



SAWYERS VALLEY VOLUNTEER BUSHFIRE BRIGADE INCORPORATED

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

File reference	
Association	SAWYERS VALLEY VOLUNTEER BUSHFIRE BRIGADE INCORPORATED
Responsible Officer/s	COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT
Review Date	AUGUST 2021
	VICKI LORANTAS PRESIDENT Date: August 2018
Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Inc. 12 Ashstead Street, Sawyers Valley, WA 6074 ABN: 63 608 549 047	

POLICY STATEMENT

The Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Incorporated expects its members to display high standards of conduct, accountability and ethical behaviour. This policy establishes core values that underpin membership of, and the operations of the Brigade.

1. GENERAL

- 1.1. This policy is the initial Code of Conduct policy for the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Incorporated. It has been developed following requests by brigade members and the Shire of Mundaring and to comply with relevant legislation.
- 1.2. The absence of a policy specifically relating to member's conduct potentially provides the opportunity for unacceptable behaviour or conduct by members or non-members to take place with minimal consequences. Such behaviour may be detrimental to other members, the Brigade, Local Government, the community and the delivery of the services for which the Brigade exists. This policy has been developed to ensure all members are aware of the required standards and the procedures and the consequences that will ensue following breaches of this policy.

2. AIM

- 2.1 The Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Incorporated (SVVBFB) Code of Conduct explains the required standards of behavior, conduct and integrity of its members in the performance of their duties and as members of the Brigade. The procedures section of the policy describes the procedures for reporting, processing and concluding breaches of the policy.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to all members of the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Incorporated, and to external personnel working with or in contact with Brigade members.

4. BRIGADE OBJECTIVES

The Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Incorporated shall undertake the following objectives:

- 4.1. Provide timely, quality and effective emergency service;
- 4.2. Minimise the impact of emergencies on the community;
- 4.3. Work with the community to increase both fire awareness and fire prevention;
- 4.4. Endeavour to ensure that Brigade members training requirements are provided, maintained and documented to the required standards;
- 4.5. Ensure that all operational equipment is serviceable and available for emergencies;
- 4.6. Provide an environment where every individual is treated with respect, and which is free from discrimination or harassment;

- 4.7. Service the local community;
- 4.8. Work cohesively with other agencies;
- 4.9. Uphold the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Incorporated Policy – Code of Conduct, Brigade Objectives and Values; and
- 4.10. Respond to Council on operational and administration matters referred to the Brigades by the Council directly to the Brigade, and/or through the Shire of Mundaring Bush Fire Advisory Committee.

5. BRIGADE VALUES

Members are to adopt the following principles at all times when representing the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Incorporated. These values shall include:

- 5.1. Strive to keep ourselves and others safe;
- 5.2. Act with honesty and integrity;
- 5.3. Work together as a committed team supporting fellow members;
- 5.4. Put the community first;
- 5.5. Respect, value and treat others with dignity, and expect them to do the same;
- 5.6. Have open and honest two way communications; and
- 5.7. Continuously develop our skills to service the community.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1. Breach of policy

A breach of policy occurs when a member:

- 6.1.1. Contravenes the Code of Conduct;
- 6.1.2. Disobeys or disregards a lawful order (including policies, procedures, doctrine, standard operating procedures and standard administrative procedures); or
- 6.1.3. Commits an act of misconduct as defined by Section 4 of the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003.

6.2. Brigade

The Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Incorporated.

6.3. Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction. It may be general in nature or relate to actions or the behaviour of another member of SVVBFB, a local government employee or elected member, a policy or a decision.

6.4. Complainant

A person making a complaint or allegation.

6.5. Member

A member of the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Incorporated. All classes of membership are included in the scope of this policy.

6.6. Misconduct

Includes, but is not limited to, any actions, decisions or behaviours by members that breach the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Incorporated Code of Conduct, policies, procedures or other acceptable standards of behaviour.

6.7. Observer

A person who observes a breach or suspected breach of the Code of Conduct.

6.8. Respondent

A person against whom a complaint or allegation is made.

