

SERVICE STANDARD 3.1.17

NSW RFS RESCUE OPERATIONS

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Version Number	1.0
SOPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SOP 3.1.17-1 Rescue Pre-accreditation, Accreditation and De-accreditation ➤ SOP 3.1.17-2 Rescue Operator Training and Certification ➤ SOP 3.1.17-3 Rescue Response ➤ SOP 3.1.17-4 Rescue Operational Capability Audit ➤ SOP 3.1.17-5 Rescue Reporting ➤ SOP 3.1.17-6 Rescue Equipment and Inspection
Owner	Executive Director, Operations
Contact	Director, Response and Coordination
Approval Date	26 February 2019
Effective Date	4 March 2019
Next Review Date	26 February 2022
Document Control	Electronic - Printed Copies are Uncontrolled

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This Service Standard and the associated standard operating procedures outline the requirements for the accreditation, training, equipment and operational response for rescue related activities as defined in the *NSW State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* and NSW State Rescue Policy.
- 1.2 The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is an accredited Rescue Agency as defined in the State Rescue Policy and as such has a responsibility to comply with the requirements of the State Rescue Policy.
- 1.3 This service standard is to be read in conjunction with the State Rescue Board Policy as issued by the board from time to time. Where there is a conflict between the State Rescue Board Policy and this Standard, the matter is to be referred to the Executive Director Operations for a determination.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purpose of this Policy Document the following definitions apply:
 - a. **Accredited:** formally recognised by the State Rescue Board (SRB) as having a particular status or being accredited to conduct rescue activities.
 - b. **Accreditation:** formal approval by the Minister to undertake rescue in NSW.
 - c. **Area of Operations:** boundaries used to define specific geographic areas where an authorised rescue brigade has the authority to plan and conduct operations.
 - d. **Authorised:** those authorised by the NSW RFS to perform specific tasks.
 - e. **Authorised Rescue Brigade (ARB):** those Rural Fire Brigades who have achieved accreditation.
 - f. **Currency:** the process that recognises that a member's skills, training and capabilities are valid and captured via operational activity or skills maintenance.

- g. **Domestic animal:** an animal domesticated by humans that lives and breeds in a tame condition and depends on humankind for survival.
- h. **Flood Rescue (FR):** all rescue activities in water which overtops the natural or artificial banks of any part of a stream, river, estuary, or dam, and/or local overland flooding associated with drainage before entering a water course, and/or coastal inundation resulting from super-elevated sea levels and/or waves overtopping coastline deficiencies. Any vehicle or pedestrian access way is deemed to be an artificial bank.

Flood rescue involves the employment of intervention methods requiring specialist skills, techniques and equipment to locate, access, stabilise and extricate persons. Flood rescue is distinct from swiftwater rescue, although the rescue techniques used, in many cases, are applicable in both environments.
- i. **General Land Rescue (GLR):** the capability and capacity to undertake all rescue activities involving the safe removal of persons or domestic animals from actual or threatened danger of physical harm. A GLR unit has the skills and equipment required to undertake road crash rescue, agricultural, animal, domestic and industrial rescues and is trained in Urban Search and Rescue Category 1.
- j. **Industrial Rescue (IR):** involves the safe removal of persons who have had an accident in the workplace including factories, warehouses and building sites. It involves disentanglement from machinery and extrication from heavy machinery such as cranes. Rescue of occupants trapped in elevators and escalators is also included.
- k. **Domestic Rescue (DR):** involves the rescue of occupants trapped in or by household settings. This includes children with fingers in drain plugs, the removal of rings, and individuals who are incapable of leaving their home due to ill health.
- l. **Land Search and Rescue (LANDSAR):** the co-ordination of Land Search and Rescue for the provision of life saving assistance to people in distress and imminent danger of loss of life.
- m. **Marine Rescue (MR):** a rescue performed on open, enclosed or inland waterways.
- n. **Resources:** all personnel, vehicles, plant and equipment available, or potentially available, to respond to an incident and carry out tasks.
- o. **Rescue Crew:** competent and current rescue operators.
- p. **Rescue Equipment:** sufficient and appropriate equipment to perform the tasks for which the unit has been accredited.
- q. **Rescue Vehicle:** a vehicle that is designed, adapted or equipped for use in rescue work; and is clearly marked with the word 'RESCUE'; or is fitted with warning devices such as flashing lights, or a siren, or both.
- r. **Rescue Vessel:** a vessel that is designed, adapted or equipped for use in rescue work and is clearly marked as a rescue vessel.
- s. **Road Crash Rescue (RCR):** the capability required to gain access to and extricate casualty/ies from vehicles travelling on the road including cars, motorcycles, buses, trucks and semi-trailers while minimising the potential for further injury and preserving the integrity of evidence.
- t. **Swiftwater Rescue:** rescue from canyons and waterways where swift flowing water within banks is the norm. Many recreational activities such as rafting, kayaking, canyoning etc., take place in these environments. While operational capabilities established to respond to flood rescue could be used in a swiftwater rescue environment, the NSW Police Force has the responsibility for swiftwater rescue.
- u. **Urban Search and Rescue Category 1 (USAR Cat 1):** the capability required to provide safe and effective rescue support to an urban search and rescue (USAR) incident as a member of a first responder rescue team. It involves assisting with the rescue and removing surface (lightly trapped) casualties or deceased victims, applying basic search techniques such as carrying out limited debris removal and following safe work practices.
- v. **Vertical Rescue (VR):** any heights or depths situation where person(s) need resources to gain access to, move within, and extricate from hazardous environments utilising rope based and/or mechanical systems, in order to ensure the safety of person(s) and/or animal(s).
- w. **Victim:** the person or animal being rescued

