

# SERVICE STANDARD 5.1.3 COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

ITEM	DESCRIPTION			
Version Number	4.0			
SOPs	> SOP 5.1.3-1 Mobile Radio Equipment			
	SOP 5.1.3-2 System Planning and Engineering			
	SOP 5.1.3-3 Installation of Mobile Radio Equipment			
	SOP 5.1.3-4 Maintenance of Radio and Paging Sites			
	SOP 5.1.3-5 Paging Systems User Procedures			
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	SOP 5.1.3-9 Recording Systems			
	SOP 5.1.3-10 Operational Command Vehicles Standard Equipment			
	SOP 5.1.3-11 Entering into Site Agreements			
Owner	Executive Director Technology, Finance and Legal			
Contact	Manager ICT Operational Platforms			
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# 1 Purpose

- 1.1 Standardised communications systems and hardware provide a higher degree of reliability for users and provide a more efficient and effective systems support capability.
- 1.2 A standard approach to systems planning, development and implementation of radio and paging communication systems and/or devices will benefit the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) by providing all members with reliable communication systems during emergency situations.

# 2 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy document, the following definitions apply:
  - a. **ACTIV**: the Member Availability Management application used by the NSW RFS to alert members to incidents, and manage messaging and availability.
  - b. Australian Communications & Media Authority (ACMA): the Federal Government Agency responsible for the regulation of broadcasting, the internet, radio communications and telecommunications.

- c. **Broadcast Tag:** an identifier used in ACTIV to alert a single group or number of groups to an operational or administrative message.
- d. **CAPCODE:** the identifier used to address an individual or group of Pagers. Also used to identify Broadcast Tags in ACTIV.
- e. **Emergency Service Facility (ESF):** NSW RFS sites where recording of telecommunications occurs that are required under legislation to be declared as an ESF by the Federal Attorney-General.
- f. **Emergency Service Organisation (ESO):** organisations such as NSW Police Force, Fire & Rescue NSW and NSW State Emergency Service.
- g. **ICT Field Engineering and Communications Field Operations Officer (FOO):** a role within ICT Field Engineering and Communications that focuses on liaising with NSW RFS Districts and managing Communication Systems in use within NSW RFS.
- h. **Fleet Mapping** (also known as Talkgroup Mapping): limiting the geographical range of a GRN/PSN Talkgroup to a specific coverage area.
- i. **Government Radio Network (GRN):** a common platform for NSW government agencies and authorities who use mobile radio communications. Also known as the PSN.
- j. **Government Radio Network Identification Number (GRN ID):** a unique number used in a GRN capable radio to allow access onto the GRN network.
- k. NSW Telco Authority (Telco): a statutory authority within the NSW Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, controlled by the Managing Director in accordance with policies advised by the Board. Telco leads sector-wide reform and delivery of government operational communications (including Agency Owned Networks) to enable stakeholders to better respond to the NSW community.
- P25: a radio standard designed for use by public safety organisations that allows for the transfer of data as well a voice messaging. Used by NSW RFS on most PMR networks, and used by NSW Telco Authority on the GRN/PSN.
- m. **Post Office Code Standardisation Advisory Group (POSCAG):** an asynchronous protocol used to transmit data to a paging device.
- n. Public Safety Network (PSN) Public Safety Network the new name for the expanded Government Radio Network being operated by the NSW Telco Authority. This term may be used interchangeably with GRN
- o. **Spok Messenger** specialised software platform used to send paging messages to pagers and/or mobile devices.
- p. **Standard Operating Environment (SOE):** a highly technical document developed and used by Communications Systems that provides guidance for radio and paging network system planning and engineering.
- q. **Ultra High Frequency (UHF):** radio frequencies in the 300-1000 MHz range programmed into NSW RFS radios and into primary and secondary radios used for voice / data communications.
- r. **Very High Frequency (VHF):** radio frequencies in the 30-300 MHz range programmed into NSW RFS fireground radios and also used for paging services.

# 3 Policy

- 3.1 Communication Systems standards reflect industry best practice and align with NSW Telco Authority policy, guidelines and framework.
- 3.2 Funding required for maintenance and costs relating to the operation of Communication networks (including the operation of the GRN/PSN) will be determined each year for each district using a model determined by the NSW RFS Finance department.
- 3.3 District Managers will be responsible to include all other maintenance and repair expenses relating to radio terminals, pagers, voice recorders and fire control centre communications systems maintenance and repairs, or any other communication related expenditure not included in clause 3.2 into their annual budget.

#### **Communications Hardware Procurement**

- 3.4 All communications equipment intended for use on NSW RFS radio and paging networks is to conform to NSW RFS technical requirements.
- 3.5 All communications equipment intended for use on NSW RFS radio, paging and other communications systems must be purchased in accordance with NSW RFS and Government Procurement Policies.

#### **Programming Profiles**

- 3.6 All radio and paging communications will operate in the designated and licenced part of the radio frequency spectrum in accordance with legislative requirements on licensed frequencies.
- 3.7 All communications equipment intended for use on NSW RFS communications systems must be programmed with the NSW RFS' standard profiles to ensure standardisation of operating conditions across the Service. Profiles for NSW RFS approved equipment can be provided by the ICT Field Engineering and Communications section located at NSW RFS Headquarters.

