



New Zealand Fire Service

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5 June 2014

Katherine Raue
Transparency New Zealand

Via www.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Raue

Information Request – Conflict of Interest Survey (our reference 2014.065)

I refer to your Official Information Act request of 31 October 2013 regarding our Conflict of Interest Survey.

I enclose a copy of the survey.

The survey was undertaken by the New Zealand Fire Service Commission Internal Audit team as part of their annual internal audit programme. We used Survey Monkey for the survey, which is an electronic survey tool used by the Internal Audit Section, and costs \$300 per annum. It is used for all internal audit surveys. The survey went to all staff via an email; a copy of that email is also attached.

If you have any queries about this survey, please contact Caroline Steele, Internal Audit Manager on 04 496 3635.

Yours sincerely

Rob Pope
Director, Office of the Chief Executive

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Conflicts of Interest

1. Conflicts of Interest

The Chief Executive and National Commander needs to be assured that the Fire Service policies and procedures for conflicts of interest are being complied with.

The Conflicts of Interest Policy requires all conflicts of interest to be identified and properly managed.

This survey is to remind you about reporting and managing conflicts of interest that will arise from time to time and at all levels, and to see how well our Conflict of Interest Policy is understood.

It would be appreciated if you could take a few minutes to complete this short survey.

1. Are you familiar with the NZFS Conflict of Interest Policy POLFA 8.1 and Standards of Conduct Policy. (The Standards of Conduct Policy POLHR1.7 refers to conflicts of interest and must be read in conjunction with the Conflicts of Interest Policy)?

Yes

I wasn't but I am now

No

Other (please specify)

2. Are you able to locate both the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Standards of Conduct Policy on FireNet?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

3. Are you aware that the conflicts of interest policy applies to all permanent staff, members of any volunteer fire brigade or fire brigade auxiliary unit, temporary staff and contractors working on behalf of the NZFS?

Yes

No

I wasn't but I am now

Other (please specify)

Conflicts of Interest

4. There is a conflict of interest where NZFS duties or responsibilities could be affected by some other interest or duty that NZFS personnel may have. In other words a conflict of interest can arise where two different interests overlap.

The other interest or duty might exist because of:

- **the person's own financial affairs;**
- **a relationship or other role that the person has;**
- **something the person has said or done.**

Examples of conflict of interest include:

- **When a person, or his/her immediate family or business interests stand to gain financially from any business dealings, programmes or services of the organisation;**
- **When a person offers a professional service to the NZFS through a company, partnership or trust;**
- **When a person stands to gain personally or professionally from any insider knowledge if that knowledge is used to his or her personal or professional advantage;**
- **Where a person is connected directly with any business (such as owner, director, partner, licensee, consultant, shareholder, or as the recipient of salary or commission), which is in direct or indirect competition with the Fire Service; or operating as an independent qualified person in terms of the Building Act, etc.**
- **Any secondary employment which negatively impacts on an individual's ability to meet their employment obligations to the Fire Service;**
- **Personnel using their position in the Fire Service for their own advantage or profit;**
- **Personnel soliciting or accepting gifts, rewards or benefits which might reasonably be considered to compromise their integrity;**
- **Personnel using undue influence to gain an advantage or preferential treatment;**
- **Personnel participating in political matters where it brings them into conflict with their primary duty with the Fire Service.**

Are you aware of any conflicts of interest like these applying to people you work alongside in the Fire Service ?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

Conflicts of Interest

5. If you have answered yes to question 4 has a conflict of interest been declared and managed ?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

6. Sometimes there may be a perception of a conflict of interest where the interests come close but do not actually overlap, or where people might mistakenly believe that there is a conflict of interest.

Are you aware that it may still be necessary to take some steps to manage these situations, because the perception of a conflict of interest can damage the NZFS's reputation or people's trust in it?

Yes

No

I wasn't but I am now

Other (please specify)

7. It is the responsibility of each person working for, or on behalf of the Fire Service, to ascertain their own situation about a potential or actual conflict of interest, and declare these as required.

Are you aware of the need to declare any conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, to your Manager?

Yes I am aware of the need to declare any conflict of interest

No I was not aware of the need to declare any conflict of interest

I wasn't aware of the need to declare any conflict of interest but I am now

Other (please specify)

Conflicts of Interest

8. Individuals will always have the fullest knowledge of their own affairs, and will usually be in the best position to realise whether and when something at work has a connection with another interest of theirs. Many situations are not clear cut.

If you are uncertain about whether or not something constitutes a conflict of interest, your manager or the Internal Audit Manager will be able to provide guidance. It is better to err on the side of openness when deciding whether something should be disclosed.

Have you, or would you disclose the interest anyway?