6.9. SVVBFB

Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Incorporated.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT

7.1. Brigade members are required to commit to the standards of the Code of Conduct and to be bound by the Code.

7.2. Members of the Brigade are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that:

7.2.1. Is consistent with the best interests of the Brigade;

7.2.2. Follows the operational and administration chains of command for firefighting and all brigade activities; and

7.2.3. Does not bring disrepute in any way to the Brigade, its members, the local government or the community.

7.3. Any member of the Brigade, when acting in the capacity of a member shall:

7.3.1. Act with reasonable care and diligence;

7.3.2. Act with honesty and integrity;

7.3.3. Act lawfully;

7.3.4. Avoid damage to the reputation of the Brigade or the local government;

7.3.5. Be open and accountable;

7.3.6. Treat others with respect and fairness;

7.3.7. Bullying whether in person or online will not be tolerated and will be classed as a significant breach of this Code of Conduct, the proven respondent of such a breach being subject to the Code of Conduct procedures which may lead to improvement action being instigated;

7.3.8. Fulfil their public and professional duties in a manner that is ethical, impartial, objective and responsible;

7.3.9. Not use or attempt to use their positions for personal benefit or the personal benefit of others, either by influencing others, the improper use of information gained in the performance of their duties, or otherwise;

7.3.10. Refrain from making allegations which are improper or derogatory.

7.3.11. Refrain from any form of conduct in the performance of their Brigade duties which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment.

8. IDENTIFYING BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- 8.1. All members, regardless of position or rank, are responsible for identifying breaches of the Code of Conduct and must follow the procedures described in the Code of Conduct – Procedures (Appendix A) for dealing with such breaches.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 9.1 In the event of a breach of the Code of Conduct all persons coming within the scope of this policy shall declare any conflict of interest they have relating to the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade and/or its members. If instructed by the Committee of Management or by the President, they will stand aside from the matter with which they have declared the conflict of interest.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 10.1. **All members** must not engage in bullying and report any instances of bullying.

10.2. **President's discretion**

The President may use discretion when applying this policy, and has the authority to exempt Brigade members from any part of this policy as is deemed necessary.

10.3. **President** is responsible for:

- 10.3.1. Adhering to and fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.3.2. Dealing with breaches of this policy in accordance with the policy procedures;
- 10.3.3. In consultation with the Brigade Committee of Management:
 - 10.3.3.1. Following the policy procedures for each case of policy breach and, if required, implementing the appropriate improvement action;
 - 10.3.3.2. Reviewing and supervising the updating of the Code of Conduct policy at a maximum of three (3) yearly intervals;
 - 10.3.3.3. Reviewing and supervising the updating of the Code of Conduct – Procedures (Appendix A) as required.

10.4. **Committee of Management members** are responsible for:

- 10.4.1. Adhering to and fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.4.2. Under direction of the Brigade President:
 - 10.4.2.1. Following the policy procedures for each case of policy breach and, if required, implementing the appropriate improvement action;
 - 10.4.2.2. Participating in the updating of the Code of Conduct policy at a maximum of three (3) yearly intervals;
 - 10.4.2.3. Participating in the updating of the Code of Conduct – Procedures (Appendix A) as required.

10.5. **Captain** is responsible for:

- 10.5.1. Adhering to and fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.5.2. Dealing with breaches of this policy in accordance with the policy procedures;
- 10.5.3. If appropriate, consulting with the Brigade Committee of Management regarding breaches of this Code of Conduct policy.

10.6. **1st Lieutenant** is responsible for:

- 10.6.1. Adhering to and fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.6.2. Dealing with breaches of this policy in accordance with the policy procedures;
- 10.6.3. Ensuring that all Lieutenants and Crew Leaders adhere to the Code of Conduct policy;

10.7. **Lieutenants** are responsible for:

- 10.7.1. Adhering to and fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.7.2. Ensuring that all Crew Leaders adhere to the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.7.3. Dealing with breaches of this policy in accordance with the policy procedures;
- 10.7.4. Reporting breaches of this policy to their immediate senior officer in the operational chain of command.

10.8. **Crew Leaders** are responsible for:

- 10.8.1. Adhering to and fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.8.2. Ensuring that all crew members under their leadership adhere to the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.8.3. Deal with breaches of this policy in accordance with the policy procedures.

