

Bush Fire Brigade Training Profile Guidelines

Guidance on minimum recommended training standards for Bush Fire Brigades based on Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS) profiles

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Document Control

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Enquiries should be addressed to:

Bushfire Centre of Excellence
Department of Fire and Emergency Services
PO Box P1174
Perth WA 6844

Web: www.dfes.wa.gov.au/BushfireCoE

Email: BushfireCoE@dfes.wa.gov.au

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Acknowledgement

DFES acknowledges First Nations Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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About the guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to provide a quick and easy means of identifying whether a brigade has sufficient trained resources to enable it to deal safely and effectively with the kinds of incidents that are likely to arise in its area of response.

By checking the training which each brigade's member has against the relevant profile, Chief Bush Fire Control Officers, Training Officers, Captains and local government staff can quickly identify and schedule the training that is required to bring each brigade up to a safe level of operation.

Profiles

These guidelines are based on existing brigade profiles determined through the Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGs). The five different types of 'profiles' for bush fire brigades align to the type of equipment brigades are provided with and their funding allocation provided through the LGGs, and therefore the service they deliver to their local community based on the risk present.

The five 'profiles' are:

1. Pastoral
2. Farmer Response
3. Rural
4. Settlement (Rural/Semi Rural)
5. Urban Defensive

In these guidelines, profiles which are similar in capability and risk have been grouped together to create three different training categories. The specific definitions for each profile included in the LGGs manual have been summarised in each of the training categories for ease of interpretation. More information on the LGGs, including the latest LGGs manual, is available on the DFES [website](#).

Why do we need profiles and training guidelines?

Under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, local governments are responsible for the provision of adequate emergency response arrangements with respect to the relevant situations that occur within their boundaries (e.g. bushfires). Inadequate response arrangements may result from deficiencies in crewing, training, or resourcing of volunteer bush fire brigades.

[State Hazard Plan Fire](#) specifies minimum training standards, and states that Controlling Agencies (including local governments) must maintain sufficient trained and equipped personnel aligned to these standards.

DFES provides these guidelines to assist local governments in ensuring that each of their brigades are adequately crewed and trained and in meeting their work, health and safety obligations under relevant legislation.

The guidelines also make it easier for local governments and BFB officers to identify training needs, schedule the type and number of courses that they require and support recruitment and retention efforts in their brigades.

How to read these guidelines

For each type of Brigade profile, common roles or functions within the brigade membership are listed. Some of these relate to an appointed position such as Lieutenant or Captain, whilst some relate to a specific capability requirement such as 'First Aider'.

For each role, a minimum recommended set of training courses is provided. These minimum requirements are cumulative and build progressively across members tenure within Brigades. For example, where the minimum recommendation for 'Lieutenant' includes 'Crew Leader / Senior Firefighter' plus additional training, this recommends that all minimum training for the 'Crew Leader / Senior Firefighter' role is completed first. This establishes a structured progression, ensuring capability is developed in sequential layers as members advance through roles.

In addition to specifying the recommended training courses for each role or function, the guidelines indicate the number of members who should be trained at that level. These numbers differ for each category and are based on an assumed total number of members, in turn based on the common type and number of appliances which a brigade with that specific profile is equipped with. These numbers need to be considered against the total number of members within a Brigade and adapted.



These requirements are not intended to restrict or limit access to further training. Members may undertake additional training beyond the minimum requirements, and brigades should support the ongoing development of personnel wherever practicable.

Numbers specified in the guideline for around one quarter of brigade members being available at any one time, along with considering the surge capacity of the brigade to sustain multiple shifts if needed.

A member may concurrently hold or be counted towards more than one role or function in the profile, for example someone in the '**FCO/Captain**' role may also be qualified against the '**First Aider**' and '**Firefighter**' roles.

Accessing training through DFES

All the training courses listed in this guideline relate to the DFES Bush Fire Service Training Program (BFS TP). The BFS TP has been developed to provide training programs which will enable local bush fire personnel to operate safely and effectively at bush fires and in the kinds of risk situations which would normally occur within the brigade's areas of response.