#### **Communication Systems Design and Engineering**

- 3.8 All radio and paging communications systems will be engineered, designed and/or approved by ICT Field Engineering and Communications section. The system design, engineering and site selection is a collaborative effort between the District and ICT Field Engineering and Communications section, however final approval rests with ICT Field Engineering and Communications section.
- 3.9 The installation of radio and paging communication systems will be coordinated by ICT Field Engineering and Communications section. This will be carried out in consultation with the District Manager with the view to using local contractors listed under the appropriate NSW Government Procurement contract. This does not include vehicle radio installation. Further information can be obtained from ICT Field Engineering and Communications section).
- 3.10 All primary NSW RFS radio networks will be Ultra High Frequency (UHF) Private Mobile Radio (PMR) or Government Radio Network (GRN) broadcast systems, in analogue or digital technology, so that when activated, all base stations in the system operate simultaneously.
- 3.11 Where the PSN/GRN is used as the primary network by Districts, this is the only PSN/GRN channel/talkgroup permanently allocated to a District.
- 3.12 The PSN/GRN network also provides for common channels used in joint operations with other Emergency Sector or Government Agencies. These are the Emergency Service Organisation (ESO) or Government Liaison (GL) shared channels. Due to the shared nature, NSW RFS members must seek approval from State Operations before the use of these channels, who will request a channel allocation from the PSN/GRN Network Manager. These channels cannot be allocated to Districts on a permanent or ongoing basis without the approval of the Manager Operational Platforms.
- 3.13 In support of optimising the PSN/GRN capacity for NSW RFS members, districts operating in Government Radio Network (GRN) may have PSN/GRN Fleet Mapping enabled. PSN/GRN Fleet Mapping limits a PSN/GRN Talkgroup to certain geographical area, or specific transmitter sites, thereby localising the PSN/GRN Talkgroup's operation within established boundaries. This ensures that local GRN channel resources are not being engaged by radios listening to their home Talkgroup whilst travelling large distances out of their home area.
- 3.14 Fleet mapping is applied to District Talkgroups, and is not specific to individual radios. This means that, for example, a radio tuned to the Shoalhaven Talkgroup will only be able to receive or transmit on that Talkgroup when in range of the sites 'mapped' to this Talkgroup. A radio located on the North Coast for example will not be in range of the Shoalhaven Talkgroup, and will be unable to transmit or receive on this Talkgroup. Once in range, the radio will then be able to operate on the Talkgroup. These settings are applied per Talkgroup, not per radio. State Wide Talkgroups (such as State Ops, OPS and ESO) will remain enabled on all GRN sites.
- 3.15 Talkgroup Fleet Mapping will be reviewed from time to time by the Supervisor Field Engineering and Communications to ensure that it is relevant and appropriate. Districts can discuss and review their fleet maps as required with their ICT FOO (ICT Field Operations Officer).
- 3.16 NSW RFS paging systems will use the Very High Frequency (VHF) assignment allocated to the NSW RFS for State wide exterior paging, and the protocol shall only be POCSAG.

3.17 Principally, all fireground radio communications will occur on the licensed VHF frequencies (known as Fireground) using radios identified by ICT Field Engineering and Communications. It is important to recognise that these frequencies are licenced as ambulatory, meaning permanent and tower based transmitter installations are not permitted. In some areas they may be shared with other licensed users as determined by ACMA, and users of these channels should be respectful of this fact where this occurs.

#### **Communication Base Sites**

- 3.18 All radio and paging communications sites will be licensed in accordance with legislative requirements for all equipment operating at the location.
- 3.19 A tenancy licence agreement, for both site and access, will be in place for all radio sites utilised by the NSW RFS.
- 3.20 All communications assets are insured by NSW RFS centrally and are managed by ICT Field Engineering and Communications.
- 3.21 District Managers are to record all Communication Base sites "Premises Occupied by the NSW RFS" Schedule 1 of the Service Level Agreement under s12A of the Rural Fires Act.

#### **Communication System Maintenance**

- 3.22 All NSW RFS PMR and Paging communication sites will be maintained under a Programmed Maintenance Agreement managed by ICT Field Engineering and Communications.
- 3.23 The Supervisor ICT Field Engineering and Communications will ensure that all scheduled maintenance is undertaken as per the agreed terms of the Contract.
- 3.24 Maintenance Contractors will, on an agreed schedule, visit each site and conduct an agreed series of tests to ensure the satisfactory and safe operation of the PMR and Paging networks.
- 3.25 The relevant FOO will liaise with Maintenance Contractors on a regular basis to understand system performance and issues, and assess and ensure the continued performance of the Contractor.
- 3.26 Maintenance Contractors will provide ICT Field Engineering and Communications with regular reports (as required by the Maintenance Contract) of their activities and performance against required maintenance tasks.
- 3.27 ICT Field Engineering and Communications will conduct regular meetings with Maintenance Contractors as required by the Contract (at a minimum) to ensure Contract Compliance.
- 3.28 The relevant FOO will liaise with the relevant District Manager (or delegate) as required to communicate any system or site issues that may arise.

#### Usage of NSW RFS Communications Systems

- 3.29 NSW RFS communications infrastructure (including PMR and Paging networks, fixed and portable radio equipment and ancillary accessories) shall only be used for activities relating to NSW RFS operational, training or administrative activities, disasters and emergencies, or other activities that the NSW RFS is involved with or otherwise supporting. The use of NSW RFS communications infrastructure for any other activity or reason must be approved by the Supervisor ICT Field Engineering and Communications.
- 3.30 NSW RFS communications infrastructure (including PMR and Paging networks, fixed and portable radio equipment and ancillary accessories) shall only be operated by members of the NSW RFS, other Emergency Service personnel as operationally required, or other persons directly supporting a disaster or operation (such as Contractors directly supporting an incident through services such as Aviation or Plant, EOC/LEMC approved personnel). The use of NSW RFS communications infrastructure by any other persons must be approved by the Supervisor ICT Field Engineering and Communications.
- 3.31 Only communications equipment and infrastructure approved for use by Manager Operational Platforms shall be used by members. Districts, Brigades or members are not to operate any individual or self-managed communications infrastructure without prior approval from Manager Operational Platforms.
- 3.32 District Managers must ensure that they have appropriate plans prepared and rehearsed to allow Operations to continue to function in the event of failure or maintenance of one or many Communication Networks, including the failure of PMR, GRN/PSN, Paging, RFS ACTIV, or Cellular networks. Alternative mechanisms of communicating should be considered and communicated to required persons in advance of any un-planned failures. These plans should be created as a part of a District's Business Continuity plan with their Section 52 District Bushfire Risk Plan.

#### **Guidelines and Security**

3.33 information regarding access to any agency's radio and paging communication system, such as dial-up phone numbers, pager codes, access codes and frequency lists, is confidential and should not be divulged to any persons without authorisation from the Manager Operational Platforms

#### Unlawful Use of Communications Equipment

- 3.34 The use of any telecommunication to make or send fraudulent, unlawful, or abusive information, calls or messages is prohibited.
- 3.35 All members of the NSW RFS have an obligation to report any threatening, intimidating or harassing telephone calls or electronic messages to an officer authorised under NSW RFS policy to receive such reports, or to their Manager.
- 3.36 Any member identified as the initiator of fraudulent, unlawful, or abusive calls or messages may be subject to disciplinary action under Service Standard 1.1.2 Discipline, and possible criminal prosecution.

