

ENG08 Bush Fire Policy

Aim	To establish and maintain a Bush Fire Brigade in accordance with Part V of the Bush Fires Acts 1954, as amended, in order to provide adequate fire protection for those areas within the municipality and to carry out any identified hazard reduction having due regard at all times for the preservation of the natural environment.
Application	All Staff
Statutory Environment	<i>Local Government Act 1995 - 2.7 (2) (b)</i> <i>Bush Fires Act 1954</i>
Principles	Strategic Community Plan 2017 – 2027 (2019 Desktop Review) Goal 04 Quality Services and Infrastructure Objective 2 Accessible and safe towns
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1. BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Shire of Ashburton Bush Fire Service comprises one Brigade whose members are all trained volunteers. Council seeks input from these members and other key stakeholders on matters relating to relating to bush fire prevention and control through the Shire of Ashburton Bush Fire Advisory Committee.

This Policy specifies when Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meetings are to be held, and the minimum issues Council seeks the Advisory committee to address.

1.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To specify a minimum number of Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meetings to be held in any year;
2. To specify what items are required to be considered at these meetings, except general agenda items;
3. To specify the membership of the Bushfire Advisory Committee and the numbers of members required to constitute a quorum.

1.3 POLICY STATEMENT

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee shall meet a minimum of two times per year with the meetings being held prior to and after the fire (April & September) season. The Chairperson shall be the Shire of Ashburton President or their nominated delegate. In their absence the Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer will act as the Chairperson.

The following items shall be considered at the post fire (April) season meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee each year:

1. The report from the Brigade Captain on the fire season activities and other Brigade related issues;
2. Bush Fire Brigade budget requests for items that fall outside of the Local Government Grants Scheme (ESL) eligibility;
3. Nominations for the National Medal.

The following items shall be considered at the pre fire (September) season meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee each year:

- a) Appointment of Fire Control Officers;
- b) the draft Section 33 Notice in regards to Fire Breaks;
- c) Capital items for the forthcoming Local Government Grants Scheme (ESL) due in January each year.

Membership of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee shall comprise of:

Membership:

Two Shire of Ashburton Council Representatives
Chief Bush Fire Control Officer(DFES Appointed)
Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers
Bush Fire Control Officers
Chief Executive Officer
Pastoralists Representative or Delegate
Director Property and Development Services
Shire of Ashburton Senior Ranger
Captain or Delegate Tom Price Volunteer Bushfire Brigade
Captain of the Tom Price PVFRS or Delegate
Captain of the Paraburdoo PVFRS or Delegate
Captain of the Pannawonica PVFRS or Delegate
Rio Tinto Representatives
(ESS Tom Price, Greater Paraburdoo, Greater Brockman)
FMG Solomon Emergency Management Supervisor

Ex Officio

DCBFCO City of Karratha (FCO)
DCBFCO Shire Town of Port Headland (FCO)
CBFCO Shire of Exmouth (FCO)
DCBFCO Town of Port Hedland
DFES Representatives other than CBCFO
DBCA Representatives

All of whom (except Ex Officio representatives) shall have equal voting rights except in the case of a tied vote; here the Chairperson shall also exercise a casting vote in addition to a deliberative vote.

Minutes and recommendations from the Advisory Committee will be presented to for discussion and referral to Council as soon as practicable after each meeting.

Quorum shall be six presiding members.

Terms of Office

- a. Each committee member will be nominated annually at the post fire (April) season meeting by the committee for Council's ratification;
- b. The Council may accept the resignation in writing of, or remove any member of the committee.

Appointment of Committee Members

The Council shall endorse the appointment of new Committee members or when a vacancy occurs in the office of a member of the Committee.

District Committees

The Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or their delegate is to represent Council, in relation to their Bush Fire obligations, at Local Emergency Management Committee

(LEMC) meetings and District Operations Advisory Committee (DOAC) meetings or other district meetings as required

1. MEETINGS OF THE BUSH FIRE BRIGADE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire Brigades are established by the Shire of Ashburton under powers conferred upon the Council by the Bush Fires Act 1954. The Shire of Ashburton Bush Fire Service comprises of one Bush Fire Brigade whose members are all trained volunteers. The Bush Fire Brigade may hold meetings on such days and at such times the Bush Fire Brigade thinks fit.

This Policy specifies when and what type of meetings the Bush Fire Brigade are to be held, the quorum required and voting rights of Brigade members

2.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To specify a minimum number of Ordinary Meetings the Bush Fire Brigade is to conduct in any year;
2. To specify what items are required to be considered at these meetings, except general agenda items;
3. To specify what type of meetings the Bush Fire Brigade can conduct.

2.3 POLICY STATEMENT

ORDINARY MEETINGS

The Bush Fire Brigade shall conduct a minimum of four Ordinary Meetings per year with at least one meeting being held prior to and one meeting after the fire (April & September) season. The Chairperson shall be the Captain or their nominated delegate. The Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer will act as the Secretary and minute the meeting. A copy of the meeting minutes is to be forwarded to the BFAC.