- I have not had a conflict of interest
- I have disclosed a conflict of interest to my manager
- I have had a conflict of interest but I was not aware I needed to declare it
- If a conflict of interest should arise I would disclose it to my manager

Other (please specify)

9. Do you remain alert for issues affecting other NZFS personnel that may create a conflict of interest, or potential or perceived conflict of interest?

- Yes
- No
- I haven't but I will now

Other (please specify)

10. Do you know how to go about registering a conflict of interest?

- Yes
- No
- I didn't but I do now

Other (please specify)

Conflicts of Interest

11. Any business or personal matter which is, or could be, a conflict of interest involving the individual and his/her role and relationship with the NZFS, must be declared and registered in the Conflict of Interest Register.

Have all conflicts of interests or perceived conflicts of interest been reported to the Internal Audit Manager to enable the conflict of interest to be registered?

- Yes
- No
- I am not aware of any conflicts of interest arising

Other (please specify)

12. Are you aware that any conflict of interest must first be registered prior to any conflicting issue being dealt with?

- Yes
- No
- I wasn't but I am now

Other (please specify)

13. Are you aware that where a conflict of interest is identified and/or registered, the individual concerned shall not act in connection with that issue except with the express agreement of the Chief Executive?

- Yes
- No
- I wasn't but I am now

Other (please specify)

Conflicts of Interest

14. The Standards of Conduct Policy POLHR1.7 provides that staff are expected to refrain from allowing workplace or personal relationships to be put at risk, or to adversely affect the Fire Service or Fire Service interests, or the performance of official duties.

In the event of a close personal relationship where either:

- **there is a direct reporting relationship between the parties; or**
- **The relationship has the potential, or may reasonably be perceived as having the potential, to compromise either party's ability to discharge their duties effectively and impartially;**

the individual involved must declare a potential conflict of interest to their immediate manager.

A "close personal relationship" includes: brother, sister, father, mother, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, cousin and spouse, a short-term intimate relationship, or partner by way of marriage or civil union, or being in a relationship in the nature of a marriage or civil union.

Are you aware that if any such situations arise this conflict of interest must be formally declared?

- Yes
- No
- I wasn't but I am now

Other (please specify)

15. Where a conflict of interest has been declared because of a personal relationship, was a written plan developed and approved to mitigate any adverse consequences and to exclude the officer or manager involved from participating in:

- **Performance reviews or disciplinary issues;**
- **Future appointments or promotions;**
- **The recommendation and approval of remuneration including expense claims; and**
- **The allocation and approval of other benefits such as training and overtime for the person with whom they have a close relationship?**

- Yes
- No
- No situations like this have arisen

Other (please specify)

Conflicts of Interest

16. Whistle-blowing results from an extreme conflict of interest where an employee's professional obligation and personal ethics collide to the extent that the person feels compelled to bypass the normal chain of management. The Protected Disclosures Act 2000 requires public sector organisations to establish internal procedures for staff to make a disclosure under the Act. The Fire Service covers these events under its Protected Disclosure Employees and Volunteers Policy - POLHR1.9. Are you aware of this policy and how you can make a protected disclosure?

- Yes
- No
- I wasn't but I am now

Other (please specify)

17. Do you think some kind of training, or guidance material to ensure staff are aware of the standards of conduct expected for conflicts of interest and how to manage conflicts of interests when they arise, would be useful?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Other (please specify)

18. Are you aware that if you require advice or assistance about conflicts of interest you can email the Manager Internal Audit on caroline.steele@fire.org.nz?

- Yes
- No
- I wasn't but I am now

Other (please specify)

Conflicts of Interest

19. Please tick which best describes your role.

- CAREER FIREFIGHTER
- FIRE SERVICE SPECIALIST (FSO, INVESTIGATOR ETC)
- MEMBER OF ANY VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE
- MEMBER OF A FIRE BRIGADE AUXILIARY UNIT
- COMCEN STAFF
- AREA MANAGEMENT
- REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
- NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS STAFF
- SENIOR MANAGER

Other (please specify)

Robinson, Louise

From: Robinson, Louise on behalf of Pope, Rob
Sent: Tuesday, 17 September 2013 11:03 a.m.
To: Whole Country
Subject: Conflicts of Interest Survey

Dear all

As a public entity the New Zealand Fire Service has a responsibility to manage any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. We have a policy which outlines the Commission's expectations – you can find the policy on Firenet – <http://firenet.fire.org.nz/Policy---Organisational-Management/NZFS%20Document/POLFA81%20Conflict%20of%20Interest1.pdf>

To help you understand the Commission's expectations – here is a short survey about our Conflicts of Interest policy – please click on the link to answer the survey

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5Q3W5DJ>

We will use the results to assess how well we manage conflicts of interest.

If you have any queries about the survey or about conflicts of interest generally please email the Internal Audit Manager at caroline.steele@fire.org.nz.

Thanks for your input to this survey – it is much appreciated.

Rob

Rob Pope
Director, Office of the Chief Executive

New Zealand Fire Service

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