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LEADERS' UPDATE

A fortnightly newsletter for Fire and Emergency leaders

Issue 03: 15 March 2019

This update is distributed on behalf of the National Commander Urban and National Manager Rural. Please action, inform and share this update with personnel.

FOR INFORMATION:

1. First Responder OSM Skill Changes
2. Health impacts when working with firefighting foam

TO SHARE:

3. Scope of Tranche 2 design extended to include the risk reduction function
4. Applications open for the 2019/2020 Volunteer Qualified Firefighter training
5. Emergency Management Systems - multi-agency or incident level
6. Carbon Monoxide monitoring at the Tasman Fire

Kia ora everyone,

Since the last Leaders' Update we've seen the State of Emergency in the Tasman Region lifted. While our operations there have scaled back considerably, we remain ready to respond to this, and other areas across the country, where the fire risk is still very high. To all who were involved in the fire and those that supported them across the country, your efforts have been very generous and impressive. My thanks to you all.

As an organisation we are now starting to look at the lessons we can take from the Tasman Fires in order to be better prepared for future events. One example is carbon monoxide monitoring which you can read about further in this update.

Nga mihi,

Kevin

FOR INFORMATION

1. First Responder OSM Skill Changes

All Personnel

KEY POINTS

1. **Consultation with St John and feedback from First responders has led to a change to the way we record First Responder skills**
2. **The four MEDFR skills in OSM have now been reduced to one skill and renamed First Responder 6 monthly skill refresher**

Effective from 11 March 2019, the four MEDFR skills in OSM have been reduced to one and renamed to **First Responder 6 monthly skill refresher**. It will have a 13-month lapse period and will be utilised for the 6-month skills refresher training.

A detailed update has been sent to Medical First Response Stations and their Officers in Charge. This change is expected to have a positive impact on our 566 medical First Responders and OSM reporting.

If you have any questions, contact medical@fireandemergency.nz

Contact: Gavin Travers, National ComCen and Medical Response Manager: Gavin.Travers@fireandemergency.nz

2. Health impacts when working with firefighting foam

All Personnel

KEY POINTS

1. **The health, safety and wellbeing of our people is paramount to us**
2. **We are taking this issue seriously and working closely with unions and associations, and international experts to make sure we are following best practice and processes.**

The official advice from the Ministry of Health is that there is no consistent evidence that PFAS (Per and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances) exposure will result in future health problems.

However, because there are concerns that these chemicals don't break down quickly and can accumulate in people, we need to take a cautious approach while we investigate further.

Current information on the health effects of PFAS (which is only found in Class B foams), is available on the Portal <https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/documents/h1-rga-advice-on-the-health-effects-of-pfas-exposure/>

We have reduced the risks to firefighters and the environment by removing from service any foam containing (or likely to contain) PFAS chemicals of immediate concern (PFOS and PFOA). We have also stopped using any Class B foam in training.

Appropriate PPE must always be worn when handling concentrates or applying foam (whether Class A or Class B).

Fire and Emergency continues to work closely with the unions and associations, and also liaise with experts, including in Australia on this matter.

If you have any questions, contact Victor Lenting, Flammable Liquids and Bulk Fuel Advisor at Victor.Lenting@fireandemergency.nz

TO SHARE

3. Scope of Tranche 2 design extended to include the risk reduction function

All Personnel

KEY POINTS

1. **We are planning the design of the next tranche of consultation – Tranche 2**
2. **Initially this was to focus on the leadership positions within the Service Delivery Branch at Regional and District level. The Executive Leadership Team has now decided to extend the scope to include the risk reduction functions at national and regional levels.**
3. **We will come back to you with next steps soon.**

As you know, consultation on proposals for the positions that would report to the DCE Service Delivery recently closed. Thanks to all who took the time to provide us with feedback. The final decisions will be released in mid/late March 2019.

In the meantime, we have been planning for the design of the next tranche of consultation, Tranche 2. Initially the focus was on the leadership positions within the Service Delivery Branch at Regional and District level.

We've had feedback that it would be helpful to bring the risk reduction functions into the scope of design for Tranche 2. ELT agreed it and has approved risk reduction to be included in Tranche 2. This would potentially affect the current positions of Principal Advisor Fire Risk Management (PARFM) Senior Fire Risk Management Officer (SFRMO) and Fire Risk Management Officer (FRMO).