10.9. **All Members** are responsible for:

- 10.9.1. Adhering to and fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Conduct policy;
- 10.9.2. Acknowledging breaches of this policy and following policy procedures;
- 10.9.3. Reporting breaches of the policy if required to by the policy procedures.

11. MONITORING, EVALUATION & INFORMATION

The Brigade President will:

- 11.1. Monitor the content of this policy to ensure its relevance and compliance with government initiatives and current legislation;
- 11.2. Review the policy every three years.

12. LEGISLATION & REFERENCES

Legislation

Members must comply with all legislative requirements, including but not restricted to:

- *Bush Fires Act 1954 and Bush Fires Regulations 1954;*
- *Shire of Mundaring Bush Fire Brigades Local Law 2013*
- *FES Act 1998*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*

- *Standard Operating Procedures*
- *Standard Administrative Procedures*
- *Associations Incorporation Act 2015*
- *Associations Incorporation Regulations 2015*
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*

13. PREVIOUS POLICY

13.1 This is the initial Code of Conduct Policy and does not replace an existing policy.

13.2 Formal documentation including a Grievance Procedure and a Media/Communications Policy are currently in development and will be reviewed by the Brigade Committee of Management.

CODE OF CONDUCT - PROCEDURES

A-1 PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- A-1.1 All members, regardless of position or rank, are responsible for identifying breaches of the Code of Conduct and for following the procedure to be taken in the event of a breach of the code.

A-2 EXPLANATORY NOTES AND EXAMPLES

- A-2.1 The aim of the Brigade and of all members is, if possible, to resolve any breaches or perceived breaches of the Code of Conduct at the lowest level prior to escalating through the Brigade chain of command.
- A-2.2 Note: In the following section the term “immediate senior officer in the appropriate chain of command” means the next senior officer above the complainant/observer.
- A-2.3 Example: For an operational breach a firefighter member would report to their crew leader, a crew leader would report to the 1st Lieutenant, a 1st Lieutenant would report to the Captain. In the event of multiple Lieutenants, the report would be to the least senior Lieutenant above the rank of the complainant.
- A-2.4 Note: In the event that the breach respondent is the Captain, the report and investigation of the breach shall be to and by the President. In the event that the breach respondent is the President, the report and investigation of the breach shall be to and by the Captain.
- A-2.5 Example: For an administration breach the report would be to the Committee of Management member with direct responsibility for the area affected by the breach (e.g., a training related breach would be reported to the Training Officer, a Financial breach to the Treasurer), who would then either resolve the issue and report to the President or the member submits the breach report for the attention of the President and if necessary the full Committee of Management.
- A-2.6 Note: Committee of Management members personally involved with a breach must declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest and withdraw from participation as a Committee of Management Member in matters relating to the breach.

A-3 CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Brigade operates a chain of command within a structure of operational ranks and positions, administrative positions, and the Committee of Management. The chain of command may extend to include Shire of Mundaring officers, and officers within other state and federal emergency organisations.

Situations such as inter-state deployments of members may lead to a revised chain of command being operated, and members are required to be aware of the chain of command in operation at any incident or occurrence that they are involved with. This ensures the most

efficient operation is in place and that all Standard Operating Procedures and Standard Administration Procedures (SOPs and SAPs) are followed.

A-3.1 Operational Chain of Command

1. Captain – the most senior operational rank and position within the Brigade
2. 1st Lieutenant
3. Lieutenant (in order of seniority)
4. Team Leader
5. Ordinary and Auxiliary Members

When members are attending an operation or training, positions such as sector commander and incident controller may be created within the command structure and allocated to Brigade members, those positions then become part of the Chain of Command.

A-3.2 Administration Chain of Command

1. President
2. Committee of Management members holding specific responsibilities, e.g. training officer, treasurer, secretary
3. Other Committee of Management members

A-4 BREACHES OF CONDUCT

A-4.1 All reports and investigations regarding breaches of the Code of Conduct must be conducted initially within the Brigade, members shall not act outside of the arrangements within this Brigade Code of Conduct policy and procedures document until all internal procedures have been exhausted.