### 4 Related Documents

- Sovernment Telecommunications Act 2018 (NSW)
- > Telecommunications Act, 1997 (Cth)
- > Radiocommunications Act, 1992 (Cth)
- > Telecommunications (Interception & Access) Act 1979 (Cth)
- > Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Act 2006 (Cth)
- > Telecommunications (Interception and Access) (New South Wales) Act 1987
- > Policy P4.1.3 Procurement
- Policy P5.1.1 ICT Equipment Standards
- Policy P5.1.3 Information Security Management
- Policy P5.1.6 Records Management
- > Service Standard 1.1.14 Personal Information and Privacy
- Service Standard 1.1.2 Discipline
- > Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Service Standard 1.1.14 Personal Information and Privacy
- > Service Standard 1.3.4 Rural Fire District Service Agreements
- Service Standard 5.1.4 NSW RFS Appliance Standards
- Service Standard 5.3.6 Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)
- > NSW RFS/SES Memorandum of Understanding
- > NSW RFS PMR/Paging Maintenance Contract
- > Radio Communication Equipment Standard Operating Environment

### 5 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
1 September 1999	1.0	Initial release (Titled Communications)
3 April 2008	2.0	<ul> <li>Repealed and remade SS 5.1.3 v1.0</li> <li>Complete review (change of title to Operational Communications)</li> </ul>
17 June 2013	3.0	<ul> <li>Repealed and remade SS 5.1.3 v2.0</li> <li>Change of title to Communication Systems</li> </ul>

		<ul> <li>Inclusion of SOP 5.1.3-9 Paging Systems – User Procedures</li> <li>Inclusion of SOP 5.1.3-10 Paging Systems – CAPCODE Administration</li> </ul>
		SOPs updated to reflect current practice
		<ul> <li>SOE, Preferred Supplier Agreement and Site License Agreement removed and published as separate documents</li> </ul>
17 May 2019	3.1	Repeals and remakes SS 5.1.3 v3.0
		<ul> <li>Removal of SOP 5.1.3-11 Operational Command Vehicles Standard Equipment</li> </ul>
		Updated to reflect current practice
17 March 2022	4.0	Repeals and updates SS 5.1.3 v3.1
		<ul> <li>Realignment of Communication Systems section to ICT Field Engineering and Communications.</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Inclusion of responsibilities for the administration and oversight of the Preventative Maintenance of Radio Sites program</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Reinstates SOP 5.1.3-10 Operational Command Vehicles Standard Equipment</li> </ul>
		> Technology, standards and procedure updates

# Mobile and Portable Radio Equipment

### 1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to list the equipment that has been evaluated as the standard equipment capable of meeting the needs of the NSW RFS operationally, in line with NSW Government Telco Authority policy, guidelines and framework.

### 2 Procedures

- 2.1 Although certain equipment makes and models are specified in this SOP, from time to time new models and makes of radio equipment appear in the market place. The use of any new equipment must be approved by ICT Field Engineering and Communications to ensure its suitability before it is installed.
- 2.2 Only equipment approved and listed in the NSW RFS SAP Equipment catalogue may be purchased. The purchase of other equipment (not otherwise defined or approved in Service Standard 5.1.3) must be approved in writing by Manager Operational Platforms.
- 2.3 These radios must be purchased through the NSW RFS SAP Equipment catalogue. ICT Field Engineering and Communications can provide details of communication equipment and accessories by contacting radio.systems@rfs.nsw.gov.au with detailed description of requirements.
- 2.4 UHF CB radios may be purchased directly from local authorised dealers and are exempt from the requirements of Clauses 2.2 and 2.3 of this SOP. Only devices that have all relevant Australian approvals may be purchased. ICT Field Engineering and Communications will maintain a list of preferred CB radios that will be published on OneRFS or available at any time with email to <u>radio.systems@rfs.nsw.gov.au</u>.
- 2.5 All radio equipment must be registered and recorded in SAP EAM. These records will be managed by the District or Department responsible for the radio, or responsible for the equipment/location where the radio is installed.
- 2.6 All radio records in SAP EAM must be complete with relevant Characteristics (such as GRN ID).
- 2.7 Whenever a radio is removed, installed or transferred between vehicles, the officer moving the radio (or other appropriately delegated member) will reflect this movement in SAP EAM as soon as possible by the District or Department responsible for the radio

#### **Radio Repeater Equipment**

2.8 Specifications of current approved radio repeater equipment manufacturers and models can be sourced from the ICT Field Engineering and Communications section.

#### PMR/GRN UHF Mobile/Portable Radio Equipment

- 2.9 All NSW RFS operational vehicles will be fitted with a Motorola P25 conventional and GRN enabled mobile radio as the primary radio, which will be GRN ID enabled and activated.
- 2.10 A secondary Motorola PMR/GRN UHF radio may be purchased from Motorola and will be Motorola P25 conventional and GRN enabled.
- 2.11 All GRN radios (excluding those installed within a building or other permanent structure) will be AVL enabled and fitted with appropriate antenna hardware.

#### **GRN ID Management**

2.12 All primary or secondary UHF radios will be programmed with a GRN identification number (GRN ID), and will be activated within the GRN network.

- 2.13 GRN IDs will only be de-activated in the following circumstances, with the approval of ICT Field Engineering and Communications:
  - a. The radio is stolen or lost and not recoverable
  - b. The radio is damaged/destroyed beyond reasonable repair
  - c. The radio is retired from service and disposed of as per the appropriate asset disposal process
- 2.14 In each of the above cases, the de-activation process is permanent.
- 2.15 All radios will be secured with an Authentication Key as per the requirements of the NSW Telco Authority
- 2.16 All requests for additions, moves or changes to GRN IDs or GRN Accounts must be submitted to ICT Field Engineering and Communications for processing.
- 2.17 In the event that a member believes that a radio has been lost, stolen or otherwise compromised, the ICT Field Engineering and Communications team must be notified immediately.