The following items shall be considered at the post fire (April) season meeting of the Bush Fire Brigade each year:

1. The report from the Brigade Captain on the fire season activities and other Brigade related issues;
2. Bush Fire Brigade budget requests for items that fall outside of the Local Government Grants Scheme (ESL) eligibility;
3. Nominations for Service Medals Medal.

The following items shall be considered at the pre fire (September) season meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee each year:

Capital items for the forthcoming Local Government Grants Scheme (ESL) due in January each year.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The Bush Fire Brigade shall hold an Annual General Meeting prior to the end of August each year.

At the AGM the Brigade is to:

Elect the Bush Fire Brigade Officers from amongst the Brigade members.

Voting will occur for positions in the following order:
Brigade Captain; Term 1 year.
Brigade Lieutenants; Term 1 year (up to 4 Lieutenants).
Brigade Equipment Officer; Term 1 year.
Secretary; By Brigade Resolution, the Shire of Ashburton DCBFCO.

Elections will be conducted by secret ballot.
Deal with any general business that is outstanding.

SPECIAL MEETING

The CBFCO, DCBFCO or the Bush Fire Brigade Captain may convene a special meeting of the Bush Fire Brigade if requested by an Active Brigade Member or when required due to a vacancy in the Officer Group.

OFFICERS GROUP MEETING

The Bush Fire Brigade Officers Group may hold meetings on such days and at such times it thinks fit to streamline line Brigade management and facilitate Brigade communication with key stakeholders. A report in the form of an email or discussion at the next Ordinary Meeting must be provided to all Bush Fire Brigade members.

2.6 QUORUM

The quorum for a meeting of a Brigade is at least 6 of the number of voting members of that Brigade. No business is to be transacted at a meeting of the Bush Fire Brigade unless a quorum of Brigade members is present in person or by authorised proxy.

2.7 VOTING

Each member is allowed one vote at a meeting of the Bush Fire Brigade. If a voting member is unable to attend a meeting they may lodge an absentee vote or nominate another member as their proxy.

If the meeting Chair is willing to accept electronic lodgement, an absentee vote may be emailed to the meeting Chair. The absentee voter must be aware of the reduced confidentiality of this method.

2. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

DFES has a set of Standard Operating Procedures relevant to the everyday operation of Bush Fire Brigades. The Standard Operating Procedures have been widely accepted and adopted by most local governments in Western Australia.

3.2 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Policy is to adopt DFES Standard Operating Procedures as Council's Bush Fire Brigades Standard Operating Procedures.

3.3 POLICY STATEMENT

That the Shire of Ashburton adopts the Standard Operating Procedures relating to Brigades and Local Authorities as outlined in the DFES Standard Operating Procedures applicable to Bush Fire Fighting and Incident Control as Council's Bush Fire Brigades Standard Operating Procedures.

3. BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

3.4 INTRODUCTION

Within the Bushfire Brigades, there are various officers appointed by Council to undertake various roles and responsibilities. The persons occupying these positions, although

volunteers, are nonetheless officers of the Council and are appointed by the Council (under section 38 of the Bush Fires Act 1954) upon their nomination by the Brigade and endorsement by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee.

This policy provides the eligibility criteria for a person to be appointed as a Bush Fire Control Officer.

4.2 OBJECTIVE

1. All Officers of the Bush Fire Brigade will be Authorised as Fire Control Officers for the Shire of Ashburton
2. To ensure that a person has the relevant qualifications necessary to hold the position of Fire Control Officer;
3. To ensure that these qualifications are maintained by the appointed Bush Fire Control Officer.

4.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. To be eligible for appointment as a Bush Fire Control Officer a person must have completed the Bush Fire Control Officer Training Program;
2. Notwithstanding Item 1 above, a person will be eligible for appointment as a Bush Fire Control Officer if they complete the Bush Fire Control Officer Training Program within 12 months of appointment;
3. For a person to continue as a Bush Fire Control Officer they must complete the Bush Fire Control Officers Course or a Refresher Course at intervals of no more than every 2 years;
4. Yearly notification is made to Council of Brigade Officers to be appointed as Fire Control Officers;
5. A Fire Control Officer shall not issue a Permit to Burn without consultation from the Chief or Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

5. AUTHORITY OF CHIEF & DEPUTY BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the Shire of Ashburton Fire Services, a formal hierarchy exists in accordance with the Bush Fires Act 1954 to provide a chain of command at multi brigade incidents. The two most senior positions are those of Chief and Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. In accordance with the Pilbara MOU Management and Control of Bush Fire Brigades and Emergency Services in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia, the FES Commissioner will delegate the role of CBFCO to a DFES Officer within the Pilbara Region.

This Policy recognises the need for the Chief and Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer to act quickly in an emergency wild fire situation where that wild fire is beyond the resources of the Shire of Ashburton Fire Services.

5.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To specify which persons may incur expenses on behalf of Council;
2. To specify the extent of the authority to expend Council funds.

