



Members of the Volunteer Fire Service (VFS) play a significant and vital role in helping to ensure that the community is a safe place in which to work, live and play.

They serve the community on a voluntary basis by providing a commitment in time, knowledge, and expertise in operational and non-operational roles.

A VFS Brigade is established by amalgamating the resources previously used by a Bush Fire Brigade (BFB) and Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) Brigade.

VFS Brigades undertake all of the activities normally performed by both Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades and Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service Brigades.

This information leaflet explains what you can expect when joining the VFS. It can also be given to your employer.

BENEFITS

- ongoing training
- personal protective equipment
- insurance cover when undertaking VFS roles
- opportunity to use existing skills and gain new ones that may be useful in the workplace
- help others in the community
- opportunity to make friends.

ABOUT THE ROLE

Volunteers undertake various roles according to their abilities, interests and what they are comfortable with.

A Volunteer Fire Service Brigade is multifunctional, and undertakes the following roles:

- structural firefighting
- bush fire firefighting
- defensive structural firefighting
- road accident rescue
- hazardous material recovery
- fire support
- road accident assistance
- community safety liaison.

Support members undertake non-operational roles in areas such as welfare and communications.

INDUCTION

There is a three month probation period, but if you have previously served with the VFRS or BFB, the probation period may be waived.

New members complete induction training which includes:

- learning about the Fire and Emergency Services Authority
- information on Volunteer Fire Service Brigades
- what your brigade expects of you
- standing operational procedures.



TRAINING

Training programs are related to brigade profiles and this will vary between the different brigades and their location.

Many brigades train regularly, usually once per calendar month on topics such as:

- bush fire suppression
- structural firefighting
- hydrants and hoses
- ropes and ladders
- map reading
- hand tools
- communications.

Training courses are run throughout the year to help volunteers gain the necessary skills and competencies and assist the brigade to meet its profile requirements.

Being a volunteer and undertaking regular training means you can:

- develop new skills and knowledge
- apply existing skills and knowledge to different situations
- explore the opportunity to be creative and develop initiative
- develop leadership skills
- improve your interpersonal, communication and teamworking skills
- maintain your current skills and competencies.



YOUR COMMITMENT

As a VFS member you are expected to:

- be available to attend incidents (whenever possible)
- attend training (amount will depend on the risk of your area and how active you are in your brigade)
- follow instructions
- use brigade equipment and vehicles in a safe manner
- carry out duties in a safe and professional manner
- demonstrate commitment to the ideals of the organisation
- work effectively with other agencies
- maintain a reasonable level of fitness.

Because VFS members work as a team, they are required to participate in activities like routine checks of appliances (vehicles) and equipment, grounds maintenance and station cleaning.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Brigades are mobilised to incidents via pagers, telephones and SMS messaging. It is understood that some volunteers may not be available at various hours due to work or other commitments, and are encouraged to discuss emergency service leave arrangements with their employers.

EMPLOYERS

The benefits to employers for supporting employees as volunteers include:

- opportunities to create relationships with the local community
- increased awareness of community issues
- increased ability to attract and retain skilled staff
- increased staff productivity
- increased staff team working skills
- increased staff morale
- positive corporate image
- enhanced public relations through FESA's Employer Recognition Program.

For more information contact:

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or a Volunteer and Youth Services Branch member on 1800 628 141.



www.fesa.wa.gov.au

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ARE YOU READY?

to join a Volunteer Fire Service Brigade

Information for prospective Volunteer Fire Service Brigade volunteers and their employers