#### VHF Fireground Mobile/Portable Radio Equipment

- 2.18 All NSW RFS operational vehicles will be fitted with an approved VHF Fireground radio
- 2.19 VHF Fireground mobile radio will be used for NSW RFS fireground use and communication with other agencies as per the standard profile available only from ICT Field Engineering and Communications. Some models of these radios maybe identified by having a blue microphone/radio face.

#### VHF Mid Band (66-88 MHz) Mobile Radio Equipment

2.20 VHF 66-88MHz mobile radio will be used for communication with other agencies as per the standard profile. Some models of these radios maybe identified by having a yellow microphone/radio face.

#### **Aviation Band Mobile/Portable Radio Equipment**

- 2.21 Aviation band radios will be used for communicating with aircraft in both mobile and portable/handheld applications either for Air to Ground or Air to Air uses.
- 2.22 When using an Aviation Band radio, all procedures and requirements stipulated by NSW RFS Aviation must be adhered to at all times.
- 2.23 Operations must be appropriately authorised and/or qualified, as per the requirements stipulated by NSW RFS Aviation.
- 2.24 Aviation Band radios are not to be used for ground to ground communications with RFS units, except where those units are directly involved with aviation or air-base operations, and the communications are undertaken in line with NSW RFS Aviation requirements.

#### **Vehicle Radios**

- 2.25 New fire appliances will be fitted with:
  - a. an approved Fireground radio and associated antennas prior to delivery to the District;
  - b. a Motorola installation kit (including power, speaker, brackets etc.) to allow the District to fit a Motorola GRN/PMR radio during commissioning; and
  - c. an approved CB Radio.
- 2.26 All fire appliances must have an operational PMR/GRN radio. Other radios maybe installed upon operational capacity assessment and fitted in line with Service Standard 5.1.4 NSW RFS Fire Fighting Appliance Construction Standards.
- 2.27 Group Officer vehicles will be fitted with:
  - d. A PMR/GRN as the primary radio;
  - e. A secondary PMR/GRN radio;
  - f. A approved fire ground radio; and
  - g. an approved UHF CB radio.

- 2.28 Other radios maybe installed in Group Officer vehicles upon operational capacity assessment and fitted in line with Service Standard 5.1.4 Fire fighting Appliance Construction Standards.
- 2.29 All operational fleet vehicles will be equipped with primary PMR/GRN radio and a secondary PMR/GRN radio, with the exception of Headquarters operational fleet vehicles, which will only receive a secondary PMR/GRN radio with the approval of the relevant manager.
- 2.30 Other fleet vehicles may be equipped with a primary PMR GRN as arranged with Engineering Services at the time of acquisition.

### 3 Related forms

> None

# **System Planning and Engineering**

# 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS has a responsibility to provide and maintain communications infrastructure necessary to support operational responses and activities. As such, the NSW RFS needs to have multiple communications sites in various locations to meet this responsibility.
- 1.2 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) sets out the processes necessary to plan and engineer a communications site in accordance with relevant government legislation and operational requirements.

### 2 Procedures

#### **System Planning**

- 2.1 ICT Field Engineering and Communications section, in conjunction with the District, will ascertain if there is a need to upgrade, relocate or decommission any communication infrastructure.
- 2.2 ICT Field Engineering and Communications sections, in conjunction with the District, will initially identify potential locations for any new communication infrastructure.
- 2.3 Based on local information provided by the District, ICT Field Engineering and Communications section will complete the network planning and design activities for the proposed communication infrastructure.
- 2.4 ICT Field Engineering and Communications section will obtain suitable frequency assignments for any proposed radio/paging systems and will obtain frequency allocations from an accredited external provider and licence the frequencies allocated through the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).
- 2.5 ICT Field Engineering and Communications section in conjunction with a nominated District delegate, will liaise with Council if any agreements need to be arranged by them for a vested asset. ICT Field Engineering and Communications section will negotiate with site owners/managers regarding proposed location of antenna equipment and site requirements for equipment storage.
- 2.6 ICT Field Engineering and Communications section will undertake all the procurement processes for the supply and installation of required equipment to commission the communications site from approved Government contract suppliers.

#### **System Engineering**

- 2.7 Consideration must be given to the structural integrity of any towers or other infrastructure being used for the communications site.
- 2.8 ICT Field Engineering and Communications section is responsible for preparing engineering diagrams to identify the location of equipment, both antennas on towers/structures, as well as the technical equipment located in huts for the site location.
- 2.9 Technical specifications will be supplied by ICT Field Engineering and Communications section for cabling, antenna and power supply requirements, based on the equipment to be installed, to ensure it operates at maximum efficiency.
- 2.10 All communications sites must have back-up power contingency plans in place, including battery banks set up with charging regulators to maintain power, in the event of a mains failure.
- 2.11 Construction standards for communications equipment huts will be supplied by ICT Field Engineering and Communications section, including but not limited to:
  - a. maximum and minimum operating temperatures for electronic equipment;
  - b. ventilation;
  - c. optimum storage space required for equipment to be located in the hut;
  - d. site fencing; and,
  - e. site access.

2.12 Relevant Australian Standards must be adhered to for communications mast/towers installation.

#### Installation of Equipment

- 2.13 ICT Field Engineering and Communications section, with assistance from the District, coordinated by the Property Liaison Officer, Fixed Assets & Building Services, will negotiate and approve the relevant site agreement(s), for both access and site, prior to any installation works commencing.
- 2.14 All NSW RFS equipment installations will be carried out by NSW Government contract approved suppliers.
- 2.15 All contractors are to install the equipment in accordance with ACMA, Work Health and Safety legislation and any NSW RFS Radio and/or Paging Communication Equipment SOE that may be in place.
- 2.16 ICT Field Engineering and Communications section will develop (and update as required) a NSW RFS Radio and/or Paging Communication Equipment SOE. A copy of this SOE may be obtained upon request to the Supervisor, ICT Field Engineering and Communications section.

#### Commissioning

2.17 A NSW RFS ICT FOO will attend or engage an external expert to inspect the site after completion to ensure the installation and site commissioning is done in accordance with the scope of works.

### 3 Related forms

None

# Installation of Mobile Radio Equipment

# 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS has a responsibility to provide and maintain communications infrastructure necessary to support operational responses and activities.
- 1.2 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) sets out technical considerations for installation of radio equipment into vehicles operated or utilised by NSW RFS personnel.