A-4.2 In the event of a breach or perceived breach of the Brigade Code of Conduct the member observing the breach or against whom the breach has been committed shall take appropriate action according to the severity of the breach:

A-4.3 Minor breach

A-4.3.1 If the complainant/observing member feels able to deal with the respondent:

A-4.3.1.1 discuss and resolve the issue between those involved

A-4.3.2 If the complainant/observing member feels unable to deal with the respondent:

A-4.3.2.1 discuss the issue with their immediate senior officer in the appropriate chain of command

A-4.3.2.2 report in writing the details of the breach to their immediate senior officer in the appropriate chain of command

A-4.3.2.3 the immediate senior officer is to investigate the breach, resolve the breach and report in writing to their immediate senior officer or to the Committee of Management if appropriate or if it is a non-operational breach

A-4.4 Safety breach

A-4.4.1 If the complainant/observing member feels able to deal with the respondent:

- A-4.4.1.1 discuss the breach with the respondent(s)
- A-4.4.1.2 request that the process or action be ceased or modified to meet safe practice

A-4.4.2 If the complainant/observing member feels unable to deal with the respondent:

- A-4.4.2.1 discuss the issue with their immediate senior officer in the appropriate chain of command
- A-4.4.2.2 all safety related breaches must be reported verbally and in writing to their immediate senior officer in the appropriate chain of command
- A-4.4.2.3 the senior officer is to investigate the breach and resolve the issue to maintain safety
- A-4.4.2.4 report the breach and actions taken to the 1st Lieutenant (or Captain where circumstances warrant) who will investigate the breach and implement further action or improvement action as appropriate
- A-4.4.2.5 depending on the severity of the breach the Captain may elect to involve the CBFCO/CESM or higher officer in the process
- A-4.4.2.6 any member observing a safety breach may withdraw from participation in the activity causing the safety breach but must immediately inform their senior officer of that action

A-4.5 Significant breach

A-4.5.1 If the complainant/observing member feels able to deal with the respondent:

- A-4.5.1.1 discuss the breach with the respondent, requesting them to cease their action
- A-4.5.1.2 report the breach verbally and in writing to the next senior member in the appropriate Operational or Administration Brigade chain of command
- A-4.5.1.3 the senior member then reviews the report, discusses the report with the respondent and resolves the breach if possible
- A-4.5.1.4 the senior member forwards the complainant/observer's original report and their own written report to the 1st Lieutenant who will investigate the breach and implement further action or improvement action as appropriate

A-4.5.2 If the complainant/observer feels unable to discuss the breach with the respondent, they should:

- A-4.5.2.1 report the matter verbally and in writing directly to their next level senior officer
- A-4.5.2.2 the senior officer is to investigate the breach and if possible resolve the issue
- A-4.5.2.3 the senior officer is to report the breach and actions taken to the 1st Lieutenant (or Captain where circumstances warrant) who will investigate

- the breach and implement further action or improvement action as appropriate
- A-4.5.2.4 1st Lieutenant is to report the breach and actions taken to either the Captain (operational breach) or the Committee of Management (administration breach)
- A-4.5.2.5 depending on the severity of the breach the Captain may elect to involve the CBFCO/CESM or higher officer in the process

A-5 APPEARANCE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

- A-5.1 Any member who is involved with a breach of the Code of Conduct including as complainant, respondent, observer or in any other capacity may be required to appear before the Brigade Committee of Management in connection with the investigation and/or resolution of the breach. Failure to appear before the Committee of Management when required would be a breach of the Code of Conduct.

A-6 IMPROVEMENT ACTION

- A-6.1 Following the investigation of a breach of the Code of Conduct, for the purpose of improving the performance or conduct of a member, any one or more of the following actions may be used:

- A-6.1.1 Counselling;
- A-6.1.2 Training and development;
- A-6.1.3 Issuing a warning to the member that certain conduct is unacceptable or that the member's performance is not satisfactory;
- A-6.1.4 Suspension of membership; or
- A-6.1.5 Revocation of membership of the Brigade

A-7 NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

- A-7.1 Failure to follow the Brigade Chain of Command when reporting, investigating or resolving a breach of the Code of Conduct would itself be a breach of the Code of Conduct and subject to investigation.