5.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and Captain plus First, Second, Third and Fourth Lieutenants of the Tom Price Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade are authorised to engage contractors or incur expenses of up to \$2,499 on behalf of Council;

6. FIREBREAK ORDER – EXEMPTIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the provisions of Section 33 of the Bush Fires Act 1954, the Shire of Ashburton adopts an annual Firebreak Notice specifying the minimum standards of fire prevention measures to be undertaken by land owners.

For varying reasons of terrain, natural water courses, stands of significant vegetation or other reasons, it may not be possible or desirable for the land owner to meet Councils requirements.

In order to avoid receiving an infringement notice for failing to comply with the requirements of the Firebreak Order, the land owner, in accordance with the Order, needs to obtain the approval of the Shire for an exemption from, the requirements of the Order. This Policy is intended to provide a procedure to deal with applications for firebreak exemptions to the annual Firebreak Order.

6.2 OBJECTIVE

To specify which persons are authorised to approve applications for firebreak exemptions and variations to the annual Firebreak Order.

6.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Chief Executive Officer or Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer are authorised to approve or refuse applications made for Firebreak Order exemptions;
2. Exemptions so granted shall be issued in writing by the Shire of Ashburton for a period of no more than 3 years.

7. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire brigades are created by Council pursuant to Section 41 of the Bush Fires Act 1954. In accordance with the MOU with DFES Brigades in the Shire of Ashburton, are under the control of DFES, DFES has a duty of care to Brigade members to ensure that they are suitably equipped and protected to carry out their roles as fire fighters.

This Policy provides for the issue of personal protective equipment to brigade members.

7.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To specify what personal protective equipment will be supplied by DFES
2. DFES will specify when brigade members can wear the personal protective equipment in accordance with DFES SOP's;

7.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. DFES shall issue all volunteers with DFES approved Level 1 Personal Protective Equipment consisting of:
 - a. Level 1 Tunic;
 - b. Level 1 Trousers;
 - c. Level 1 Helmet;
 - d. Level 1 Gloves;
 - e. Bush Fire Boots;

- f. Level 1 Tee Shirt 100% Cotton;
- g. Baseball Style Cap
- h. Wide Brim Sun Hat
- i. Goggles
- j. Appropriate facemasks for the undertaking of Bush Fire Suppression.

The PPE kit remains the property of the Shire of Ashburton at all times. Upon termination or resignation from the Brigade, all kit must be returned to the Brigade for re-issue to other active members. Failure to return the kit to the Brigade will result in the issue of an invoice for the replacement cost of a new kit.

Failure to pay for or return the issued PPE will result in legal action being undertaken by the

Shire of Ashburton to recover the items or replacement costs. All members are responsible for the care and maintenance of all PPE issued to them.

2. Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or Captain shall require that a brigade member completes the attached form acknowledging that they have received the personal protective equipment and that they undertake to return the equipment if they cease to be an active member of the Brigade. Personal Protective Equipment shall only be worn at fire incidents and bona fide Brigade activities

8. FIRE APPLIANCES – REPAIRS, and SERVICING

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire brigades are created by Council pursuant to Section 41 of the Bush Fires Act 1954. In accordance with the MOU with DFES, brigades in the Shire of Ashburton are under the control of DFES, a duty of care to Brigade members to ensure that all equipment provided for Brigade use is maintained to the correct standard and that any modifications do not compromise the operational safety of the equipment.

8.2 VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

In line with the MOU and Concept of Operations for the MOU, if the Shire elects to transfer responsibility to DFES for vehicle maintenance and repair, the approved vehicles will be incorporated in the DFES's fleet and maintenance schedule and services via DFES Service providers.

8.3 VEHICLE REGISTRATION

As per item 5.5 of the MOU, all appliances, equipment and apparatus of the bush fire brigade will remain the property of the Shire of Ashburton. As such, vehicles will continue to be registered by the Shire of Ashburton with costs reimbursed from the Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS) funds on DFES' receipt of an invoice from the Shire of Ashburton.

9. DUTIES OF RANGERS AT FIRES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Section 38(1) of the Bush Fires Act 1954 Shire of Ashburton Rangers may be appointed as authorised Fire Control Officers.

It is the function of Volunteer Bush Fire brigades to suppress wild fires within the Shire of Ashburton. However, in performing this function, the Officer in control of the fire may enlist other services or agencies as required.

This policy seeks to specify when the Shire Rangers are requested by the Incident Controller or Chief Executive Officer or delegate to attend fire emergencies and the role of that officer at same.

9.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To specify when the Shire Ranger are to attend fire services incidents;
2. To specify the Shire Ranger's role at fire services incidents.

9.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Shire Rangers shall attend fire emergencies only at the request of the Incident Controller or Chief Executive Officer or delegate;
2. At fire emergencies the role of the Shire Ranger is to:
 - a) assist the Incident Controller in establishing a forward control point;
 - b) provide essential communications assistance;
 - c) provide forward reconnaissance;
 - d) provide the Incident Controller with logistical support.

