



POLICY NO. 3/03

Standard Operating Procedure Safety Advisor

1.0 Principles

- 1.1 **It is a fundamental principle of fire management operations that personal safety is the responsibility of all persons at the Incident.**
- 1.2 **The Safety Advisor who will work within the chain of command has the delegated authority of the Incident Controller to stop or change any order, action or condition only where any person's life or safety is at immediate risk.**
- 1.3 **The appointment of a Safety Advisor will not absolve anyone else in the chain of command of their obligations and responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all personnel in their area of responsibility.**

2.0 Appointment

- 2.1 **The Safety Advisor (SAF), when appointed, is responsible to and reports to the Incident Controller for the overall functions of Health and Safety for all personnel involved in the incident. The Incident Controller must consider the recommendations of the Safety Advisor and must document the issues and the decisions made.**
- 2.2 **The function of Safety Advisor at a single agency incident or prescribed burn may be retained as part of the role of the Incident Controller but if so, must be carried out as an integral function.**
- 2.3 **A dedicated Safety Advisor must be appointed in the following circumstances:**
 - A fire classified as class 2 incident or a class 3 (Section 44).
 - A fire that has the potential to escalate to a class 2 or a class 3 (Section 44).
 - The number of personnel or resources allocated to the incident is such that the fire ground needs to be sectorised. (Note: Following the initial suppression efforts, the IC may elect to withdraw the need for a safety advisor if they determine the function is not warranted).
 - Weather conditions are conducive to erratic fire behaviour.
 - At a multi agency prescribed burn.
 - In accordance with an agency's Standard Operating Procedures.
 - At a multi agency training exercise.
 - Where an agency attending an incident requests that a safety advisor be appointed.
- 2.4 **Notwithstanding the above criteria, an incident controller may appoint a safety advisor during any operation if they believe it is appropriate given the prevailing situation.**

3.0 Role and Responsibilities

3.1 The Safety Advisor is to:

- Obtain a briefing from the Incident Controller including decisions on risk management.
- Attend Incident Management Team (IMT) meetings and briefings.
- Conduct a risk assessment of hazards and specify appropriate precautions to be observed including identifying escape routes and refuges. This is to include consideration of risks likely to emerge in future shifts and propose actions to prevent and/or mitigate such risks.
- Identify and report to the Incident Controller on significant unsafe conditions or practices.
- Identify inappropriate and/or inadequate availability of resources for the incident to be controlled safely or to provide for reasonable contingencies.
- Ensure that systems are in place to monitor all personnel/ground crews form part of the coordinated response to ensure that there are no "freelance" operations.
- Identify and ensure that action is taken to rectify any unsafe condition or practice.
- Monitor that electrical and other utilities are rendered safe or are identified and the hazard mitigated.
- Exercise delegated authority to immediately suspend any activity only where there is an immediate threat of significant injury or fatality and immediately advise the Incident Controller.
- Liaise with and draw the attention of the appropriate Officer within the chain of command to ensure the rectification of any health or safety issue.
- Monitor the Incident Action Plan (IAP) and provide safety advice for proposed strategies and tactics. Review the medical accident response plan and the communications plan. Provide safety messages for inclusion in the IAP.
- Monitor that all personnel at the incident are properly briefed by their supervisor, receive a safety briefing, are made aware of all known hazards and are kept informed.
- Monitor that all personnel are adequately supervised and are wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Monitor that all personnel are using equipment appropriate to the activity being undertaken.
- Monitor that all personnel are debriefed at the conclusion of their shift.
- Monitor the application of the Agency's safe working systems and practices.
- Ensure that a system is implemented to account for all personnel at the incident.
- Monitor operational/safety information flow between the Incident Management Team (IMT) and the personnel on the ground including the provision of maps, warnings, etc.
- Ensure that a log is maintained and that an appropriate investigation by a suitably qualified person/s of any accident, near miss, significant injury and/or fatality is undertaken and that the advice/briefing is provided to the Incident Controller and to any other relevant authority.
- Monitor the health and welfare of all personnel at the incident including rotation, travelling time, refreshment, recuperation, rest and welfare.
- Advise on the need for Critical Incident Support Services and/or Chaplaincy services to the Incident Controller.
- Maintain a log of all Safety Advisor actions and communications.
- Prepare a Safety Advisor's report at the end of a shift for the Incident Controller.