### 2 Procedures

#### Mobile Radio Supply

- 2.1 Mobile radio sets shall be supplied in accordance with accepted trade and manufacturers practice, and be certified as approved for operation within the frequency spectrum intended by ACMA.
- 2.2 Radios shall be sourced through NSW RFS SAP using the list of approved radios and vendors contained within the SAP Catalogue.
- 2.3 Radios may only be sourced through other mechanisms with the written approval of the Manager Operational Platforms or Supervisor ICT Field Engineering and Communications.

#### **Mobile Radio Installation**

2.4 Mobile radio sets shall be installed into vehicles in accordance with the procedures related to Fixing, Wiring and Fusing, as outlined in the following clauses (2.5-2.13).

#### Fixing

- 2.5 Where any radio mobile equipment is installed in the cabin passenger or driver area of a vehicle, then it shall be attached or fixed so as not to present a danger to the occupants of that vehicle either during normal travel or in the event of an accident.
- 2.6 The radio should be installed in such a way that the controls are readily accessible to the vehicle occupants.
- 2.7 Local installations or those not undertaken by the NSW RFS contract vehicle commissioning provider will be subject to the NSW RFS Vehicle Risk Assessment process, then endorsed and agreed by the ICT Field Engineering and Communications and/or NSW RFS Engineering, as required.
- 2.8 All equipment will be installed in accordance with the requirements of NSW RFS Engineering.

#### Wiring

- 2.9 All wiring associated with the installation of mobile radios shall be securely fixed and/or concealed where possible in a professional and protective manner.
- 2.10 All power wiring to mobile radios shall be 4mm<sup>2</sup> automotive grade as a minimum and be clearly identified as to polarity (unless specified otherwise by the manufacturer).
- 2.11 Wiring should be kept as short as possible.

#### Fusing

- 2.12 Fusing or an appropriate circuit breaker of the correct type and current rating shall be applied to each circuit of the power wiring and as close to the battery as is practicable.
- 2.13 **Note**: Please refer to Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZ 4346:1995 (Guide to the installation in vehicles of mobile communication equipment intended for connection to a cellular mobile telecommunication service (CMTS)). For cellular telephone devices, and as a more detailed guide to antenna placement and other installation procedures for mobile equipment.

# 3 Related forms

> NSW RFS Vehicle Risk Assessment Worksheets (NSW RFS Engineering Services)

# Maintenance of Radio and Paging Sites

# 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS has communications infrastructure across NSW for radio and paging communications to its members.
- 1.2 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the requirements for maintaining this infrastructure by suitably qualified and approved technicians in order to maintain optimum operational ability.

### 2 Procedures

- 2.1 All NSW RFS PMR and paging radio sites must be checked, tested and re-aligned annually as a minimum, and in accordance with the maintenance contracts.
- 2.2 Centralised maintenance contracts for PMR and Paging radio sites are centrally coordinated and managed by ICT Field Engineering and Communications to ensure a standardised approach to PMIs, equipment maintenance, record keeping and fault/incident reporting, and that maintenance is carried out in accordance with approved standards at a set time.
- 2.3 ICT Field Engineering and Communications is responsible for ensuring maintenance checks are completed at the due times in accordance with the maintenance contracts.
- 2.4 ICT Field Engineering and Communications utilise a centralised monitoring system to receive alarms and alerts from P25 PMR radio sites. Information will be provided to Districts as required to alert them of any operational impact.
- 2.5 The relevant FOO will liaise with Maintenance Contractors on a regular basis to understand system performance and issues, and assess and ensure the continued performance of the Contractor
- 2.6 Maintenance Contractors will provide NSWRFS with agreed documentation (as specified in the PMR and Paging Maintenance contract), which will include at a minimum: (a) Performance / Maintenance Report; (b) Site and Equipment Photos; (c) Issues Report.
- 2.7 Performance/Maintenance Reports will be loaded into the RFS Records Management System. Other Documentation provided by the Maintenance Contractors will be stored by ICT Field Engineering and Communications for historical reference as required.
- 2.8 Districts must be vigilant in monitoring the ongoing operational functionality of their PMR and paging systems at a local level and advise ICT Field Engineering and Communications of abnormal operation. Otherwise, Districts may not be alerted to issues outside of normal business hours and some technical issues may not be detected by the PMR monitoring system.
- 2.9 Analogue PMR and paging equipment are not currently monitored by the centralised monitoring system.
- 2.10 During business hours for District support, contact should be made with the relevant ICT FOO and after hours, the Communication Systems Duty Officer can be contacted on 1300 677 737 for urgent issues. Alternatively, tickets can be raised by e-mailing radio.systems@rfs.nsw.gov.au.

# 3 Related forms

None

# Paging Systems User Procedures

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS operates a purpose-dedicated radio paging network in most areas of New South Wales. This paging service is primarily intended for time critical alerting of Brigade members and NSW RFS staff to emergency incidents.
- 1.2 NSW RFS Paging services use a specialised software platform, known as Spok Messenger.
- 1.3 Spok Messenger software is installed on a dedicated server. This server will be connected to the NSW RFS wide area network (WAN) thus allowing compatible external "client" versions of Spok Messenger to connect from remote locations where the WAN is available. More recent versions of the Spok Messenger server can also be accessed using a web browser from any internet connected device.
- 1.4 Servers may be enabled to send SMS messages if the server is enabled with a SMS Gateway. This is at the discretion of the District.
- 1.5 Pager messages are sent to multiple radio transmitters in the area surrounding the initiating District Office where the server is located. These paging transmitters are connected to the initiating office server via radio link.
- 1.6 Efficient and disciplined use of a paging system will maximise benefit by conserving transmitter power requirements, reducing transmitter and link radio usage, reducing message delivery times and ensuring that congestion does not occur on network radio links and paging transmitters.
- 1.7 This SOP is intended to ensure that the NSW RFS paging system is secure and effective, and that time critical messages are sent and forwarded to pagers in the most efficient manner.
- 1.8 This SOP does not address the technical aspects of system design, specification and implementation. ICT Field Engineering and Communications will be able to provide advice around system design.

