



# SERVICE STANDARD 2.1.1 FORMATION AND DISBANDMENT OF BRIGADES AND GROUPS OF BRIGADES

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Version Number	v2.2
SOPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ SOP 2.1.1-1 Formation of Brigades</li><li>➤ SOP 2.1.1-2 Formation of Groups of Brigades</li><li>➤ SOP 2.1.2-3 Disbandment of Brigades</li></ul>
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Contact	Director Area Operations
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## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS is committed to providing a fire service which has relevance to local communities.
- 1.2 The NSW RFS recognises that local situations can change and there is a need to periodically review the placement of Brigades.
- 1.3 From time to time, it is also necessary to disband Brigades. This can be due to many factors such as population shifts, fire service delivery changes, or Brigade amalgamations.

## 2 Policy

- 2.1 The Commissioner may form a Brigade for a Rural Fire District if any Local Authority requested to form a Brigade for that district refuses or fails to do so within the period prescribed by the regulations after being requested to do so by the Commissioner.
- 2.2 Any request to form a new Brigade, disband an existing Brigade, amalgamate existing brigades or vary the area of operations of a Brigade is to be made to the District Manager.
- 2.3 The District Manager is to consider the merits of each application in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures attached to this Service Standard and must consult with all affected parties, including the Area Commander, District Senior Leadership Team and any existing Brigade executive(s).
- 2.4 The District Manager may consolidate two or more Brigades within the District into a Group of Brigades in accordance with SOP 2.1.1-2.
- 2.5 A Brigade may be disbanded in accordance with SOP 2.1.1-3.

### 3 Related Documents

- > [Rural Fires Act 1997](#)
- > [Service Standard 1.3.1 Delegations and Authorisations](#)
- > [Service Standard 1.3.4 Rural Fire District Service Agreements](#)

### 4 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
1 September 1999	1.0	Initial release
15 October 2001	1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Repealed and remade SS 2.1.1 v1.0</li><li>&gt; Clauses 2.1, 3 and 7</li></ul>
30 November 2010	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Repealed and remade SS 2.1.1 v1.1</li><li>&gt; Complete review and update to new format</li><li>&gt; Amalgamates and repeals:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SS 2.1.1 Formation of Brigades</li><li>• SS 2.2.1 Formation of Groups of Brigades</li><li>• SS 2.2.3 Disbandment of Rural Fire Brigades</li></ul></li></ul>
16 March 2022	2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Repeals and remakes SS 2.1.1 v2.0</li><li>&gt; Updated to align with current organisational structure and processes</li></ul>
7 June 2022	2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Repeals and remakes SS 2.1.1 v2.1</li><li>&gt; Updated to align with SS 1.3.1 Operational Delegations and Authorisations v3.7</li></ul>

## SOP 2.1.1-1

# FORMATION AND AMALGAMATION OF BRIGADES

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure sets out the procedure for establishing, amalgamating or varying the area of operations of a Rural Fire Brigade (Brigade) in accordance with sections 15 and 18 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act).

## 2 Procedures

- 2.1 Any interested person may request the formation, amalgamation or variation of the area of operations of a Brigade. The application must be in writing and sent to the relevant NSW RFS District Manager.
- 2.2 The District Manager must consider the merits of any application to form a new Brigade, amalgamate existing Brigades or vary the area of operations of any existing Brigade.
- 2.3 If the application is considered appropriate the District Manager must:
  - a) consult with all affected parties in writing and allow a minimum of 28 days for feedback to be provided;
  - b) assess the feedback from all affected parties; and
  - c) determine whether the proposal should be recommended to be approved or denied.
- 2.4 If the application is for an operational rural fire brigade, and is endorsed by the District Manager, he or she must seek the approval of the Commissioner prior to writing to the applicant to advise of the outcome.
- 2.5 If the application is for an operational support rural fire brigade, and is endorsed by the District Manager, he or she must seek the approval of the Area Commander, prior to writing to the applicant to advise of the outcome.
- 2.6 If the application is recommended by the District Manager to be rejected, he or she must seek the approval of Deputy Commissioner Field Operations prior to writing to the applicant to advise of the outcome.
- 2.7 Using the approved NSW RFS system, the District Manager must ensure there is an accurate record of:
  - a. the names of Brigades within their District;
  - b. the area of operations of each Brigade;
  - c. the classification (if applicable) of each Brigade; and
  - d. where a Brigade has a specialist or multi-functional role (endorsement), the specialist role/s undertaken by that Brigade.
- 2.8 An email will be sent out in a timely manner by the District Manager to Brigades in the District to notify them that a new Brigade has been established.

## 3 Related forms

- SAP Brigade Creation and modification request

## SOP 2.1.1-2

# FORMATION or AMENDMENT OF GROUPS OF BRIGADES

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure sets out the procedure for forming two or more Brigades into a Group of Brigades in accordance with section 16 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act).