DFES provides training at no cost to Bush Fire Brigades, through a network of endorsed Trainer Assessors across Western Australia. In addition, DFES stores training records in its training management system, eAcademy, for all registered courses. To request a course or find out more about accessing DFES training, contact your local government or your local DFES regional office.

This guideline sets minimum requirements only and does not prevent a local government from requiring additional training beyond the minimum standard where deemed necessary.

Trainer Assessor endorsement

Trainer Assessors can be endorsed through the DFES Trainer Assessor endorsement process. If you are interested in becoming a Trainer Assessor, you should first obtain support from your Brigade chain of command.

Trainer Assessors are required to:

- ❖ Hold the competency the trainer is seeking endorsement in (for example, Bushfire Safety Awareness)
- ❖ Hold a relevant training qualification, which is:
 - DFES0612 Workplace Trainer Assessor (or its successor) OR
 - TAE40122 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment OR
 - TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment OR
 - TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- ❖ Have brigade, group or unit (BGU) support and endorsement of the application
- ❖ Have regional endorsement of the application (CESM/AO/DO or similar)

For further information on the DFES Trainer Assessor endorsement process, contact your local government, your local DFES region or refer to DFES SAP 6.1.H Presenters, Trainer Assessor Endorsement.

Recognition of current competency

DFES has a recognition of current competency (RCC) process, which is designed to provide members with the opportunity to have current skills, knowledge and experience recognised against DFES courses on their current Training Program.

For further information on the DFES RCC process, contact your local government, your local DFES region or refer to DFES SAP 6.1.A Recognition of Current Competency or the RCC Fact Sheet available on the DFES Volunteer Hub.

Urban Defensive Brigades

The Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS) defines **Urban Defensive** brigades as typically occurring in a town or town site with more than 40 houses, along with infrastructure such as a small hospital or nursing home, several public buildings and multiple shops, office complexes and a light industrial area.

The numbers below are based on an assumed brigade membership of 32 members, with three LGGS-funded fire appliances, typically one to two Light Tankers and a 3.4 Urban Tanker. These brigades may also be equipped with a specialist appliance such as a 12.2 Bulk Water Tanker.

Role/Function	Bushfire Service Training Program	Recommended Minimum training standard	Recommended 'minimum' number
FCO/Captain	BFS Leadership	Lieutenant, plus: Fire Control Officer (FCO)	2
Lieutenant	BFS Leadership	Crew Leader / Senior Firefighter, plus: - Ground Controller - Sector Commander - Mental Health First Aid - Leadership Fundamentals - AIIMS 2025 - Incident Controller Level 1	4
Workplace Trainer / Assessor	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter, plus: - Workplace Trainer/Assessor - Must hold the competency endorsement is being sought in and vocational currency	2
Crew Leader / Senior Firefighter	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter – Structural Defensive, plus: - Assist with Planned Burning - Advanced Bush Firefighting - Crew Leader	8
Firefighter - Structural	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter and First Aider, plus: - Structural Firefighting - Rural Urban Interface Operations - Internal Structural Firefighting Radio (Volunteer)* - Breathing Apparatus*	16
First Aider	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter, plus: - Provide First Aid - Provide Basic Life Support	16
Chainsaw Operator*	BFS Specialised Courses	Firefighter, plus: - AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws AND one of the following chainsaw qualifications in line with local government direction: - FWPCOT2273 Trim and cut felled trees	6

		○ FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic) ○ FWPCOT3350 - Fell trees manually (intermediate) OR FWPHAR3205 Harvest trees manually (intermediate)	
Appliance Driver (Light/Medium/Heavy Rigid)	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter, plus: • On-road or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) • Off-road or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) • Emergency Driving or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) • Light, Medium or Heavy Rigid driver's license (as applicable to appliance type) • Pump Operations	4 per heavy appliance
Appliance Driver	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter, plus: • Driver's license applicable to appliance type • On-road or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) • Off-road or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) • Emergency Driving or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC)	16
Firefighter	BFS Bush Firefighter	• Induction • Bushfire Safety Awareness • Firefighting Skills • AIMS Awareness • Provide First Aid	32

***Based on local government direction and risk assessment**

Rural/Settlement Brigades (Rural/Semi Rural)

Rural brigades are normally located in a small-town site with a few houses (less than 20) and very few other limited facilities such as offices, shops or essential services for areas with less than 600mm annual rainfall. In areas with more than 600mm of annual rainfall a 'Rural' profile does not necessarily have to be in a town site and is generally used where the predominant risk is bushfire with limited structural fire risk.

