



# Service Standard 1.1.28

## Injury / Accident Reporting and Investigation

---

**Date of Issue** 9 December 2008

---

**Version Number** 1.0

---

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Service Standard replaces:
- Service Standard 1.1.4B Serious Accident Preliminary Reporting (v.1.0); and
  - Service Standard 1.1.4C Firefighter Accident Prevention SOPs (v.1.2)
- 1.2 The RFS acknowledges its responsibility to investigate the occurrence of accidents and identify corrective actions. To facilitate this process, the RFS has established an accident investigation system.
- 1.3 The availability of reliable information is critical for the development, monitoring and evaluation of preventative strategies designed to improve the health, safety and welfare of RFS members.
- 1.4 Prompt reporting of injury/accident occurrence facilitates a rapid assessment of the event and assists in the identification and allocation of support.
- 1.5 Injury/accident reports assist the RFS in the management of injury compensation and rehabilitation services.
- 1.6 This Service Standard provides for a system to facilitate recording and reporting of an injury/accident occurrence, and the undertaking of related investigations.

### 2. Policy

For the purpose of this Service Standard, the term “injury” includes all RFS related physical and psychological illness.

#### **Injury/Accident Reporting**

- 2.1 The injury/accident reporting system has been developed to meet the following objectives:
- (a) to provide information on the nature and extent of RFS related injury;
  - (b) to facilitate comprehensive injury/accident related data analysis to assist in the management of health, safety and welfare;

- (c) to assist in the efficient allocation of health and safety resources; and
  - (d) to assist in the identification of appropriate preventative strategies and to provide data to monitor the effectiveness of preventative strategies.
- 2.2 In accordance with the *NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, once completed, injury reports are handled in confidence and distribution shall be limited to personnel who have a bona fide requirement to access this information.
- 2.3 Injury/Accident Notification forms must be submitted to State Operations within 48 hours of occurrence.
- 2.4 This Service Standard does not apply to the reporting of a fatality. Notification of a fatality shall be in accordance with *Incident Management Procedure 6.4.2 Notification of Fatality of Firefighter*.

### **Accident Investigations**

- 2.5 The purpose of accident investigation is to establish a factual sequence of events and to identify principal causative factors which contributed to the incident, and to make recommendations as appropriate to prevent re occurrence.
- 2.6 The RFS accident investigation system has been developed to provide a structured framework to undertake accident related investigations with a consistent approach and in a manner that is beneficial to the RFS.
- 2.7 RFS accident investigation does not apportion blame and is not related to discipline or other Service investigative processes.

## **3. Links**

- [Report of Injury/Accident Form](#)
- SOP 1.1.28-1 RFS Accident Investigation
- Incident Cause Analysis Method - Incident Investigation Guide

## **4. Who is responsible for implementing the Service Standard?**

Director Membership Services

## **5. Amendments**



# SOP 1.1.28 - 1

## Service Accident Investigation

This SOP forms part of 1.1.28 Injury / Accident Reporting and Investigation

Related Form(s) [Report of Injury/Accident Form](#)

### 1. Purpose

This SOP provides a structured framework for RFS accident investigation officers to undertake investigations with a consistency of approach and in a manner that is most conducive to an outcome beneficial to the RFS.

### 2. Procedures

- 2.1 The principal objective of accident investigation is to prevent recurrence, reduce risk and advance health and safety. To achieve this, an investigation team must remain impartial and objective in establishing causal factors.
- 2.2 The RFS accident investigation system facilitates:
- (a) a common recording and reporting methodology;
  - (b) a consistent approach to the identification of accident causal factors; and
  - (c) the identification of corrective actions based on a lessons learnt approach.

#### Immediate Actions

- 2.3 Ensure all assistance is provided to persons involved in an accident and take action as appropriate to ensure site safety.
- 2.4 Advise all known details of the accident to State Operations at Headquarters as soon as possible.
- 2.5 In the event of a serious accident, the senior member present shall take appropriate action to preserve the accident scene and secure pertinent information. Such actions may typically include but not be limited to:
- (a) restricting access to the accident scene;
  - (b) securing T-cards and resource disposition boards;
  - (c) recording accident scene (photos);
  - (d) recording contact details of persons involved and witnesses;
  - (e) securing recordings and communication logs (radio/telephone);
  - (f) securing other pertinent documentation (sitreps, weather forecasts, maps); and

- (g) securing equipment involved (power tools, vehicles, electrical equipment).

### **Determining the Requirement for Accident Investigation**

- 2.6 An RFS accident investigation shall be initiated by a member of the executive, a regional manager or a district manager and will generally occur when an accident has caused the death or serious personal injury to a person, or has caused destruction or significant damage to property.
- 2.7 An investigation may also be initiated from an accident that may have, but did not result in, the death or serious injury to a person.
- 2.8 An RFS accident investigation will normally be conducted under a Terms of Reference provided to the investigation team by the Manager Health Safety and Welfare and issued under the authority of the Commissioner.
- 2.9 The Terms of Reference shall detail requirements for the conduct of the investigation and subsequent reporting of findings and recommendations.
- 2.10 Accident investigations initiated and managed at a regional or district level may be conducted under a Terms of Reference provided to the investigation team by the regional or district manager.

### **Conduct of an Accident Investigation**

- 2.11 An RFS accident investigation will generally be undertaken by an RFS officer who has been trained in accident investigation, however the appointment of investigating officers other than trained accident investigators shall remain at the discretion of regional and district management.
- 2.12 An investigator may not gather evidence or take statements from organisations or individuals external to the RFS without express consent from the Executive, and such consent will only be given subsequent to consultation with individual or organisation concerned.
- 2.13 In respect of an RFS accident investigation where there is a confirmed or anticipated involvement of an external agency operating under legislative authority, the conduct of the RFS investigation shall proceed in full cooperation with such agencies.
- 2.14 In respect of accident investigations being undertaken by a team, a team leader shall be appointed. The selection of the team leader is at the discretion of the manager initiating the investigation.

### **Incident, Cause, Analysis, Method (ICAM)**

- 2.15 RFS officers trained in accident investigation will utilise an investigation methodology termed Incident Cause Analysis Method (ICAM). Such officers have at their disposal tools and guidance documents for the undertaking of an accident investigation in accordance with this system.
- 2.16 RFS officers not trained in accident investigation but tasked to undertake accident investigation work must seek assistance from the Health Safety and

Welfare Section prior to commencing investigative work and prior to creation of an investigation report.

- 2.17** Comprehensive guidance material on the conduct of accident investigations and the ICAM system may be accessed from the Intranet at the Health Safety and Welfare Section home page or via a link from Service Standard 1.1.28 Injury / Accident Reporting and Investigation.

### **Accident Investigation Report**

- 2.18** Subsequent to the completion of an accident investigation, a report shall be compiled for submission and review by the Executive. The content of the accident investigation report will largely be determined by the nature and complexity of the investigation with specific reporting requirements detailed within the Terms of Reference covering the conduct of the investigation.
- 2.19** Comprehensive guidelines on the recommended protocols for accident investigation reporting are detailed within the ICAM Incident Investigation Reference Guide.