10. HAZARD REDUCTION WITHIN THE GAZETTED TOWNSITES

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The Shire of Ashburton is responsible for the reduction of fire hazards on land under its control. This land includes road and drainage reserves as well as public open space. This Policy provides for the burning of road and drainage reserves within the Shire of Ashburton for fire hazard reduction and maintenance purposes.

10.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To specify who can conduct burning on road and drainage reserves under the care, control and maintenance of the Shire of Ashburton;
2. To ensure that persons involved in burning are trained to do so, in a safe manner;
3. To ensure that adequate appliances and/or machinery are available to facilitate the safe burning of road and drainage reserves.

10.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. All hazard reduction burns identified within the Shire of Ashburton Townsites are to be carried out in consultation with the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the Captain of the Private Fire and Rescue Service Brigades in Tom Price, Paraburdoo and Pannawonica and the Manager of the Onslow Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services Unit;
2. Officers so authorised by Council shall issue permits to burn verge/drainage reserves to the following organisations only:
 - a. Private Fire and Rescue Service Brigades in Tom Price, Paraburdoo and Pannawonica and the Onslow Volunteer Emergency Services Unit.
 - b. Council's Bush Fire Brigades;
3. A Fire Control Officer shall not issue a Permit to Burn without consultation from the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer;
4. The Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer shall be notified of a burn under this Policy.

11. FIRES OUTSIDE THE SHIRE OF ASHBURTON

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire brigades across the region operate in an environment of “mutual support”, where Brigades in areas not under immediate threat from wild fire will assist at incidents which are beyond the capacity of the controlling agency.

This Policy recognises the need for the Shire of Ashburton to be able to assist other local authorities and emergency services where they request our assistance with an incident that is outside of the local government area of the Shire of Ashburton.

11.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To specify that the Shire of Ashburton is available to assist at incidents outside of the Shire of Ashburton;
2. To specify which officers are delegated to approve the response of Shire of Ashburton to incidents outside of the Shire of Ashburton.

11.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. A Bush Fire Brigade shall not attend an incident outside of the Shire of Ashburton unless their response is authorised by the Chief or Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer;
2. The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer shall be notified as soon as a fire appliance is dispatched to an out of district fire.

12. USE OF COUNCIL PLANT – FIRE EMERGENCIES

12.1 INTRODUCTION

It is the function of Volunteer Bush Fire brigades to suppress wild fires within the Shire of Ashburton. However, in performing this function, the Officer in control of the fire may enlist other services or agencies as required

This Policy provides that Council plant may be used to assist at an incident and specifies which officers can approve the use of the plant.

12.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To specify when plant may be used at a fire emergency;
2. To specify which employees can authorize the use of Council Plant at fire emergencies;
3. To specify that plant operators have a minimum level of training before attending fire service incidents/civil emergencies;
4. To specify who will be responsible for costs associated with the use of Council plant at fire emergencies.

12.3 POLICY STATEMENT

The Shire of Ashburton, where practicable, shall make its plant available for use at fire emergencies.

Council Employees authorised to permit the use of Council plant at fire services incidents/civil emergencies are:

1. Chief Executive Officer;
2. Chief/Deputy Chief Bush Fire Officer;
3. Director Infrastructure Services;
4. Director Property and Development Services

5. Brigade Officers.

Council employees operating the plant shall have completed introduction to Bush Fire Fighting.

Where Council plant is utilised in accordance with Part 1 above, expenses are to be met by Council unless the expenses can be recovered by insurance procedures or Bush Fire Financial Assistance (DFES SAP 3.1.A) as approved by DFES Operations Command Pilbara

13. TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire brigades are created by Council pursuant to Section 41 of the Bush Fires Act 1954. As Brigades are under the control of the Shire of Ashburton, the Shire has a duty of care to Brigade members to ensure that they are suitably equipped and trained for their task. This Policy is to ensure that volunteer fire fighters are properly trained by making available suitable venues, catering and by encouraging fire fighters to attend courses.

13.2 OBJECTIVE

1. Chief Bush Fire Control Officer coordinates all training requirements;
2. To make available suitable venues for training; and
3. To specify when catering will be organised for course participants.

13.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Shire of Ashburton shall make available, any suitable venue for the training of fire fighters;
2. It shall be the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control to arrange for the booking of such venues;
3. DFES shall pay via Emergency Services Levy and or annual budget allocation for catering at courses that are organized.
4. The Chief Bush Fire Control shall make available to all Brigades within the Shire of Ashburton notices of upcoming training courses and encourage suitable candidates to attend these courses.

14. FIRE FIGHTERS MEALS – FIRE SERVICES INCIDENTS

14.1 INTRODUCTION

At incidents of major fires, the welfare, including sustenance, of fire fighters must be considered and planned for.

This policy seeks to specify where and when meals will be provided to personnel present at fire services incidents.