Settlement brigades are normally located in a small-town site with up to 40 houses as well as other infrastructure such as shops, public buildings, agricultural suppliers and essential services.

The numbers below are based on an assumed brigade membership of 16 members, with one to two LGGS-funded fire appliances, typically either one to two Light Tankers or a Light Tanker and a 2.4/4.4 Broadacre type appliance. Some of these brigades may also be equipped with a specialist appliance such as a 12.2 Bulk Water Tanker.

Role/Function	Bushfire Service Training Program	Recommended 'minimum' training standard	Recommended 'minimum' number
FCO and/or Captain	BFS Leadership	Lieutenant, plus: - Incident Controller Level 1 - Fire Control Officer (FCO)	2
Lieutenant	BFS Leadership	Crew Leader / Senior Firefighter, plus: - Ground Controller - Sector Commander - Mental Health First Aid - Leadership Fundamentals - AIIMS 2017	2
Workplace Trainer / Assessor	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter, plus: - Workplace Trainer/Assessor - Must hold the competency endorsement is being sought in and vocational currency	1
Crew Leader / Senior Firefighter	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter, plus: - Assist with Planned Burning - Provide First Aid - Pump Operations - Structural Firefighting - Advanced Bush Firefighting - Crew Leader	8
Chainsaw Operator*	BFS Specialised Courses	Firefighter, plus: - AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws AND one of the following chainsaw qualifications in line with local government direction: - FWPCOT2273 Trim and cut felled trees - FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic)	4

		FWPCOT3350 - Fell trees manually (intermediate) OR FWPHAR3205 Harvest trees manually (intermediate)	
Appliance Driver (Medium/Heavy Rigid)	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter, plus: - On-road or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) - Off-road or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) - Emergency Driving or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) - Light, Medium or Heavy Rigid driver's license (as applicable to appliance type) - Pump Operations	4 per heavy appliance
Appliance Driver (Light Tanker)	BFS Advanced Firefighter	Firefighter, plus: - Driver's license applicable to appliance type - On-road or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) - Off-road or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC) - Emergency Driving or Equivalent National Unit of Competency (NuC)	4
Firefighter	BFS Bush Firefighter	- Induction - Bushfire Safety Awareness - Firefighting Skills	16

***Based on local government direction and risk assessment**

Pastoral/Farmer Response Brigades

Pastoral brigades are normally located in pastoral areas with less than 600mm of annual rainfall. Usually there are no town sites in the response area and no dedicated firefighting appliances in the area of coverage.

Farmer Response brigades are usually located in wheatbelt areas with less than 600mm of annual rainfall. There is normally no town sites in the area of coverage and no dedicated firefighting appliances in the area of coverage – ‘private slip-ons’ are usually used by local firefighters. A Farmer Response brigade would normally have less than 15 incidents per annum.

The numbers below are based on an assumed brigade membership of 6 members, with no LGGS-funded fire appliances.

Role / Function	Bushfire Service Training Program	Recommended ‘minimum’ training standard	Recommended ‘minimum’ number
FCO / Captain	BFS Leadership	• Induction • Rural Fire Awareness • Provide First Aid • AIIMS Awareness • Fire Control Officer (FCO)	1
Lieutenant / Crew Leader	BFS Advanced Firefighter	• Induction • Rural Fire Awareness • AIIMS Awareness • Provide First Aid	Optional but recommended
Firefighter	BFS Bush Firefighter	• Induction • Rural Fire Awareness	6

Skills Maintenance Training

Skills maintenance is an ongoing process. For most people, retention of knowledge and skills declines quickly after initial training unless knowledge and skills are regularly practiced or used. The additional practice may be required to ensure Bush Fire Brigade members maintain competency across the full range of knowledge and skill sets for their risk profile.