### 2 Procedures

#### **Server Location**

2.1 The paging server should be located in a secure communications/ICT server room where possible.

#### System Login and Access

- 2.2 Spok Messenger has several levels of login access known as 'permissions'. Permissions are defined by settings within the software and are generally set up at system commissioning time in consultation with the District Manager.
- 2.3 The District Manager should nominate appropriate staff to be trained and given 'administrator' access to Spok Messenger. Administrator access logins should only be allocated to NSW RFS staff and should always be kept secure.
- 2.4 Changes within the administrator fields of the system setup should only be made by personnel who are trained and/or fully familiar with system operation. Advice may be obtained from ICT Field Engineering and Communications r.
- 2.5 System training and operating instructions are made available when the system is installed or may be obtained from the installing contractor.

#### **Paging Messages**

2.6 Paging messages sent via the system should be concise and contain only information needed to convey the objective of the paging activation. Salutations, personal greetings, and other unnecessary information should not be sent. Depending on the District and the types of pagers in use, messages longer than the preconfigured number of characters will be automatically split and transmitted as multiple pages.

- 2.7 General information messages to groups of personnel are acceptable (i.e. weather warnings, meeting reminders etc.). However, consideration should be given to using alternative higher-bandwidth channels (such as RFS ACTIV) where the message is not Time Critical.
- 2.8 Paging messages should be prefixed with a time and date stamp, selectable from the operating page of the Spok Messenger user software.
- 2.9 Each Spok Messenger system is set up with "All Call" activation. This single contact, or recipient as defined on the Spok Messenger screen, will send a pager message to all pagers on a local network, using only a single activation of system transmitters and radio links. This facility should be used wherever possible, thus avoiding multiple repeats of the same message to many different recipients (pager contacts) and consequent delays. This is particularly important in the case of repeats of general messages intended for multiple recipients.
- 2.10 Consideration should be given to using alternative higher-bandwidth channels (such as RFS ACTIV) where the message is not Time Critical to minimise load on the Paging Network.

#### SMS and smart phone/device applications

- 2.11 SMS is suitable for administrative, non-time critical messaging applications, but must not be used for Brigade response purposes as there is no guarantee of message delivery or delay.
- 2.12 Congestion and delays will occur when using SMSs during periods of peak activity or other network operations.
- 2.13 All ongoing cost associated with SMS service is the responsibility of the District. RFS ACTIV should be strongly considered as an alternative to SMS, as it provides more certainty around delivery as well as a return channel showing whether a user has responded to a message.

### 3 Related forms

None

# SOP 5.1.3-6 Paging Systems CAPCODE Administration

# 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP is intended to ensure that the NSW RFS paging system is operated in an efficient manner such that time critical messages are sent and delivered to pagers in the most reliable and fastest way possible.
- 1.2 Efficient and disciplined use of a paging system will maximise benefit by conserving transmitter power requirements, reducing transmitter and link radio usage, reducing message delivery times and ensuring that congestion does not occur on network radio links and paging transmitters.
- 1.3 This SOP concerns the programming of pagers and the recipient database within Spok Messenger software. This SOP assumes some knowledge of pager programming methods, database creation and changes within Spok Messenger.
- 1.4 A pager contains a radio receiver that constantly monitors a specific radio frequency. The pager will remain silent until it receives a specific number as a string of data which tells it to alert and display a message. This number string is known as a CAPCODE.
- 1.5 A pager may contain four or more CAPCODES in its memory, and will respond to any of these codes by alerting and displaying. The CAPCODE is represented by a seven-digit number programmed into pagers with a corresponding number allocated in the Spok Messenger database.
- 1.6 This SOP is intended to cover all important aspects of pager and server setup. There are many other features such as Rostering, Call Escalation, and Departments etc. Further information on the use of these features may be obtained from the supplier or from ICT Field Engineering and Communications.

# 2 Procedures

2.1 The programming and configuration of pagers is the responsibility of the District Manager and/or designated staff members, however ICT Field Engineering and Communications can assist with advice or information regarding the programming of pagers.

#### Pagers CAPCODES

- 2.2 CAPCODES are strictly administered by ICT Field Engineering and Communications and allocated to Districts in accordance with a specific numbering plan, based on the Local Government Area (LGA) boundaries.
- 2.3 The three leading digits of the CAPCODE are used to delineate Districts in which the pager users normally reside (staff, Brigades etc.). The remaining four digits of the CAPCODE number are for allocation by the District to Brigades and individuals within that District according to previously agreed guidelines. This numbering convention is available from ICT Field Engineering and Communications. Districts must use this numbering plan when programming pagers and the Spok Messenger database of contacts.
- 2.4 A CAPCODE may be programmed into a single pager or may be programmed into many pagers (groups of pagers).
- 2.5 Pagers must be programmed:
  - a. With a District "All Call" CAPCODE. This code must be programmed into every pager used on the local District paging network;
  - b. With the NSW RFS paging frequency i.e., 148.5875 MHz in a 25 kHz channel;
  - c. To a data rate of 512 baud which is common to all NSW RFS pagers; and
  - d. With the additional CAPCODES relevant to the individual pager.
- 2.6 There are many types of pager programs and programming hardware. Each type has differing features and settings. If any difficulty is experienced in using pager programming devices or software, users should

consider having their pagers programmed by the supplier or their local approved contractor. Assistance in programming may also be obtained from ICT Field Engineering and Communication or from the supplier.

#### **Spok Messenger**

- 2.7 Spok Messenger servers are provided as part of a District's paging system installation and must have no other applications apart from Spok Messenger paging software installed. This equipment is for the dedicated use of Spok Messenger only.
- 2.8 A recipient in Spok Messenger is defined as the name of the individual or group of individuals to whom a page message is intended. Recipients may be allocated a Pager Number known as a Local ID. This ID should have four digits, and is not related to a CAPCODE.
- 2.9 The Spok Messenger Contacts name field should always contain individual staff positions, staff and administration groups, senior member positions, Captains by Brigade and Brigades by Brigade name etc. Personal names of Brigade members should not be used. A single page to a brigade may contain a discrete message to an individual who is required to be contacted, (e.g., "John Smith call Fire Control").
- 2.10 Grouping of recipients using the Group facility of Spok Messenger results in the same pager message repeated for each Group member. This is a particularly inefficient method of sending pager messages and should be avoided wherever possible. Grouping pager recipients should never exceed three members per group. If the group is considered to be a permanent necessity, consideration should be given to grouping by adding a CAPCODE and re-programming the pagers concerned.