We are working through the implications of this decision in terms of timings, how the design process will be undertaken, and who will be involved. We will share this with you in the coming weeks. Relevant unions and associations (RPA, PSA and NZPFU) have been notified of this decision and we have invited them to put forward suitable nominations for representative to be involved in this work.

If you have any questions, please get in touch.

Contact: Kerry Gregory, Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery: kerry.gregory@fireandemergency.nz

4. Applications open for the 2019/2020 Volunteer Qualified Firefighter training

All Personnel

KEY POINTS

1. **Volunteer Qualified Firefighter courses are now available.**
2. **The courses have been increased, with 33 courses regularly run each year.**
3. **If someone in your brigade is interested, look at the schedule and fill out an application form today.**

In 2015, the New Zealand Fire Service updated the VQFF programme to create a streamlined and practical programme. It was so popular, the demand for course spaces outstripped the planned supply of courses.

New approach offers more VQFF training

Training has been working closely with regions over the past two years to allocate VQFF course spaces to brigades needing the most support.

This has been successful to support succession planning, operational effectiveness and community response. However, we know it has been frustrating for some other brigades.

The good news is the 2019/2020 course spaces are now open to everyone and we now regularly have 33 courses each year.

Apply for training today?

Take a look at the VQFF courses on the [Training schedule](#), and fill out an [Training application form](#).

Note: Some course spaces will be held aside to support at-risk brigades. These will be managed with the support of the Region Training Coordinators.

For more information contact Brent Wyatt, Training Business Services Team Leader; Brent.Wyatt@fireandemergency.nz

5. Emergency Management Systems - multi-agency or incident level

All Personnel

KEY POINTS

1. **In a large multi-agency event we will continue to use the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS)**
2. **Fire and Emergency is now working on a system that we can use for managing our own large incidents.**
3. **Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) has been chosen as the best option for our organisation.**

In December 2018, Government agencies agreed that the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) will remain the multi-agency emergency management system for New Zealand.

The CIMS system is suited as a wider emergency management system for coordinating Civil Defence and all government responses.

CIMS review

CIMS is currently under review with a view to release CIMS 3 in 2019. We are actively engaged with our agency partners to finalise CIMS 3.

AIIMS - the system identified for Fire and Emergency incidents

Fire and Emergency needs a system for managing the incidents we respond to. We have identified the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) as the most appropriate Incident Command System (ICS) to effectively manage our incidents.

We will work with Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) over the next few months to develop a modified AIIMS model that is more suited to the types of incidents we respond to in New Zealand.

The long-term goal is for AIIMS to be officially used across Australasia from the next review, which is planned for 2020.

As well as working with AFAC on AIIMS, we will:

- review, update, develop and implement the ICS changes for Fire and Emergency personnel, and
- map out how we remain interoperable in multi-agency incidents, plug into CIMS and the CIMS incident levels.

If you have any questions, contact Paul Turner, National Operations Manager at Paul.Turner@fireandemergency.nz

6. Carbon Monoxide monitoring at the Tasman Fire

All Personnel

KEY POINTS

1. **During the Tasman Fire, the Incident Controller asked for Carbon Monoxide (CO) monitoring to be done to make sure our firefighters had the appropriate safety protection while fighting the fire**
2. **The information gathered during the fire will help us work out what we equipment we will need to protect our firefighters in the future.**

We are developing options around carbon monoxide (CO) monitoring at vegetation fires that is meaningful and informs our firefighters on the best practice to protect their health in this environment.

Use of gas detectors in Nelson

During the Tasman Fire, the Incident Controller asked for CO monitoring to be undertaken. Twenty-five Miniclip XL 4- gas detectors were distributed across crews, and firefighters given guidance on the best way to wear the detectors to provide an accurate reading. The resulting gas detection readings were then used by the Incident Management Team to inform them on tactics to make sure firefighters were working in the safest environment possible.

Next Steps

Work is now underway to develop the best approach to monitoring CO and inform firefighting practices at vegetation fires. This is being led by Trudy Geoghegan and John Rasmussen

Contact: John Rasmussen, National Operations Rural Manager, john.rasmussen@fireandemergency.nz

Did you see it? Updates from the past fortnight

News

- [National Notice 005/2019: Requesting science advice and partner agency support at incidents involving hazardous substances](#)
 - [Support recognitions for our volunteers on Pigeon Valley deployment](#)
 - [Replacement of all wooden ladders](#)
 - [Danger of exploding heavy vehicle wheels](#)
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