



Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) To ensure the ongoing health and safety of CFA members around alcohol and other drugs

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to all CFA members equally. This includes both employee and volunteer members as well as labour hire contractors, trainees and apprentices engaged by CFA.

(3) CFA members must comply with this policy when engaged in CFA activities at the State, Region, District, Group and Brigade levels including but not limited to; turning out to any incident, training, brigade and group related activities, deployment or community engagement activities.

Section 3 - Policy

(4) CFA is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace, free from the hazards and risks associated with impairment from or misuse and/or abuse of alcohol and other drugs. CFA seeks to ensure the safety of its members through identification and promotion of responsible attitude towards alcohol and other drugs consistent with Laws, CFA policies, procedures, Values, Codes of Conduct and [Behavioural Standards](#).

(5) Impairment from the consumption of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted as an excuse for unacceptable behaviour.

Workplace Health and Safety

CFA acknowledges the value of the time that that volunteer members provide to CFA. We recognise that they provide their time within the context of other demands in their personal lives including employment, family and social commitments and may be called to duty at any time. Taking this into account, along with CFA's commitment to health and safety:

(6) CFA members must not be impaired by alcohol, medications or prohibited substances (collectively known as drugs) while undertaking CFA duties or activities including training.

(7) CFA members must be unimpaired by alcohol or drugs when they arrive for duty. This means that they are physically and mentally ready to undertake regular tasking. Members must be able to perform the essential duties of their role in a safe, secure, productive and effective manner, without presenting a risk to themselves or others.

(8) Any Next in Charge who suspects a member of being impaired by alcohol or drugs must prohibit that member from any involvement in CFA activity and, if practicable, remove that member from the work environment. A member who has been prohibited from involvement in CFA activities or removed from the work environment will not be permitted to return to duty until their Next in Charge is satisfied that the member is no longer impaired.

Consumption and possession of drugs and alcohol

Drugs

(9) Prohibited substances are not permitted to be brought into, or consumed within, any CFA workplace. A prohibited substance includes:

- a. any illicit drug as described in the [Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 \(Vic\)](#)
- b. any prescription drug, other than in circumstances where the member:
 - i. has a prescription, provided by a registered health care provider, for the drug; and
 - ii. is using it in accordance with the advice of that health care provider

(10) Possession or use of any prohibited substances in CFA a workplace or while engaged in CFA activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities for further investigation.

(11) Members taking prescription or over the counter drugs are expected to follow all relevant instructions or safety information on the pack and obtain information from a Medical Practitioner or Pharmacist as to whether their medication will adversely affect or impair their ability to perform duties safely.

- a. Where that medication may adversely affect or impair their ability to perform duties safely, members must inform their Next in Charge.
- b. CFA will not request unnecessary information about a member's medication or health condition. A member is not required to reveal the nature of the condition being treated or the type of medication, only that they are taking medication which has the potential to adversely impact upon safety. The member must not attend work / undertake operational activities until one of the following occurs:
 - i. their Next in Charge has consulted with them to make reasonable adjustments to their duties.
 - ii. a clearance is provided from their Medical Practitioner

Alcohol

(12) Members must not consume alcohol in CFA workplaces or at CFA sponsored events unless a responsible officer is present who is willing to assume responsibility for:

- a. ensuring compliance with the Values, Code of Conduct, [Behavioural Standards](#), Child Safety Behaviour Statement and other relevant policies and procedures;
- b. supervising the conduct of the members in attendance; and
- c. ensuring members under 18 years of age do not consume alcohol

(13) In the case of Brigade and Group events, the responsible officer must be of the rank Lieutenant and above. A Captain or Group Officer may nominate a member to be the responsible person in the absence of a member of rank lieutenant or above but only if the member is:

- a. senior member over the age of 18 years; and
- b. is prepared to be responsible for all persons; and
- c. present at all times while alcohol is being consumed.

(14) In the case of CFA State, Regional or District events, the responsible officer must be of sufficient management seniority when considering the complexity of the event to be held. A Group General Manager (GGM), Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) or General Manager (GM) may nominate a employee member (including Assistant Chief Fire Officers (ACFOs) and Commanders) to be the responsible person in the absence of a senior manager but only if the employee is:

- a. over the age of 18 years; and
- b. is prepared to be responsible for all persons; and
- c. present at all times while alcohol is being consumed.

(15) Any member who is acting as a Responsible Officer at a CFA event must not consume alcohol while supervising.

(16) Where alcohol is served at a CFA sponsored event, low alcohol and non-alcoholic beverages, as well as food, must be provided in accordance with accepted responsible service of alcohol guidelines.

(17) Members consuming alcohol whilst wearing CFA logo / branded items of clothing (such as t-shirts or hats) or lanyards must abide by CFA policies, procedures, Values and Code of Conduct. If attending an event at a public location where alcohol is likely to be offered, members should preferably change into non-CFA branded apparel.

(18) Members must not consume alcohol while wearing uniform or personal protective clothing (PPC) in view of the general public unless at a CFA sponsored event or official external function.

(19) When attending external events as a representative of CFA, members are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and within the bounds of all CFA policies, procedures, Values, Code of Conduct and Behavioural Standards.

(20) All CFA members are discouraged from keeping alcohol in CFA workplaces, except for brigades that have a valid liquor licence.

(21) Alcohol must not be supplied or made accessible to children under 18 years of age in CFA workplaces or at CFA sponsored events by any person, including the child's parent or guardian. Consumption of alcohol in the presence of children is discouraged.

