



## Service Standard 4.1.5

# Assistance for Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents (AIDER) & Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) Programs

Version	2.0
SOPs	Nil
Policy Owner	Deputy Commissioner Field Operations
Policy Contact	Director Area Operations
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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The RFS seeks to assist residents to improve the level of protection of their residence if it is at risk of bush fire.
- 1.2. The Assistance for Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents (AIDER) and the Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) Programs are in place to provide services and advice to eligible residents.
- 1.3. This Service Standard outlines the principles of the AIDER and HFSV Programs.

### AIDER Program

- 1.4. The AIDER program provides a free-of-charge once-only service for infirm, disabled and elderly community members who have limited domestic support available from family, relatives, friends or other services to undertake vegetation and fuel management on their property, and are at risk of bush fire.

### HFSV Program

- 1.5. The HFSV Program is a free-of-charge prevention program whereby the RFS will visit a home to assist residents to make their homes safer. It involves simple but critical home fire safety tips and the offer to test or replace smoke alarm batteries. If the smoke alarms are not working, the RFS may either replace the battery or install a smoke alarm/s.

## 2. Policy

- 2.1. The relevant Area Command is responsible for the AIDER and HFSV Programs.

- 2.2. Residents and carers can apply for both programs:
- through either the AIDER or HFSV page on the RFS website
  - by phoning 1300 011 737 or
  - emailing [aider@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:aider@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

### AIDER Program

- 2.3. The AIDER Program requires an application to be lodged for the RFS to assess eligibility. It is not an entitlement program.
- 2.4. To be eligible for the AIDER Program, the resident receiving the service must be:
- Living in a residence on bush fire prone land; or living in a residence determined to be exposed to a significant bush fire threat, **and**
  - Responsible for vegetation and fuel management on their property (the RFS may require evidence of this responsibility).
- 2.5. In addition to the criteria in clause 2.4, the resident receiving the service must also be:
- Infirm, or
  - Disabled, or
  - Elderly, or
  - People who are receiving community assistance and services for ageing and/or disability.
- 2.6. Generating requests, managing referrals and assessing eligibility for the AIDER Program is the responsibility of the Area Command. Further information can be found in the Area Mitigation Crew AIDER and HFSV Manual.
- 2.7. Dual residences such as holiday homes are eligible for the AIDER Program if the resident is the primary occupant of that house and both the house and primary occupant meet the eligibility criteria outlined in clauses 2.4 and 2.5 of this Policy.
- 2.8. A resident who has previously had works undertaken as part of the AIDER Program at their primary residence or dual residence may not be eligible for further works under the AIDER Program.
- 2.9. If the living arrangements of an AIDER client have changed, eligibility for additional services will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Manager Community Risk at the Area Command.

### HFSV Program

- 2.10. The HFSV Program requires an application to be lodged to assess eligibility. This process is managed by the Area Command. Further information can be found in the AMC Manual.
- 2.11. To be able to access the HFSV program the applicant must live in a residence where they are responsible for the provision of smoke alarms.
- 2.12. The HFSV program is:
- For people within the community who are statistically at higher risk of incidents occurring,
  - Limited by available resources, funding, and operational needs, and
  - Managed by the RFS Area Commands.
- 2.13. The HFSV service is not available to landlords in untenanted premises. For landlord responsibilities please refer to part 9 of the [Environmental Planning and Assessment Act \(Development Certification and Fire Safety\) Regulations 2021, Reg 95](#) for more information.
- 2.14. Improving the level of protection for a HFSV client includes:
- Using RFS planning and preparation tools to identify the level of vulnerability,
  - Undertaking a site visit to check that smoke alarms are in good condition and working order, and are installed in suitable areas,
  - If residents don't have a working smoke alarm the RFS crew will install a long-life battery-

- powered smoke alarm as well as replace existing smoke alarm batteries all at no cost,
- Advising residents how to prepare for fires within their residences,
- Recommending ways to maintain their safety once the HFSV is complete, and
- Connecting them to local RFS programs, plans or initiatives.

### AIDER and HFSV Manual

- 2.15. The RFS has published the Area Mitigation Crew AIDER and HFSV manual which provides detail on the assessment, carrying out and reporting processes for both programs.
- 2.16. The Area Mitigation Crew AIDER and HFSV Manual forms part of and should be read in conjunction with this Service Standard.

### Conduct

- 2.17. RFS members managing, coordinating or delivering the AIDER and HFSV Programs are required to comply with:
  - Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics
  - Policy P1.1.3 Conflicts of Interest
  - Policy P1.1.4 Gifts and Benefits, and
  - All other policies and Service Standards.

### Confidentiality

- 2.18. The personal information of AIDER and HFSV clients will be managed in accordance with Service Standard 1.1.14 *Personal Information and Privacy*.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this Service Standard the following definitions apply:
  - **AIDER:** Assist Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents Program. This program provides a free once-only service for infirm, disabled and elderly community members who have limited domestic support available from family, relatives, friends or other services to undertake vegetation and fuel management on their property, and are at risk of bush fire.
  - **Client:** a resident of NSW who meets the eligibility criteria for the AIDER or HFSV Program.
  - **Disabled:** a resident who fulfils at least one of the following criteria:
    - Receiving the disability support pension,
    - Receiving any Home and Community Care (HaCC) Services for the disabled,
    - Receiving any federal Department of Social Services (DSS) or Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet services for the disabled, or
    - Having a disability as defined in the NSW *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*.
  - **Elderly:** a resident who fulfils at least one of the following criteria:
    - 65 years or older (50 years or older for an Indigenous person),
    - Receiving an age pension,
    - Receiving a Veterans Affairs pension,
    - Receiving any HaCC services for the aged,
    - Receiving any DSS services for the aged, or
    - In receipt of a NSW Seniors Card.
  - **HFSV:** Home Fire Safety Visit. This program is a free-of-charge prevention program whereby the RFS will visit a home to assist residents to make their homes safer.
  - **Infirm:** a resident who requires ongoing personal care, support and assistance because of their disability, long-term or life-limiting illness, mental illness, dementia or ageing.

- **Living arrangements:** location where AIDER client resides or any other living arrangements which may warrant AIDER services to be provided.

## 4. Document control

### Release history

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	25 Oct 2016	Initial release
2.0	8 July 2025	Relocation of procedural information to Guideline Addition of information relating to Home Fire Safety Visits Forms deleted as AIDER is now a Guardian module Update of terminology to align with organisational alignment and Area Management roles and functions

### Approved by

Name	Position	Date
Peter McKechnie	A/Commissioner	8 July 2025

### Related documents

Document name
<a href="#">Disability Inclusion Act 2014</a>
<a href="#">Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002</a>
<a href="#">Rural Fires Act 1997</a>
<a href="#">4.1.5A AIDER and HFSV Manual</a>
<a href="#">Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code for New South Wales</a>
<a href="#">Service Standard 1.1.14 Personal Information and Privacy</a>
<a href="#">Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics</a>
<a href="#">Policy P1.1.3 Conflicts of Interest</a>
<a href="#">Policy P1.1.4 Gifts and Benefits</a>
<a href="#">Policy P5.1.6 Records Management</a>
<a href="#">Policy P6.1.3 Environmental Assessment for Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Works</a>
<a href="#">Policy P6.1.4 Bush Fire Hazard Complaints and Notices incl Guideline</a>
<a href="#">RFS Standards for Pile Burning</a>
<a href="#">RFS Standards for Asset Protection Zones</a>