4.0 Audit

4.1 An audit process will evolve with the development of this role.

5.0 Competency

5.1 The Safety Advisor is to have a level of competency at least equal to that of the Operations Officer and the relevant operational experience in the terrain and vegetation type, knowledge, skill and ability to manage incident safety in accordance with this Standard Operating Procedure.

5.2 The Safety Advisor is also to have knowledge of the following and apply their principles to incident management:

- Occupational Health & Safety Act and Regulations.
- Agency specific Standards, Policies and Procedures and Standard Operating Procedures or Guidelines.
- A knowledge of hazard identification that could be encountered at the type of incident.

5.3 Competency standards and associated training will evolve with the development of this role.

6.0 Hand Over

6.1 The following steps constitute an appropriate hand over of responsibilities:

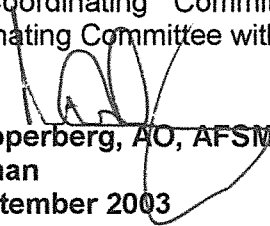
- Prepare and hand over to next shift.
- Prepare and advise on safety portion of IAP, if necessary.
- Attend IMT changeover briefing and liaise with incoming Safety Advisor and other personnel on the Plan details.
- **Then Stand Down**

7.0 Review

7.1 **This Standard Operating Procedure will be reviewed as part of the post-season fire debrief to modify accordingly with lessons learnt.**

8.0 Development of Agency Standard Operating Procedures

8.1 In adopting this policy, the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee requests the Fire Fighting Agencies to proceed to develop their Agency's Standard Operating Procedures for Safety Advisor and to ensure that these remain consistent with this policy. In addition, the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee requests that each Agency provide the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee with a copy of their developed Standard Operating Procedures.


Phil Koperberg, AO, AFSM, BEM
Chairman
25 September 2003

ATTACHMENT: 1. Safety Advisor Checklist.

SAFETY ADVISOR CHECKLIST

Incident	Name	DTG
	Obtain a briefing from the Incident Controller including decisions on risk management.	
	Attend Incident Management Team (IMT) meetings and briefings.	
	Conduct a risk assessment of hazards and specify appropriate precautions to be observed.	
	Check escape routes and refuges.	
	Conduct an assessment of risks likely to emerge in future shifts and propose actions to prevent and/or mitigate such risks.	
	Identify significant unsafe conditions or practices and report to the Incident Controller.	
	Identify inappropriate and/or inadequate availability of resources for the incident to be controlled safely.	
	Identify inappropriate and/or inadequate availability of resources to provide for reasonable contingencies.	
	Monitor that all personnel/ground crews form part of the coordinated response to ensure that there are no "freelance" operations.	
	Identify and ensure that action is taken to rectify any unsafe condition or practice.	
	Monitor that electrical and other utilities are rendered safe or are identified and the hazard mitigated.	
	Exercise delegated authority and immediately suspend any activity only where there is an immediate threat of significant injury or fatality and immediately advise the Incident Controller.	
	Liaise with and draw the attention of the appropriate Officer within the chain of command to ensure the rectification of any health or safety issue.	
	Monitor the Incident Action Plan (IAP) and provide safety advice for proposed strategies and tactics.	
	Review medical accident response plan and communications plan in the IAP.	
	Provide safety messages for inclusion in the IAP.	
	Monitor that all personnel at the incident are properly briefed, receive a safety briefing, are made aware of all known hazards and are kept informed.	
	Monitor that all personnel at the incident are adequately supervised.	
	Monitor that all personnel at the incident are wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).	
	Monitor that all personnel at the incident are using equipment appropriate to the activity being undertaken.	
	Monitor that all personnel at the incident are properly debriefed at the conclusion of their shift.	
	Monitor the application of the Agency's safe working systems and practices.	
	Ensure that a system is implemented to account for all personnel at the incident.	
	Monitor operational/safety information flow between the Incident Management Team (IMT) and the personnel on the ground including the provision of maps, warnings, etc.	
	Ensure that a log is maintained and that an appropriate investigation by a suitably qualified person/s of any accident, near miss, significant injuries and/or fatalities is undertaken.	
	Monitor the health and welfare of all personnel at the incident including rotation, travelling time, refreshment, recuperation, rest and welfare.	
	Advise on the need for Critical Incident Support Services and/or Chaplaincy services to the Incident Controller.	
	Maintain a log of all Safety Advisor actions and communications.	
	Prepare a Safety Advisor's report at the end of a shift for the Incident Controller.	