## 2 Procedures

- 2.1 Any interested person may request the formation or amendment (including disbandment) of a Group of Brigades. The application must be in writing and be sent to the District Manager.
- 2.2 The District Manager must consider the merits of any application to form a Group of Brigades or vary the area of operations of a Group of Brigades.
- 2.3 If the application is considered appropriate, the District Manager must:
  - a. consult with the District's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in the affected area by;
    - i. calling a meeting to consider the matter; or
    - ii. consulting them in writing and allow a minimum of 28 days for feedback to be provided,
  - b. assess the feedback from the SLT; and
  - c. arrange for the SLT to endorse the proposal.
- 2.4 The District Manager must seek the approval of the Area Commander for changes to the structure of Groups of Brigades.
- 2.5 If the application is approved by the Area Commander, the District Manager must write to the applicant advising them of the determination.
- 2.6 If the area of operations of a Group of Brigades is to be varied the provisions of clauses 2.1 to 2.4 of this SOP are to be followed.
- 2.7 If the District Manager wishes to form, disband or vary the area of operations of a Group of Brigades the provisions of clauses 2.3 and 2.4 must be followed.
- 2.8 Using the approved NSW RFS system, the District Manager must ensure there is an accurate record of:
  - a. the names of Groups of Brigades in the District; and
  - b. the area of operations of each Group of Brigades.

## 3 Related forms

- None

## SOP 2.1.1-3

# DISBANDMENT OF BRIGADES

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure sets out the procedure for disbanding a Rural Fire Brigade (Brigade) in accordance with section 17 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act).

## 2 Procedures

- 2.1 An application to disband a Brigade can be made by the Brigade or the District Manager.
- 2.2 An application made by the District Manager must be submitted to the Area Commander.
- 2.3 The application must be in writing and address the following:
  - a. the reasons for the proposed disbandment;
  - b. proposals for the transfer, reallocation or disposal of the Brigade's equipment and funds;
  - c. proposals for the transfer of the Brigade's members to other Brigades; and
  - d. proposals for the area of operations of the Brigade to be redistributed.
- 2.4 If the application has been made by the Brigade, it must be endorsed by a simple majority of its members at a properly constituted Brigade General meeting.
- 2.5 If the application has been made by the District Manager the Brigade must be consulted at a properly constituted Brigade General meeting to which all members have been invited.
- 2.6 Provided that all members of the Brigade have received a notification with not less than 21 days' notice, clearly outlining the reason for the meeting, the absence of a quorum will not affect the validity of the meeting.
- 2.7 The District Manager or Area Commander must consider the merits of any application to disband a Brigade, along with the relevant documents (including Brigade minutes and recommendations).
- 2.8 If the application is considered appropriate, the District Manager or Area Commander must:
  - a. consult with the Senior Leadership Team in relation to the proposal at an appropriately convened meeting;
  - b. assess the feedback provided by the parties; and
  - c. seek the approval of the Commissioner in the case of an operational rural fire brigade, or the Area Commander in the case of an operational support rural fire brigade, to disband the Brigade.
- 2.9 If the District Manager intends to proceed with a proposal to disband the Brigade he or she must send the Captain and President of the Brigade a letter ("the notice") advising them of that decision.
- 2.10 If the position of Captain and/or President of the Brigade is vacant, the District Manager must send the notice to the most senior Brigade officer participating in the operation of the Brigade.
- 2.11 In accordance with section 17 of the Act the decision to disband the Brigade will take effect 21 days after the notice is given to the officers referred to in clause 2.9 of this SOP, unless:
  - a. the majority of the members of the Brigade agree to appeal the decision to disband the Brigade to the Minister; and
  - b. the appeal is lodged in writing with the Minister before the disbandment takes effect.
- 2.12 Before any appeal is lodged:
  - a. a general meeting of the Brigade must be convened in accordance with the provisions of the Brigade's constitution to decide if an appeal should be lodged; and
  - b. the District Manager or his/her representative must be allowed to speak at the meeting to explain why the decision to disband the Brigade has been made.

- 2.13 If a majority of the Brigade members agree to lodge an appeal with the Minister, a copy of the appeal and a copy of the minutes of the general meeting of the Brigade must be sent to the District Manager at the same time as the appeal is lodged with the Minister.
- 2.14 Where an appeal has been lodged with the Minister that satisfies the requirements of subsection 17(3) of the Act, the decision to disband the Brigade will not take effect until the appeal is:
  - a. withdrawn; or
  - b. finally determined by the Minister and his or her decision is received by the officer in charge of the Brigade.
- 2.15 As soon as possible after the Brigade disbandment takes effect, the members of the Brigade must deliver to the District Manager:
  - a. all vehicles, equipment, authority cards or other property in the possession or custody of the Brigade or its members;
  - b. all funds held by or on behalf of the Brigade other than any funds in the Brigade's Public Fund which must be dealt with in accordance with clauses 16.1 to 16.3 of the Brigade's Constitution; and
  - c. all books of account, bank statements, minutes and other records of the Brigade.
- 2.16 The District Manager must ensure that any funds received from the Brigade are transferred to another Brigade or Brigades in the same District, in consultation with the disbanded Brigade.
- 2.17 The District Manager must vary the Brigade's area of operations and membership lists and complete any other administrative tasks to close the Brigade.

### 3 Related forms

- SAP Brigade Creation and modification request