#### Pager Activation by Telephone ("Man-in-the Box")

- 2.11 Spok Messenger has the capability of allowing users to send selected messages remotely via a telephone keypad if the Spok Messenger server has been installed with a PBX interface. This method, known as "man in the box", will send a message selected from a numbered list of pre-determined messages to a recipient ID.
- 2.12 Where joint District paging networks are used, i.e. the network uses more than one server, District Operations staff must ensure that the Paging (PBX) Message list is common to both servers. If changes are made to the PBX Message list, these must be agreed and implemented at both servers. The District Managers are responsible for ensuring that the databases on their respective servers are kept synchronised.

#### Pager Activation by Web Access

- 2.13 Spok Messenger also has the capability of allowing users with internet access from laptops, tablets or smart phones to send messages remotely.
- 2.14 This method allows full messaging capability via the web browser however, no Spok Messenger administrative activities can be undertaken via this facility.

#### **RFS ACTIV**

- 2.15 Spok Messenger servers will be connected via the NSW RFS WAN to the NSW RFS ACTIV system to allow direct messaging. All Brigades will have their CAPCODES replicated to activate ACTIV.
- 2.16 Each brigade will be configured with an ACTIV Broadcast Tag identical to their Brigade CAPCODE.

### 3 Related forms

None

# Paging Networks and Other Agencies

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS is responsible for a paging network in NSW which, in some areas of the state, is utilised by other Emergency Service Organisations (ESO).
- 1.2 This SOP sets out the process for the development of formal agreements which must be in place to ensure the system usage is monitored and recorded.
- 1.3 This paging network may be utilised by other bodies including emergency service organisations, provided a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other agreement is entered into.

### 2 Procedures

- 2.1 Those bodies requiring access to NSW RFS District paging networks should initially contact ICT Field Engineering and Communications at NSW RFS Headquarters stating their need for access to the paging network and providing a written outline of their requirements from the system.
- 2.2 If the system is capable of providing the service required by the requesting ESO, the District Manager and ICT Field Engineering and Communications will develop a MOU outlining services to be provided to the agency requesting the service.
- 2.3 This MOU is to be signed by the Manager Operational Platforms and an equivalent representative from the requesting Emergency Service Organisation.
- 2.4 The MOU will remain in force for 3 years from date of signing, with an annual review between the agencies at a local level.
- 2.5 CAPCODES for use on the paging network will be supplied by ICT Field Engineering and Communications from the state CAPCODE database in accordance with SOP 5.1.3-6 Paging Systems CAPCODE Administration.

# 3 Related forms

> None

# **Issuance of NSW RFS Radio Profiles to Third Parties**

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 All radios ordered and purchased by the NSW RFS have standard radio profiles programmed into them upon supply. These profiles are necessary to ensure a standard operating environment is maintained across the communications fleet throughout rural fire Brigades.
- 1.2 This SOP provides guidance for the release of secure information pertaining to the use of NSW RFS radio profiles.

### 2 Procedures

- 2.1 ICT Field Engineering and Communications has profiles developed for the radio equipment which can be made available for programming of communications equipment for Districts by authorised suppliers.
- 2.2 Profiles supplied by ICT Field Engineering and Communications are for exclusive use in NSW RFS fixed and handheld radio equipment and must not be supplied for use in private or personal radios.
- 2.3 Profiles supplied from ICT Field Engineering and Communications must not be modified in any way, prior to programming of radio equipment by suppliers.
- 2.4 Breaches of this SOP will be subject to disciplinary action.

### 3 Related forms

> Non-Disclosure Agreement (available on request from the Manager Communication Systems)

### **Recording Systems**

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS has a need to record emergency related messages, which must be undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements.
- 1.2 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) sets out the process for purchasing appropriate voice recording devices, and the procedures for managing the information captured during the recording process.

### 2 Procedures

#### **Legislative Requirements**

- 2.1 Under the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979*, all NSW RFS sites where recording of telecommunications occurs must be declared an Emergency Service Facility (ESF) by the Federal Attorney-General.
- 2.2 ICT Field Engineering and Communications is the conduit between the District Office and the Attorney-General.
- 2.3 District Managers are responsible for ensuring that the location at which they propose to carry out recording has been declared an ESF
- 2.4 Once a facility has been declared an ESF by the Federal Attorney-General, appropriate signage must be posted at each entrance stating that communications to and from the facility may be monitored and recorded.

#### Recording System Planning and Installation – New product purchases

- 2.5 All new voice recorders must be ordered in consultation with ICT Field Engineering and Communications to ensure local and Headquarters server compatibility needs are met.
- 2.6 The following information must be supplied to ICT Field Engineering and Communications to assist in selecting the appropriate voice recording equipment:
  - a. Details of any current recording equipment in place;
  - b. Make, model and specifications of the current telephone/PABX system in use at the ESF; and,
  - c. Details of the communications circuits/channels to be recorded.
- 2.7 ICT Field Engineering and Communications will evaluate the ESF needs based on the information provided, to select the most appropriate system available through State Government contract.
- 2.8 ICT Field Engineering and Communications will verify whether the fire control centre is a declared ESF.
- 2.9 ICT Field Engineering and Communications will source the quote and provide the quote to the District. ICT Field Engineering and Communications will raise the order through the approved NSW RFS purchasing system and undertake all the associated processes.
- 2.10 The equipment supplier will build the system and arrange to install and commission the equipment at the ESF.
- 2.11 ICT Field Engineering and Communications will manage the recording system remotely from NSW RFS Headquarters, setting up users in the system and access permissions.
- 2.12 During major incidents, the District Manager and/or Incident Controller will ensure that all telephone communications are undertaken via recorded telephones (where possible) and that all area command and control radio channels being utilised in the Fire Control Centre are recorded.

#### **Recording System Business Rules – All Devices**

- 2.13 District Managers must ensure that all recording systems are operated in accordance with the *Telecommunications (Interception & Access) Act 1979*, the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* and any other requirements.
- 2.14 The use of electronic recording systems does not replace the need to keep handwritten logs of events.

