



COVID-19 FACT SHEET

NSW RFS Members in Identified Higher Risk Categories

Principles

- All members are responsible for identifying if they are in a higher risk category.
- Identified higher risk categories may change from time to time, based on Health advice. You should monitor official Health channels including [NSW Health](#) for any changes.
- Where a member is in an identified higher risk category, they should take steps to protect themselves from COVID-19, and take steps to limit their potential exposure. This may include temporarily withdrawing from volunteer activities or considering alternative work arrangements.

Actions and Advice

The NSW RFS has undertaken precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic to preserve the health and wellbeing of members, whilst maintaining essential service delivery to the community.

These precautions have included measures such as restriction of services to essential activities, social distancing, regular communications on personal hygiene controls, and the introduction of site and appliance cleaning protocols in accordance with state and federal government requirements and NSW Health advice.

Additionally, alternative work arrangements for staff across the Service have been implemented; including splitting critical staff across locations, adopting work from home arrangements where possible, and alternating staff between different locations.

People at higher risk

The COVID-19 situation is dynamic and there are regular advice updates communicated by state and federal authorities. These updates include information on categories of people who are recognised as being at greater risk of more serious illness if they are infected with COVID-19, including:

- People aged 70 years and over
- People aged 65 years and over with chronic medical conditions
- People with compromised immune systems
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50

Protecting yourself

Good hygiene and taking care when interacting with other people are the best defences for you and your family against coronavirus. This includes:

- covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- disposing of used tissues immediately into a rubbish bin and washing your hands
- washing your hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet, and when you have been out to shops or other places
- using alcohol-based hand sanitisers (60% alcohol), where available

- cleaning and disinfecting surfaces you have touched
- stay 1.5 metres away — 2 arms' length — from other people. This is an example of social distancing
- stay at home and avoid contact with others
- avoid non-essential travel
- consider having the chemist deliver your medicines
- consider having your groceries and essential items delivered to your home

If you are a NSW RFS member in a higher risk category, we encourage you to take the above precautions to protect yourself.

Staying at home and avoiding contact

If you are a volunteer member in a higher risk category and you wish to temporarily withdraw from volunteer activities during this COVID-19 pandemic, we ask that you advise your direct chain of command, i.e. Brigade Captain, Group Captain or District Manager, for appropriate operational management.

If you are a staff member in one of these categories, and you wish to request alternative work arrangements, please submit the **attached form** to your direct manager, for Director endorsement and Executive Director approval.

In the event that alternative work arrangements are not viable, leave arrangements (including special leave) may be considered.

Advice for supervisors and managers

Where you have a staff member who is in an identified higher risk category, as outlined above, you should consider alternative working arrangements.

Alternative working arrangements may include working from home, if that person's work can be performed at home.

Where a person is unable to work from home, discuss with the staff member options such as taking up to 20 days of special leave, or other forms of leave.

Staff who are requesting alternative working arrangements due to being in an identified higher-risk category should complete the attached form. Director recommendation and Executive Director approval is required for working from home.

Further Information

- Check www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/coronavirus for updates.

Information as at 2 April 2020



COVID-19 FORM - NSW RFS STAFF IN HIGHER RISK CATEGORIES

REQUEST TO WORK FROM HOME OR TAKE LEAVE

HOW TO USE THIS FORM:

1. Applicant enters details and submits to manager for review
2. Manager, Director and Executive Director review application
3. Executive Director submits by email to safety@rfs.nsw.gov.au

NOTE: Any work from home arrangements approved during COVID-19 are temporary only and subject to regular review for suitability

APPLICANT DETAILS

STAFF MEMBER NAME

STAFF MEMBER ROLE

DIRECTORATE

SECTION

RISK CATEGORY (please tick box):

- Person aged 70 years and over
- Person aged 65 years and over with chronic medical condition(s)
- Person with compromised immune system
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person over the age of 50

ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENT REQUEST

(please tick one box only)

- I am requesting to Work from Home
- I am requesting to take Special Leave (COVID-19)

Why is special leave your preferred option?

MEDICAL EVIDENCE

If you selected either chronic medical condition(s) / compromised immune system, please attach medical evidence from your treating Doctor, which:

- > details your medical condition(s)
- > confirms that you are at greater risk due to your medical condition(s)
- > recommends that you stay at home as a necessary protection measure

MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:

RECOMMENDED NOT RECOMMENDED

Name _____

Date _____

DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION:

ENDORSED NOT ENDORSED

Name _____

Date _____

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVED NOT APPROVED

Name _____

Date _____



When completed this form is to be sent to safety@rfs.nsw.gov.au

If not approved, provide rationale and note other controls to be implemented (e.g. if Working from home is not viable, then consider 20 days special leave and other leave as required)