3 Policy

- 3.1 NSW RFS Brigades seeking to undertake rescue operations are to be accredited in accordance with SOP 3.1.17-1 Rescue Pre-Accreditation, Accreditation, and De-Accreditation.
- 3.2 The NSW RFS will ensure that NSW RFS Brigades comply with the *NSW State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*, the NSW State Rescue Policy and any other relevant State Rescue Board (SRB) directives at all times.
- 3.3 Any NSW RFS Authorised Rescue Brigade (ARB) must meet all required training, pre-requisites, and certifications in accordance with SOP3.1.17-2 Rescue Operator Training and Certification.
- 3.4 The District Manager and the NSW RFS ARB must ensure that at all times the ARB maintains operational capability and will be subject to annual audit in accordance with SOP3.1.17-4 Rescue Operations Capability Audit.
- 3.5 Accredited NSW RFS ARBs must ensure that rescue operations are reported in accordance with SOP 3.1.17 – 5 Rescue Reporting.
- 3.6 Equipment and training relevant to accredited rescue operations will only be provided to brigades that have pre-accreditation or accreditation through the State Rescue Board or otherwise in accordance with SOP 3.1.17-6 Rescue Equipment and Inspection.
- 3.7 This Service Standard excludes rescue operations conducted by the NSW RFS from Rotary Wing Aircraft.
- 3.8 The Manager Emergency Management and Coordination shall be the primary contact for matters involving the State Rescue Board.

4 Related documents

- > [NSW State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 No 165](#)
- > [Rural Fires Act 1997](#)
- > [NSW State Rescue Policy](#)

5 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
26 Feb 2019	1.0	Initial release

SOP 3.1.17-1

Rescue Pre Accreditation, Accreditation and De-Accreditation

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP outlines the process for NSW RFS Brigades to achieve pre-accreditation, accreditation or the de-accreditation for rescue operations under the State Rescue Policy.

2 Procedures

Pre-Accreditation

- 2.1 Pre-accreditation is a status granted to NSW RFS brigades that authorises them to undertake the NSW RFS rescue training program.
- 2.2 Pre-accreditation is formal acknowledgement from the State Rescue Board (SRB) that the brigade can expect to attain accreditation once an operational capability audit has been undertaken.
- 2.3 Pre-accreditation status only lasts for 12 months before a new application is required.
- 2.4 Pre-accredited units are not authorised to undertake rescue operations.
- 2.5 Pre-accreditation applications for general land rescue will be completed strictly as per this SOP.
- 2.6 Prior to seeking pre-accreditation through the SRB, brigades are required to seek support from the District Manager, Regional Manager, Director Response and Coordination and approval from Executive Director Operations (EDO).
- 2.7 Once approved by EDO, applications for pre-accreditation will be completed by Remote Area Firefighting and Specialised Operations (RAFSO) and will include consideration to community risk and need, brigade capacity to undertake 24 hour 7 day per week response, and level of support locally from other emergency services.
- 2.8 The application is then submitted to the SRB through local and regional rescue committees, facilitated by the Manager Emergency Management and Coordination.