14.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To make available suitable meals and catering for persons attending fire services incidents;
2. To provide guidelines as to when meals will be made available; and
3. To specify who is authorised to incur expenditure in this regard.

15. USE OF FUEL CARDS BY BUSH FIRE BRIGADES

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire Brigade appliances are provided by the Shire of Ashburton and maintained by DFES. As part of the maintenance of these appliances, Fuel Cards are issued to bush fire brigades for:

1. Purchase of fuel and oil appropriate to the fire appliance

15.2 OBJECTIVE

To ensure the secure and proper use of fuel cards by bush fire brigade personnel.

15.3 POLICY STATEMENT

DFES shall issue a fuel card for each Bush Fire Brigade appliance provided by the Shire of Ashburton, for use in the following manner:

1. Fuel cards are specific to each fire appliance and as such are to be kept on the relevant fire appliance in a secure place at all times;
2. The fuel card must be presented to the cashier when a purchase is made. It is incumbent on the person signing the receipt to ensure that details of the purchase are correct;
3. If at any time a fuel card is found to be missing or stolen, it must immediately be reported to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer so that the fuel card can be cancelled. In this instance it would be helpful if an approximate date of the loss/theft of the fuel card could be reported;
4. If a purchase is attempted that is not a valid type of expenditure for that card the purchase will be rejected. Misuse of the fuel cards will render the offender liable to disciplinary and/or legal action.

16. MINIMUM DRIVER TRAINING - SHIRE FIRE APPLIANCES

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire brigades are created by Council pursuant to Section 41 of the Bush Fires Act 1954. In accordance with the MOU with DFES Brigades in the Shire of Ashburton are under the control of DFES, DFES has a duty of care to Brigade members to ensure that they are suitably trained to carry out their roles as fire fighters.

This Policy has been developed to recognise potential duty of care issues in relation to the training standards of persons who are required to operate Shire of Ashburton Fire Appliances

16.2 OBJECTIVE

The driver of any Council fire Fighting appliances will hold a current driver's license appropriate for the appliance being driven and be either:

1. A Shire employee;
2. A registered member of a Volunteer Fire Brigade;
Any person instructed by the Chief Bush Fire Brigade Control Officer, Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer or the Captain of the Bush Fire Brigade or Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or any other authorized person.
3. The objective of this Policy is to specify a minimum training standard for all drivers of Shire of Ashburton Fire Appliances.

16.3 DEFINITIONS

In this Policy, unless the contrary appears:

“approved driving course” means Drive Vehicles Under Operational Conditions DFES Introduction to Driving or equivalent.

“authorised training” means driver training on appliances that is conducted and supervised by a brigade officer or training officer, who has completed an approved driving course.

“learner driver” means a driver who is issued with a learners permit under Section 48C of the Road Traffic Act 1974.

“probationary driver” means a driver who is issued with a probationary license under Section 45 of the Road Traffic Act 1974.

“volunteer firefighter” means a registered member of a bush fire brigade formed under the Bush Fires Act 1954 and includes any bush fire control officer, officer, office bearer, firefighter, probationary firefighter, probationary firefighter and auxiliary member of a brigade.

16.4 POLICY STATEMENT

1. A volunteer firefighter shall not drive any fire appliance owned by the Shire of Ashburton in an emergency situation unless they have completed an approved driving course;
2. Other Brigade members may drive appliances in non-emergency situations subject to their holding the necessary motor vehicle driver's license

17. USE OF BRIGADE APPLIANCES

17.1 INTRODUCTION

Council provides appliances to Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades for the protection of property and the community in the event of fire. The immediate availability of these appliances, subject to maintenance down time, for the purpose for which they are provided, is essential for Brigades to carry out their commitment to the community

17.2 OBJECTIVE

To stipulate the use which may be made of Council owned fire appliances thus ensuring the appliance is available for the purpose for which it was provided.

17.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. To ensure that Bush Fire Brigade appliances provided by Council are readily available, the following uses only will be permitted:
 - a. Attending call outs to wild fires;
 - b. Carrying out hazard reduction burning;
 - c. Brigade training activities;
 - d. Travel associated with approved training outside the Shire of Ashburton
 - e. Travel associated directly with refuelling or vehicle maintenance;
 - f. A 30 minute maintenance run, twice a month, during the off fire season.
2. Any use of a Brigade Appliance for a purpose other than that described in Part 1 above shall only occur if approved by the Brigade Captain or Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or any other authorised persons.

18. PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR BUSH FIRE BRIGADES

18.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire Brigades are established by the Shire of Ashburton under powers conferred upon the Council by the *Bush Fires Act 1954*. In accordance with the MOU with DFES Brigades in the Shire of Ashburton are under the control of DFES. It is the responsibility of DFES to ensure the Brigades are provided with the level of equipment necessary to, and suitable for, the performance of their roles.

18.2 OBJECTIVE

To ensure that any equipment/appliances purchased:

1. Is suited to the task for which it is intended;
2. Has the endorsement of the Shire of Ashburton Bush Fire Advisory Committee; and
3. Is in the best interests of the Shire of Ashburton Emergency Services as a whole.