#### What should be Recorded

- 2.15 As a minimum, a District office is to maintain an audio recording of the:
  - a. "000" (fire line);
  - b. main operational telephone line(s);
  - c. all command and control radio channels; and
  - d. all operational telephone handsets.
- 2.16 District Managers should assess the need for additional recording lines in order to provide an optimum record of District operations.
- 2.17 The rapid recall function available on some systems must only be used for clarification of details passed in a recent conversation.
- 2.18 All ESF locations must provide the option of one non-recorded telephone line as personal privacy considerations need to be taken into account. Mobile phones may be appropriate for this purpose.

#### **Device Location and Access**

- 2.19 All recording devices must be situated in a secure area, with restricted physical access (for example a secured Equipment Room).
- 2.20 The District Manager will maintain a current register of people with access to recordings made in their District.
- 2.21 The District Manager will advise ICT Field Engineering and Communications when a staff member has changed roles or otherwise no longer requires access.
- 2.22 Access to the centralised recording system located at NSW RFS Headquarters will utilise the staff members NSW RFS network credentials.
- 2.23 The District Manager and/or designated staff members will be responsible for retrieving recording(s) as required for legal or substantiation purposes. Where there is a large number of recordings required, the District Manager must identify the channel number(s), start and finish date(s) & time(s) and submit a written request for assistance through ICT Field Engineering and Communications.

#### **Storage Media and Access**

- 2.24 All recorders must archive recordings to a central server managed by ICT Field Engineering and Communications.
- 2.25 The ongoing management of the recorded data archive is the responsibility of ICT Field Engineering and Communications.
- 2.26 If access to a recording is required and the criteria set out in Service Standard 1.1.14 Personal Information and Privacy is met, it can be retrieved by an authorised user.

#### **Maintenance of Voice Recorders**

- 2.27 ICT Field Engineering and Communications will be responsible for the maintenance of the main recording system located at NSW RFS Headquarters.
- 2.28 Districts will be responsible for the maintenance of the recording system located at their District Office or any satellite office.
- 2.29 The District Manager will ensure an ongoing annual maintenance agreement is in place with the supplier or an appropriate contractor.
- 2.30 The District Manager will implement a process where the voice recorder is checked on a regular basis to ensure that it is recording all essential channels, lines and/or phones.

# 3 Related forms

- > Emergency Service Facility Signage (published by Corporate Comms)
- > List of Approved Emergency Service Facilities (available on request from FOO)

# **Operational Command Vehicles Standard Equipment**

### 1 Purpose

1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the minimum standard communications equipment to be installed in a dedicated operational command vehicle. This ensures appropriate communication can be maintained with both the NSW RFS and other agency appliances and commanders whilst conducting operational activities.

### 2 Procedures

- 2.1 All operational command vehicles should be fitted with the following radios as a minimum (as per clauses 2.2 and 2.3).
- 2.2 OCV Operational Section
  - a. Three (3) Motorola PMR/GRN mobile radio
  - b. Two (2) Fireground Radios. One of which is for NSW RFS fireground use and the other for communication with other agencies (where required);
  - c. One (1) VHF 66-88 MHz mid band mobile radio for communication with other agencies (where required);
  - d. One (1) Aviation band mobile radio;
  - e. One (1) UHF CB radio;
  - f. One (1) Cellular device for voice and data;
  - g. One UHF National Liaison repeater with PMR/GRN Link Radio;
  - h. Antenna capacity on mast for VHF Fireground repeater; and
  - i. Dedicated mobile telephone for use during operations. Glass mounted antenna should not be used for this purpose.
- 2.3 OCV Driver Section
  - a. One (1) primary Motorola PMR/GRN mobile radio
  - b. One (1) Fireground Radio
  - c. A separate car kit and external antenna for the driver's mobile phone. Glass mount antenna should not be used for this purpose.
- 2.4 All of these radios should be programmed with the appropriate approved ICT Field Engineering and Communications profile.
- 2.5 Additional radios may be installed as per local requirements upon approval by ICT Field Engineering and Communications and fitted in accordance with Service Standard 5.1.4 Fire Fighting Appliance Construction Standard.

# 3 Related forms

> None

### **Entering into Site Agreements**

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS requires multiple communications sites in various locations so as to provide the communications infrastructure necessary to support operational responses and activities. As such, a site and/or access agreement for each site is required to be in place between the NSW RFS/Council and the operator of the site.
- 1.2 The NSW RFS Vested sites under s119 of the Rural Fires Act 1997, will need to have the agreement in the Local Government Authority name where the site geographically located. These sites are then managed by the RFS under s12A of the Act.
- 1.3 This SOP) sets out the processes necessary to meet these responsibilities in occupying space on a communications site which is not owned or managed by the NSW RFS.

### 2 Procedures

- 2.1 Following identification and approval by ICT Field Engineering and Communications of the communications site to be completed, the Property Liaison Officer from Fixed Assets and Building Services will co-ordinate with the District to have a formal site and/or access agreement(s) in place prior to any site works being commenced.
- 2.2 The following site details are required in order to facilitate occupation of the preferred site:
  - a. Land owners name details (ABN required);
  - b. Lot and DP numbers;
  - c. copy of formal council Development Application approval (if applicable); and
  - d. other site occupier details.
- 2.3 The Property Liaison Officer with the assistance of the District Manager, will assist in the negotiation on behalf of the Local Government Authority(ies) a legal occupation and/or access agreement(s) with the site owner. This agreement shall be in accordance with any Service Level Agreement between the NSW RFS and the Local Government Authority(ies) that may be in place. The District Manage will facilitate the execution of agreements held in Councils name for vested Sites.
- 2.4 Once the occupation and/or access agreement(s) has been finalised and signed off by all parties, a copy will be registered on the relevant electronic document management system on the site specific electronic file and relevant District electronic file.
- 2.5 ICT Field Engineering and Communications will then grant approval for the site works to commence.
- 2.6 The District is to contact ICT Field Engineering and Communications to obtain a copy of the relevant agreement documents that are used by the NSW RFS.
- 2.7 A licence agreement, for both site and access, must be in place for all radio sites utilised by the NSW RFS.

### 3 Related forms