Accreditation

- 2.9 'Accreditation' means formal approval by the Minister to undertake rescue in NSW. The approval provides the authority to undertake rescue operations under the coordination of the NSW Police in the nominates area of operations.
- 2.10 Prior to seeking accreditation, Brigades are required to undertake and satisfy the NSW RFS Rescue Operational Capability Audit in accordance with SOP SS3.1.17-3.
- 2.11 All applications for accreditation require the approval of EDO and are submitted to the SRB by the Manager Emergency Management and Coordination.
- 2.12 Once accredited for rescue, a brigade will be granted Authorised Rescue Brigade (ARB) status.

De-accreditation

- 2.13 If a situation occurs where an ARB is not capable of undertaking rescue for which it is accredited or is unable to provide two competent and current operators for call-out, the following applies:
 - a. The district is to be notified by the ARB in the first instance with District then notifying the Operational Communications Centre (OCC). Alternate response arrangements are to be managed by the State Duty Operations Officer through the VKG Rescue Coordinator (VKG RCO). This may be alternate or joint response capability.
 - b. The State Duty Operations Officer is to notify the Manager Emergency Management who will in turn notify the Manager RAFSO and request the development an action plan with the goal to return the ARB to a minimum operational capability within six months.

- c. If the situation is unable to be rectified within six months, the Manager Emergency Management will notify EDO of the situation and proposed action. Any application for de-accreditation must be approved by Executive Director Operations, prior to making application to the State Rescue Board.
- d. Application for de-accreditation must be made in writing to the State Rescue Board, through the local rescue and regional rescue committee.

3 Related Forms

- None

SOP 3.1.17- 2

Rescue Operator Training and Certification

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP outlines the required training, pre-requisites, and certification for NSW RFS members to perform rescue operations.

2. Procedure

Rescue Training

- 2.1 Rescue training and certification will be available to members of NSW RFS Brigades that have rescue accreditation or pre-accreditation in accordance with SOP SS3.1.17 – 1 Rescue Pre Accreditation, Accreditation and De-Accreditation.
- 2.2 Due to the nature of rescue operations and the NSW RFS requirement to comply with State Rescue Board Policy, the training pre-requisites for members nominating for rescue training will include the following:
 - a. >18 years of age, and
 - b. completed the NSW RFS Volunteer Induction (VI), and
 - c. certified competent in Safety Induction (SI), and
 - d. certified competent in Bush Firefighter (BF), and
 - e. hold a current in First Aid Application (FAA), or equivalent first aid certification, and
 - f. have membership status of 'Operational' on the brigade register (SAPHR) at a pre-accredited or accredited Authorised Rescue Brigade (ARB).
- 2.3 Rescue training will include the following five modules:
 - a. Participate in a rescue operation (PIARO); and
 - b. Road crash rescue (RCR); and
 - c. Urban Search and Rescue Category 1 (USAR); and
 - d. Crew Safety and Welfare (CSW); and
 - e. Industrial and Domestic Rescue (IDOM).
- 2.4 All five modules in clause 2.3 are mandatory to gain certification as a General Land Rescue Operator.
- 2.5 In addition, any driver of a NSW RFS rescue vehicle is required to be certified in Rural Fire Driver (RFD).
- 2.6 All rescue training courses will be conducted in accordance with NSW RFS Training SOPs and relevant standards.

General Land Rescue Operator Certification

2.7 To satisfy requirements of the State Rescue Board, and this Service Standard, a NSW RFS member to be certified as a NSW RFS Rescue Operator must be current in the following units of competency:

<i>Unit of Competency</i>	<i>SI / BF / IND</i>	<i>CSW</i>	<i>USAR Cat 1</i>	<i>PIRO</i>	<i>RCR</i>	<i>IDOM</i>	<i>RFD</i>
PUACOM001C Communicate in the workplace				X			
PUACOM002B Provide services to clients				X			
PUALAW001B Protect and preserve incident scene				X			
PUAOHS001C Follow defined occupational health and safety policies and procedures	X						
PUAOHS002B Maintain safety at an incident scene		X					
PUAOPE002B Operate communication systems and equipment	X						
PUASAR024A Undertake road crash rescue					X		
PUASAR022A Participate in a rescue operation				X			
PUASAR023A Participate in an urban search and rescue Category 1			X				
PUASAR026A Undertake industrial & domestic rescue						X	
PUATEA001B Work in a team	X						
PUATEA004D Work effectively in a public safety organisation	X						
PUAVEH001B Drive vehicles under operational conditions (Drivers only)							X

NSW RFS Rescue Operator Identification

- 2.8 A NSW RFS member who has achieved certification and is current as a Rescue Operator is to identify themselves by placement of the word RESCUE on either side of member's helmet.
- 2.9 A NSW RFS member with RESCUE upon their helmet, who is not current or qualified as a GLR Operator may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Service Standard 1.1.2 Discipline.