18.3 POLICY STATEMENT

For the purposes of this policy, grant funds also includes corporate sponsorship.

1. Individual Brigades, or members thereof, shall not apply for funding or purchase firefighting equipment or appliances;
2. In order that grant funds may be pursued for the best overall strategic benefit of the Shire of Ashburton Bush Fire Brigades and grant funds will only be applied for by the Shire;
3. Any equipment/appliances required by Bush Fire brigades will only be purchased on behalf of the Brigade DFES;
4. Equipment will not be purchased, other than to replace an existing item, unless the Bush Fire Advisory Committee has determined:
 - a. the need to purchase the item
 - b. the item meets all current DFES standards
 - c. provision for the insurance/maintenance of the item can be made within the existing operating budgets.

19 MEMBERSHIP

19.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire brigades are created by Council pursuant to Section 41 of the Bush Fires Act 1954. In accordance with the MOU with DFES Brigades in the Shire of Ashburton are under the control of DFES, DFES a duty of care to Brigade members and prospective members to ensure that they are suitable to the for role of a Volunteer Bush Fire Fighter

19.2 OBJECTIVE

The intent of this policy is to mutually determine the prospective volunteers or the Bush Fire Brigades suitability for an ongoing relationship and define the minimum requirements for members to retain their membership with the Bush Fire Brigade

19.3 APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

A person applying to join a Bush Fire Brigade must attend a minimum of 3 meetings of that Bush Fire Brigade. The applicant must then obtain a Criminal History Check in accordance with Policy 20. The applicant will then be eligible for basic training

The Officer Group may vary the required number of meetings a prospective member is required to attend at their discretion

19.4 CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. The requirement to serve a probationary period and determine its length, being not more than 12 months;
2. Any additional procedures that may be employed by the Brigade prior to approval of an application for membership. Such procedures will include, but are not limited to, a Criminal History Check;
3. The Brigade is to act within the parameters of this policy in determining applications for membership.

19.5 AGE LIMITS

The minimum age for any member, is 16 years. There is no maximum age limit, however the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer may require any member to obtain a medical clearance if he or she has genuine concerns about the member's general fitness for duty.

19.6 MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

A registration form must be completed for every new member, change of member information or termination of member, with a copy provided to DFES within 14 days of a decision.

19.7 SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership of a Brigade may be suspended at any time if, in the opinion of the Brigade Officers, the CBFCO or the Shire of Ashburton CEO, circumstances warrant suspending the member.

The period of suspension shall be at the discretion of the Brigade Officers, the CBFCO or the Shire of Ashburton

The suspension may be from all or part of the member's responsibilities.

Upon expiry of the period of suspension the Brigade Officers, the CBFCO or the Shire of Ashburton CEO may:

1. Extend the period of suspension;
2. Terminate the membership; or
3. Reinstatement the member.

19.8 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership of a Brigade terminates if the member:

1. Gives written notice of resignation to the Brigade;
2. Is, on medical advice, permanently incapacitated by mental or physical ill health, to such a degree that they cannot perform their duties;
3. Is dismissed by the Brigade;
4. Fails to meet commitments subject to this Policy;
5. Is deceased.

All Brigade property is to be returned to the Brigade within two weeks of termination or an invoice may be sent to the terminated member to recover cost for all equipment issued. The Brigade Officers, the CBFCO or the Shire of Ashburton CEO may terminate a person's membership if that member has been found to have committed:

1. A serious breach of Brigade discipline or policy;
2. Theft of Brigade materials or equipment;
3. Any action with intent to harm the Brigade; or
4. Any action that has harmed the public standing and good name of the Brigade or the Shire of Ashburton

19.9 MEMBER HAS RIGHT OF DEFENCE

A Brigade member is not to be dismissed without being given the opportunity to meet with the Brigade Officers, the CBFCO or the Shire of Ashburton and answer any allegations which might give grounds for dismissal. The member has the right to be accompanied or represented by a support person of their choice

19.10 OBJECTION RIGHTS

A person whose application for membership is refused, membership is terminated or membership is suspended has the right of objection to the Council, which may dispose of the objection by:

1. Dismissing the objection;
2. Varying the decision objected to;

3. Revoking the decision objected to, with or without substituting for it another decision;
or
4. Referring the matter, with or without directions, for another decision by the Brigade.

19.11 GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Brigades should refer to the local government's current grievance procedure to ensure fairness and equity in any grievance, dispute, or discrimination resolution process. Any Brigade member who has a grievance will have recourse to this process

20 BRIGADE MEMBERS – TRAINING & COMMITMENT

20.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire brigades are created by Council pursuant to Section 41 of the Bush Fires Act 1954. In accordance with the MOU with DFES Brigades in the Shire of Ashburton are under the control of DFES, DFES has a duty of care to Brigade members to ensure that they are suitably equipped and trained for their task. This Policy seeks to ensure that volunteer fire fighters have attained the necessary level of competence prior to their attendance on the fire ground in a wildfire situation and maintain those competencies by attending Brigade Training.