(22) Gifts of alcohol must not be accepted, unless approved in line with CFA policy.

Liquor Licences and Sale of Alcohol

(23) Brigades that have a renewable liquor licence (such as community club or BYO licence) as of 1 January 2023 shall be permitted to maintain that licence in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Liquor Commission. Such brigades may maintain their licence however if they lose their liquor licence for any reason or allow it to lapse, they cannot reapply.

(24) From 1 January 2023, no further CFA brigades shall apply for a liquor licence.

(25) Brigades that have an existing liquor licence must continue to comply with all aspects of the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (Vic).

(26) Brigades must make any documents, records or items related to their liquor licence available to CFA upon request.

(27) Under no circumstances should alcohol be sold at any CFA workplace or event without a valid liquor licence, except as a prize in an approved and legitimate raffle. Brigades or CFA members who sell alcohol without a liquor licence may be liable for fines up to \$40,000 (240 penalty units) under the [Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 \(Vic\)](#).

(28) All CFA functions where alcohol is to be sold must be conducted in licenced venue or location and be served by a person that holds all requisite accreditations for the service of alcohol.

Driving CFA vehicles

(29) All members must abide by Standard Operating Procedure 12.01: Drive and travel in CFA or ESO vehicles

(30) Any Next in Charge or brigade officer who suspects a member of being impaired by alcohol or above the legal Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC), must take measures, to ensure as far as is reasonably practical, that the member is prevented from driving any vehicle. In the event that the above occurs, an incident report must be completed via CFASafe as this may be deemed a near miss incident.

Counselling and Support Services

(31) CFA seeks to facilitate the health, safety and welfare of all members and is committed to educating, assisting and supporting members to deal with alcohol or drug related problems through support services, counselling and assistance provided via the CFA Wellbeing Support Line. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phoning: 1800 959 232.

Responsibilities

All members must:

(32) Ensure that they comply with this policy

(33) Report to their Next in Charge if they suspect impairment of themselves or others due to alcohol or other drugs while engaged in CFA activities.

Next in Charge must:

(34) Ensure this policy is known and understood by all members

(35) Take appropriate action if impairment or alcohol or drug use is suspected by members while involved in CFA activities

(36) Report any significant alcohol related issues or breaches of this policy to their Next in Charge or in CFASafe.

Section 4 - Definitions

Alcohol	The intoxicating constituent in a beverage (e.g. beer, wine and spirits).
Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)	Blood alcohol content, also called blood alcohol concentration or blood alcohol level, is a measurement of alcohol intoxication used for legal or medical purposes.
CFA Sponsored Event	A sponsored event shall have a clearly defined purpose and includes: 1. meetings, functions or events organised by a CFA, a brigade or brigade social committee 2. training courses (regardless of whether they are conducted in a CFA workplace) 3. meals provided at, or social gatherings held in conjunction with, meetings or training courses involving employees and/or volunteers. Service of alcohol must be lawfully administered and where it is reasonably practicable an appropriately licenced external party will be engaged to serve alcohol at a CFA sponsored event.
Drugs	Refers to illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and over-the-counter medications.
Illicit drugs	Any drug prohibited by law including but not limited to marijuana, heroin, amphetamines, cocaine, LSD and ecstasy
Next in Charge	The supervisor or manager directly in charge of a CFA member or Labour Hire Contractor e.g. for a volunteer this would be a Lieutenant, Captain, Deputy Group Officer or Group Officer; for an employee / labour hire contractor this would be their direct manager.
Impairment	The alteration of normal physical or mental function due to the consumption of alcohol or drugs, which results in diminished performance, conduct or ability to perform tasks in a safe and productive manner
Prescription drugs	Refers to drugs which are prescribed to an individual by a medical practitioner and normally dispensed by a pharmacist.

Over the counter drugs	Refers to drugs that can be legally purchased at a pharmacy or other retail outlet without a medical practitioner's authorisation.
Workplace	Includes places occupied by CFA members whilst undertaking authorised activities and may include, but are not limited to: 1. vehicles and tankers 2. boats 3. aircraft 4. fire grounds 5. trailers 6. caravans 7. plant and machinery 8. incident control centres 9. brigade stations 10. offices 11. training centres or locations 12. base camps 13. staging areas 14. canteens 15. workshops 16. storage facilities and warehouses 17. garages 18. toilets and amenities 19. any other location where CFA activities/duties occur.

Related documents

- (37) [CFA Behavioural Standards](#)
- (38) CFA Values
- (39) [CFA Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)
- (40) Child Safety executive policy
- (41) [Country Fire Authority Act 1958](#)
- (42) [Country Fire Authority Regulations 2004](#)
- (43) Gifts Benefits & Hospitality executive policy
- (44) Health, Safety, Environment & Wellbeing executive policy
- (45) [Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 \(Vic\)](#)
- (46) [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)
- (47) Responding to Gifts Benefits & Hospitality business rule
- (48) [Road Safety Act 1986](#)
- (49) [Road Safety Road Rules 2017](#)
- (50) Standard Operating Procedure 12.01: Drive and travel in CFA or ESO vehicles
- (51) [Victorian Public-Sector Commission Code of Conduct](#)

Status and Details

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Effective Date	To Be Advised
Review Date	To Be Advised
Approval Authority	
Approval Date	To Be Advised
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Torbjorn Servin General Manager People and Culture
Responsible Officer	Evan Townsend Manager - HR Shared Services
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