



## PROCEDURE

### Providing Assistance in a Fire Event or Emergency

PROCEDURE NUMBER: PROC030

DEPARTMENT: Infrastructure and Utilities

EFFECTIVE DATE: 13/06/2017

UNIT: Disaster Management

#### 1.0 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this procedure is to outline how and to what extent council will assist the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service with plant and equipment during a fire event or fire emergency.

#### 2.0 Reference

Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990  
Providing Assistance in a Fire Event or Emergency Policy

#### 3.0 Definitions

**Council** means the Central Highlands Regional Council.

**Council Resources** means plant, equipment and personnel.

**Firecom** means Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Communication Centre.

**Fire Emergency** means a combination of circumstances that calls for immediate action to manage high fire risk. A declaration is made by the Commissioner that a State of Fire Emergency exists within or somewhere within Queensland. Under this declaration the Commissioner may take any reasonable measures to abate the fire emergency, which may include requisitioning, plant equipment, materials or substances for fire prevention, fire-fighting or fire suppression.

**Fire Event** means a fire that has ignited, begun burning, and the impending situation may cause injury, loss of life or damage to property – includes wildfires, structural building or vehicle fire incidents.

**Incident Control** means the management of all activities necessary for the resolution of an incident.

**Incident Controller** means the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services **Officer in Charge** managing the fire incident on the ground.

**On-Call Officer** means the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services senior officer on-call at Firecom.

**Personnel** means persons employed by the Central Highlands Regional Council, including elected members.

**Resource Status Card (T-Card)** means a card that is used by the Resources Unit to record status and location information on resources, transportation, and support vehicles and personnel. These cards provide a visual display of the status and location of resources assigned to the incident.

**Rural Fire Brigade** means a volunteer entity established under the *Fire and Emergency Service Act 1990* to assist in mitigating the risk to communities from the direct impact of wildfires, and includes

the functions of fire prevention and fire control.

**Urban Fire Brigade** means an entity established under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*.

#### 4.0 Procedure Statement

All personnel, volunteers and contractors must abide by the conditions of this procedure.

#### 5.0 Application

Council will only become involved in providing assistance to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services in response to a fire if it has the appropriate authorisation.

Appropriate authorisation means:

- A request for assistance from Firecom
- Followed by verbal approval from one of the following authorised officers:
  - ❖ Council's General Manager Infrastructure and Utilities, or
  - ❖ Manager Infrastructure.

**BEFORE** Council provides resources and assistance.

- **NOTE:** A request from a Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Officer in Charge at a fire is not an appropriate authorisation in its own right. The above 'appropriate authorisation' requirements must be complied with.
- Initial approval for the use of council resources (personnel and equipment) will be limited to four (4) hours. Continued use of this equipment beyond the four hours will be decided through consultation with the Incident Controller, the On-Call Officer, and council's General Manager Infrastructure and Utilities or Manager Infrastructure.
- Operators of plant and equipment are only to provide a support role to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service, and are not required to directly fight the fire, unless they are members of a volunteer fire brigade and are called upon to do so.
- In all instances, council personnel are to adhere to the procedures in this document.
- Where possible, the State Government (Queensland Fire and Emergency Service) covers the full cost of any assistance provided by council. Council may seek to recover costs incurred, so it is important that appropriate authorisation is obtained to enable cost recovery to occur. Costs will otherwise be recovered from council's Rural Fire Brigades assistance budget.

#### 6.0 Procedures

1. **BEFORE** council provides resources or assistance, council must **FIRST** receive a request for assistance from Firecom.
2. Personnel receiving the request must ask for and record:
  - The name of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services senior officer who made the request.
  - The date and time of the request.
  - Which Rural or Urban Fire Brigade has been advised and is responding to the fire.
  - The details on the type of assistance required – e.g. type of plant and equipment.
3. Personnel having received and recorded the request, must then immediately contact one of the following council managers, communicate the request information, and obtain approval before providing support:

- i. General Manager Infrastructure and Utilities  
0448 013 350
  - ii. Manager Infrastructure  
0428 764 780
4. Supervisors responsible for council plant shall make an assessment as to which plant, equipment and operators to dispatch to the fire danger area.
  5. Any plant to be deployed to a fire emergency site is to be adequately fuelled, and flashing lights activated.
  6. Personnel operating the plant and equipment must:
    - Hold appropriate plant and equipment tickets.
    - Have mobile phones turned on.
    - Have operational two way radio communication with the Officer-in-Charge of the fire.
    - Must **NOT** be wearing synthetic clothing, synthetic socks or shorts.
  7. In all situations, the General Manager Infrastructure and Utilities, or Manager Infrastructure, will notify the Emergency Services Coordinator about which personnel, plant and equipment have been deployed.
  8. Personnel attending an incident **MUST** ensure that they are officially logged on to the event in the form of a T-card. Log on can be either in person on arrival at the Incident Control, or by mobile phone or two way radio.

Information that will be required includes:

- Name/s of the persons operating the plant.
- Registration number or plant ID.
- Type of vehicle e.g. grader/water truck etc.
- Contact phone number.
- Radio ID if VHF radio is also within the vehicle.

This information is held at Incident Control and ensures all participants are accounted for; what area they are tasked to; and what time they are due for relief. It is also required for Workers' Compensation cover.

## 7.0 Health Safety and Welfare Considerations

1. Personnel may be directed by their supervisor or manager, to respond to a request for assistance from the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service. The task could include:
  - taking a plant such as a water truck, grader, backhoe to the fire incident;
  - operating the plant at the fire incident; and/or
  - man traffic control at road closure points.
2. Fires are dangerous. Your survival and safety depend on the decisions you make, and precautions you take, before entering or operating within a fire danger area.
3. Ultimately, it is the operator's call if he/she wishes to be involved in assistance operations.
4. Personnel providing assistance must **NOT** wear synthetic clothing, synthetic socks or shorts.
5. Upon arrival at the scene, the council operator in charge of the plant shall at all times, retain the absolute discretion to participate in and proceed with assistance activities or not. If he/she is not

confident, or believes that his/her personal safety would be at unacceptable risk, the operator shall advise their supervisor that he/she will not be participating in the incident.

6. Similarly, if during the incident, the operator has valid concerns regarding their safety, he/she shall withdraw from emergency activities and shall notify their Supervisor of this decision who in turn shall notify the Officer–In-Charge Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and relevant council managers.
7. In the event that a council employee decides not to participate during a declared fire emergency, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services have the power under section 97 of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* to second plant and equipment if the resources are deemed necessary. Such a decision will require Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to notify council.
8. If council employees choose to participate in the operations, then the supervisors and / or overseers are to attend the site and assess the situation and oversee plant operations. This to be done in consultation with the Incident Controller and the plant operator.
9. Council and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services both have a defined fatigue management procedure. It is **imperative** that council employees adhere to any directions from their supervisor or the Incident Controller. When a decision is made to provide a relief operator for that unit, either by means of direct changeover at the scene, or by return to a nominated location, the operator must adhere to this direction. Failure to do so may jeopardise the operation.
10. Council water trucks are to remain on roads to service Queensland Fire and Emergency Services appliances with water. Where it is deemed safe and appropriate for council water trucks to leave the road, to wet the edge of the fire break or graded track with batter spray, the plant operator and the Incident Controller must check the fire breaks/tracks prior to allowing a truck to access the area, and check for washouts, soft ground, stumps or any other hazards.

## 8.0 Procedure Review

All procedures will be reviewed annually or when any of the following occurs:

- Relevant legislation, regulations, standards and policies are amended or replaced; and
- Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the Chief Executive Officer / Executive Leadership Team / Managers.