To support skills maintenance training, DFES has developed a range of skill cards that relate to common topics for Bush Fire Brigades. The skill cards can be found on eAcademy and will be added to with more topics over time.

Maintaining brigade records for skills maintenance requires documenting all skills maintenance activities. The Skills Maintenance Attendance Record (SMAR) has been developed to assist with record keeping and support brigade officers in maintaining an accurate register of maintenance training.

It is recommended that skills maintenance training be undertaken monthly by all brigades except Pastoral and Farmer Response. An indicative calendar of training sessions, with two potential topics to choose from each month, is provided below:

Month	Topic
July	1. Bushfire Skills Card - Appliance Familiarisation
	2. Bushfire Skills Card - First Aid and Snake Awareness
August	3. Bushfire Skills Card - T Cards
	4. Bushfire Skills Card - Vehicle Checks and Maintenance
September	19. Bushfire Skills Card - Hose Drills
	33. Bushfire Skills Card - Burnover Survival Drill
October	22. Bushfire Skills Card - Pre-season Refresher Training
	20. Bushfire Skills Card - Pump Operations Review
November	5. Bushfire Skills Card – Radios
	36. Bushfire Skills Card - ComCen Radio Operations
December	32. Bushfire Skills Card - UXO Awareness
	31. Bushfire Skills Card - Dieback Awareness
January	11. Bushfire Skills Card - Hydrants
	15. Bushfire Skills Card - Hose Reel
February	16. Bushfire Skills Card - Attack & Supply Hose Drill
	25. Bushfire Skills Card - Initial Incident Arrival - Grass Fire
March	9. Bushfire Skills Card - Drip Torch
	7. Bushfire Skills Card - Hand Tools
April	8. Bushfire Skills Card - Extinguishers
	29. Bushfire Skills Card - Initial Incident Arrival - HAZMAT Truck Crash
May	13. Bushfire Skills Card - Ropes and Knots
	43. Bushfire Skills Card - Electric vehicle awareness
June	30. Bushfire Skills Card - AIMS Refresher
	21. Bushfire Skills Card - Crew Leader Initial Arrival

In addition, all profile brigades (including Pastoral and Farmer Response) should undertake a pre-season refresher process to ensure members are adequately prepared for their high threat period and are able to operate safely and effectively. DFES has developed pre-season refresher skills card (Skills Card 22) which covers essential topics such as:

- Personal Protective Clothing/Equipment (PPC/PPE)
- Safe work procedures such as LACES and the Dead Man Zone
- Bushfire suppression strategies and tactics
- Burnover survival and crew protection system
- Basic firefighting skills such as radio communication, hose drills and pump operations

 	
Bushfire Skills Card Pre-season Refresher Training	
Related SOP/SAP	SOP 3.5.10 Crew Safety at Bushfires SOP 3.5.11 Entrapment and Burnover at Bushfires SOP 3.2.4 Incident Communications
Training Product	DFES0999 Crew Protection DFES1019 Bushfire Safety and Survival
Recommended Firefighter Level	• All firefighters
Outcomes	• Refresh understanding of bushfire suppression strategies and tactics • Refresh and apply LACES principles to maintain the safety • Demonstrate a sound understanding of asset protection strategy and tactical deployment of equipment to protect people and structures • Demonstrate correct use of crew protection systems during burnover situation and discuss avoidance of burnover • Safely reverse and park vehicles considering their size and ensuring the safety of other firefighters • Demonstrate proficiency in the basic operation of a Light Tanker appliance • Display team values and maintain the safety of self and others
Timing	3 hours: • 15 minutes – Chief/Captain pre-season briefing (optional) • 30 minutes – Strategies/tactics and LACES review • 15 minutes – PPC/PPE inspection • 90 minutes – Pre-season activities (Activity 1: Asset Protection/RUI , Activity 2: Burnover Drill)
Resources	• Whiteboard