20.2 OBJECTIVE

The intent of this policy is to stipulate the level of training required to be undertaken by volunteer Bush Fire Brigade members before they can be considered by the Council to be competent to be present on the fire ground and to maintain and improve on competencies.

20.3 POLICY STATEMENT

1. A volunteer member of a Shire of Ashburton Bush Fire brigade shall not be permitted on to the fire ground until they have demonstrated their competence in this regard; and
2. The minimum attainment of competence shall be demonstrated by the member having completed the following modules of the DFES Bush Fire Fighters Course:
 - a. Volunteer Fire Fighter Pathway 1

Skills Maintenance

To remain an active member, Brigade members must maintain proficiency and currency of skills relevant to their role

Brigade Training

Brigade members shall participate in ongoing training as specified by the Bush Fire Brigade Officer Group

Brigade Commitments

Brigade members are required to maintain currency in brigade activities and training these include but are not limited

- Emergency Response
- Hazard Reduction
- Public Education & School Visits
- Brigade Maintenance
- Public Service

All of these activities are important parts of the functioning of the Brigade, as such all Brigade members are expected to participate.

20.4 FAILURE TO MEET COMMITMENTS

Should an Active Member of a Brigade fail to comply with this policy, correspondence will be forwarded to the Active Member requesting contact be made with the Brigade to indicate the intentions of the Active Member's status. The Brigade member may:

1. Respond to the correspondence providing a reasonable explanation and request for alternative arrangements to be made for training or meeting obligations;
2. Request leave of absence from Brigade commitments due to personal circumstances; or
3. Terminate their membership.

If a Brigade member fails to respond to the correspondence within 14 days a subsequent letter will be forwarded from the Brigade putting the Brigade member on final notice. Should a Brigade member fail to acknowledge the final notice within 14 days, the membership shall be terminated, to take effect from the date of the final notice.

20.5 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A Brigade member may apply in writing to their Brigade for a leave of absence for a maximum period of 12 months.

21 CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS (CHC)

21.1 INTRODUCTION

DFES on behalf of the Tom Price Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade (TPVBFB) will undertake Criminal History Checks (CHC) of all Tom Price Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade personnel to ensure their identity and integrity.

21.2 OBJECTIVE

Tom Price Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade personnel regularly engage with the community through the services they provide and may have unsupervised access to private property. They are trusted with the care and use of valuable community assets and work with the public, often during times when individuals are most vulnerable. Additionally, TPVBFB personnel are entitled to expect that their colleagues are of good character and do not pose a risk to their safety.

CHC are a contemporary workplace practice which improve both the Shire's and the TPVBFB's commitment to the wellbeing and safety of its personnel and the community. This policy outlines the process for undertaking CHC for existing and prospective TPVBFB personnel.

This policy aims to:

1. Comply with the Shire's and the TPVBFB's legal and moral responsibility to create a safe and protective workplace and community environment;
2. Minimise any risk to the community by ensuring the good character of TPVBFB personnel;
3. Ensure the rules of procedural fairness are applied to TPVBFB personnel who commit a criminal offence(s).

The policy includes a number of mandatory requirements to ensure CHC are properly conducted and applied. An adverse criminal record will not necessarily preclude employment or being a volunteer with the VFBF

Note: The CHC referred to in this document is separate to the Working with Children Check, which relates specifically to people who carry out "child related work".

21.3 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

APPLICATION

All prospective TPVBFB personnel are required to undertake a CHC and provide a satisfactory National Police Certificate (NPC) prior to commencing as a volunteer with the TPVBFB.

PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

Prospective members under 18 years of age applying to be a senior or active BGU member are required to undertake a CHC. A parent or guardian must consent to a CHC for a person under 18 years. Convictions for any of the offences set out in Schedules 1 and 2 of the *Young Offenders Act 1994* will appear on a NPC for an applicant under 18 years of age.

21.4 EXISTING TPVBFB VOLUNTEERS

Existing TPVBFB volunteers who have not previously provided a satisfactory NPC must undertake a CHC on transfer from the TPVBFB to another Brigade or Unit.

21.5 PROSPECTIVE PERSONNEL WITH AN EXISTING NPC

DFES will accept an existing satisfactory NPC from prospective personnel providing it is not more than 3 months old. The person must provide a statutory declaration to certify the NPC is true and correct and they have not been charged with or convicted of an offence (excluding minor traffic offences such as speeding) since the NPC was issued.

21.6 TPVBFB PERSONNEL CHARGED WITH AND/OR CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE

TPVBFB personnel must report if they are charged and subsequently convicted of an offence. They must report to the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or direct to the CBFCO at DFES within 14 days of being charged or convicted of an offence.

21.7 SPENT CONVICTIONS ACT 1988

Under the provisions of the Spent Convictions Act 1988, a person can apply to have certain convictions removed from their criminal record after 10 years plus any term of imprisonment. DFES or the TPVBFB must not ask personnel or an applicant to disclose any spent convictions. DFES or the TPVBFB cannot discriminate against persons with spent convictions.