NSW RFS Rescue Operator Currency and Recertification

- 2.10 NSW RFS Rescue Operator certification will be valid for three years, before a recertification needs to be undertaken.
- 2.11 Certified Rescue Operators are required to maintain regular training to ensure operator currency and skills maintenance.
- 2.12 A training schedule will be provided by Remote Area Fire and Specialist Operations (RAFSO) to the District for each rescue unit to ensure all components of general land rescue are covered in a 12 month cycle. Targeted training topics will be scheduled on multiple occasions during the 12-month program.

- 2.13 The District Officer responsible for Learning and Development will ensure rescue training requirements as prescribed by RASFO are included in the Annual District Training Plan.

Brigade Based Rescue Training and Skills Maintenance

- 2.14 The District Manager must ensure the ARB undertakes required ongoing training and skills maintenance in accordance with the Annual District Training Plan.
- 2.15 The District Manager must ensure that all training events of an ARB are recorded in the authorised membership database. Recording of these activities in the authorised database will provide necessary evidence for the purpose of the annual audit of the ARB.
- 2.16 Brigade or District based Rescue training must be coordinated by a Rural Fire Instructor (RFI) who holds a current rescue operator certification. A safety officer, also holding current rescue operator certification must be appointed for all training sessions.
- 2.17 Brigade or District based Rescue training may be conducted or coordinated by an instructor from another rescue organisation (e.g. VRA). The District or the ARB is to consult with RASFO prior to engaging an instructor from another agency.
- 2.18 Each qualified rescue operator will maintain a Skills Maintenance log. This log will record all training activities including initial training, ongoing formal and informal training sessions as well as recertification events. Attendance at rescue incidents is not to be included in rescue training records.
- 2.19 The District Manager will ensure the undertaking of a review of local rescue specific training records every six months to ensure compliance with minimum training hours.

3. Related Forms

- None

SOP 3.1.17-3

Rescue Response

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP outlines the process for dispatch and response to rescue incidents by an Authorised Rescue Brigade (ARB).

2. Procedure

Operational Unavailability

- 2.1 If an ARB becomes temporarily unavailable to attend rescue incidents for any reason, the ARB is to notify the District Duty Operations Officer (DDOO). The DDOO must immediately inform the Operational Communication Centre (OCC).
- 2.2 The OCC must inform the State Duty Operations Officer (SDOO) who in conjunction with the DDOO and RAFSO Duty Officer shall consider the circumstances related to the ARB unavailability and if required make alternate provisions for rescue response.
- 2.3 The SDOO shall ensure that the VKG Rescue Coordinator (VKG RCO) is informed of the ARB unavailability, including any timeframes of expected return to operational response capability.

Operational Response

- 2.4 Activations for Rescue are coordinated by the NSW Police.
- 2.5 Activations for rescue incidents will be received via the NSW Police VKG RCO to the OCC providing incident details and a rescue incident number. The rescue incident number is to be recorded in ICON.
- 2.6 Any activation of an ARB for rescue incidents outside of this SOP must be immediately notified to the OCC who in turn will notify VKG RCO.
- 2.7 The OCC will pass the rescue call, providing all details via the relevant district 24Hr Contact Number. The District will respond the ARB in accordance with the Districts call out procedures.
- 2.8 Where a District is a participant to the NSW RFS Central Dispatch arrangement the ARB will be dispatched by the OCC.
- 2.9 A minimum of two (2) qualified and currently certified Rescue Operators will be responded to all rescue incidents.
- 2.10 An ARB may provide fire protection at a rescue incident only where there is sufficient crew to allow both the rescue and fire operation to be performed safely. Otherwise, an additional resource must be dispatched to provide fire protection.
- 2.11 Upon finalisation of a rescue response, the ARB shall complete required post incident reporting.