21.8 SOA & DFES WELFARE SUPPORT

The CHC process may cause distress to some persons. Both the Shire and DFES offers welfare support to TPVBFB personnel through its employee assistance program, peer support program and the DFES chaplaincy.

21.9 EXEMPTIONS FROM CHC

A prospective TPVBFB volunteer or short term contractor appointed or engaged for less than 20 working days may be exempt from providing a NPC.

21.10 ACCURACY OF CRIMINAL HISTORY INFORMATION

Current or prospective TPVBFB personnel must dispute any inaccurate information in a NPC with the service provider, and not with the Shire or the TPVBFB.

21.11 CONFIDENTIALITY

Strict confidentiality must be maintained regarding any CHC and related documentation. Information on a person CHC must only be accessed and distributed as required for decision making purposes.

21.12 RECORD RETENTION

Documentation relating to the CHC process will be retained in the region or business area according to Shire's Record Keeping Directive ADM04 (Internal and the State Records Act 2000 (WA)). The NPC must not be kept on file after a decision is made, only the supporting documentation.

21.13 COSTS

A prospective volunteer must pay to obtain their NPC. Upon clearance and acceptance into TPVBFB, the cost can be reimbursed from DFES. DFES will cover the costs of a NPC, where an existing volunteer is required to produce a NPC.

22. USE OF WARNING LAMPS AND AUDIBLE WARNING SYSTEMS

22.1 INTRODUCTION

The Road Traffic Code 2000 permits the use of Warning Lamps and Electric Siren Warning Systems for vehicles providing active response to an emergency.

To guard against incorrect use and to avoid possible detraction from the significance of flashing warning lamps and sirens, their use is limited to particular vehicles and particular circumstances.

22.2 OBJECTIVE

1. To guard against incorrect use and to avoid possible detraction from the significance of flashing warning lamps.

23. BRIGADE OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS

23.1 INTRODUCTION

Bush Fire brigades are created by Council pursuant to Section 41 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 In accordance with the MOU with DFES Brigades in the Shire of Ashburton are under the control of DFES, DFES has a duty of care to Brigade members to ensure that they are suitably equipped and trained for their task.

This duty of care extends to the qualifications of Brigade Officers to ensure they have the necessary combination of formal qualification and experience to perform their roles and provide for the safety of those whose activities they direct.

The Policy also seeks to provide a pathway for members to follow should they aspire to fill more senior roles within the Brigade and Ashburton Shire Bush Fire Services.

23.2 OBJECTIVE

The intent of this policy is to stipulate the level of training and experience to be attained by persons seeking to become officers within volunteer bush fire brigades within the Shire of Ashburton.

23.3 POLICY

In addition to the qualifications required under Policy 19.24 - Brigade Members –

Competence at Fire Grounds, Council requires that all persons seeking to hold the position of officer of a brigade within the Shire of Ashburton Bush Fire service shall attain, as a minimum, the following combination of qualifications and experience:

Captain

1. Be a competent fire fighter with operational experience at this level and,
2. Have completed the following courses as a minimum standard:
3. Volunteer Fire Fighter Path Way 1
 - Fire and Incident Operations
 - Sector Commander
 - Machine Supervision.
 - Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) Awareness

Lieutenant

1. Be a competent fire fighter with operational experience; and
2. Have completed the following courses as a minimum standard:
 - a. Volunteer Fire Fighter Path Way 1

Brigade Equipment Officer

The Brigade Equipment Officer is elected by the Brigade and is responsible to the Brigade Captain for the proper management and maintenance of all Brigade property and equipment. The Brigade Equipment Officer has the following specific functions:

1. Arrange and carry out monthly checks and maintenance on all Council's firefighting equipment vested in their respective Brigade;
2. Report any missing or faulty equipment as required by Brigade policy;
3. Maintain and keep the equipment storage area neat and tidy;
4. Undertake any other function assigned by the Brigade Captain or Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

Fire Control Officer

1. Completed the Fire Control Officer Pathway
2. Be a competent Fire Fighter with operational experience at this level;
3. To be eligible for appointment as a Bush Fire Control Officer a person must have completed the Bush Fire Control Officer Training;
4. Notwithstanding Item 2 above, a person will be eligible for appointment as a Bush Fire Control Officer if they complete the Bush Fire Control Officer Training Program when next available.
5. For a person to continue as a Bush Fire Control Officer they must complete the Bush Fire Control Officers Course or a Refresher Course at intervals of no more than every two years.

Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

1. Demonstrated competence as a Fire Control Officer;
2. Completed the Fire Control Officer Pathway
3. Completed Level 1 Incident Control Pathway
4. Experience as a Fire Control Officer and maintain competencies in;
 - a. Sector Commander
 - b. Machine Supervisor
 - c. Level 1 Incident Controller
 - d. Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) Awareness