3. Related Forms

- NSW RFS Rescue Post Incident Report

SOP 3.1.17- 4

Rescue Operational Capability Audit

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP outlines the process for NSW RFS Operational Capability Audits of Authorised Rescue Brigades (ARB), or where Brigades are seeking a rescue accreditation.

2. Procedure

NSW RFS Rescue Operational Capability Audit

- 2.1 The Manager RAFSO will cause all ARBs who hold a rescue accreditation to be audited annually.
- 2.2 All Brigades seeking accreditation for Rescue are required to undertake the NSW RFS Rescue Operational Capability Audit (ROCA), these will be facilitated by RAFSO.
- 2.3 The ROCA will be undertaken and reported in the form and structure approved by the Executive Director Operations.

General Land Rescue Approved Auditor

- 2.4 The ROCA may only will be performed by a General Land Rescue Approved Auditor (GLRAA).
- 2.5 A GLRAA undertaking a ROCA will be qualified in GLR with suitable experience to undertake the audit, and approved by the Executive Director Operations
- 2.6 A register of authorised GLRAA is to be maintained by RAFSO.
- 2.7 A GLRAA is restricted from undertaking an ROCA on any ARB to which they are a member.

Audit Outcomes

- 2.8 The ROCA shall have a focus on assisting Brigades in meeting the required operational capability to be accredited and remain current as an ARB.
- 2.9 The GLRAA shall complete any audit reporting, and submit to the Manager RAFSO within 21 days of undertaking the ROCA.
- 2.10 Having received and considered the ROCA the District Manager in consultation with RAFSO shall seek to undertake such outcomes in order to achieve or maintain rescue accreditation within their respective ARB.

3. Related Forms

- NSW RFS Operational Capability Audit

SOP S3.1.17- 5 Rescue Reporting

1. Purpose

1.1 This SOP outlines the process for the reporting of rescue activities undertaken by the NSW RFS.

2. Procedure

Reporting

- 2.1 The NSW RFS is required to submit to the Secretary, State Rescue Board (SRB) the following reports:
 - a. Monthly rescue activities, and
 - b. Annual Operational Capability, and
 - c. Other reports as requested by the SRB.
- 2.2 The Manager State Operations shall be responsible for the preparation of rescue activity reports.
- 2.3 The Manager Emergency Management shall be responsible for the preparation of the Annual Operational Capability report.
- 2.4 The Manager Emergency Management shall be responsible for the submission of required reports to the SRB and be the NSW RFS point of contact for State Rescue Board related matters.
- 2.5 All reports and papers submitted to the SRB must be reviewed by the Executive Director Operations, on behalf of the Commissioner.

3 Related Forms

➤ None

SOP 3.1.17- 6

Rescue Equipment and Inspection

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP outlines the equipment and inspection requirements for an ARB.

2. Procedure

Rescue Equipment

- 2.1 Only NSW RFS ARBs shall be permitted to obtain, stow and operate rescue equipment.
- 2.2 State Rescue Board (SRB) Policy requires any NSW RFS ARB to carry rescue equipment 'sufficient and appropriate to the tasks for which the unit has been accredited'.
- 2.3 Only rescue equipment approved or specified by the NSW RFS may be acquired or issued to an ARB.
- 2.4 RAFSO will provide an ARB with their initial allocation of rescue equipment, upon accreditation in accordance with SOP 3.1.17 – 1 to meet the requirements of the SRB Policy.
- 2.5 Allocations of general land rescue equipment will be entered into the approved asset management system (currently EAM).
- 2.6 Replacement, maintenance and repair of rescue equipment after initial issue by RAFSO shall be the responsibility of the District.

Equipment Inspection

- 2.7 NSW RFS approved rescue equipment must be inspected in line with manufacturer's specifications.
- 2.8 Notwithstanding 2.7 above, all rescue equipment must be inspected at least annually in accordance with section 38 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.
- 2.9 Inspections of rescue equipment are to be recorded within the approved asset management system or otherwise in the provided rescue equipment audit log (currently EAM).
- 2.10 The use of the approved asset management system and the rescue equipment audit log is mandatory and District Managers are responsible for ensuring availability, completion and accuracy of information contained within.

3. Related Forms

- NSW RFS Rescue Vehicle Checklist
- NSW RFS Rescue Cordage Register