

What I Need to Know

Members' Responsibilities

- A member shall:
 - Pursue the objectives and functions of the brigade;
 - Obey the lawful instructions of the First Officer or other person having charge of the brigade's operations;
 - Behave in a manner which does not endanger him/herself or any other member of the brigade;
 - Comply with the *Act* and with the DES Code of Conduct, and any policies and procedures that are issued by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service;
 - Comply with this constitution and approved rules and operating procedures of the brigade;
 - Acquire the skills and knowledge applicable to the members role in the brigade;
 - Wear and maintain all issued personal protective equipment supplied; and
 - Use and maintain appliances and equipment within its original design and capability.

Brigade Office-Bearers

- The management committee of the brigade shall consist of the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and First Officer. The management committee must have as a minimum three persons that includes the First Officer.
- If there is a combination of any of the above, the brigade must elect an additional person or persons to the management committee (as required in clause 7(a) and 7(c)) to provide for fairness and accountability in decisions made by the management committee.
- The brigade may choose to have a fifth person on the management committee, the additional person need not hold any office however the decision to have a fifth person on the management committee is made by the brigade at a meeting or an annual general meeting.
- The term "Office-Bearer" must not be confused with the term "Officer". An "Office Bearer" is the bearer of any office created by the brigade (in accordance with clauses 7 and 8(c) and 8(d) of the Brigade Constitution). An "Officer" is a First Officer or other Officer authorised by s81 of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, including officers elected (in accordance with clause 8(a) and 8(b)).
- A brigade may have up to eight officers.
- The constitution provides for the management committee to perform most of the routine financial and administrative functions on behalf of all members. However, it is for each brigade to determine how the management committee will perform these functions.
- Election or appointment to offices in a brigade is usually a matter for each brigade to determine; however, the Act does give power to QFRS to:
 - dismiss a person from office; or
 - disqualify a person from holding office.
- The Act also requires QFRS to approve each election.

Chairperson's Responsibilities

- The chairperson is responsible for:
 - chairing brigade and management committee meetings
 - ensuring the income and property of the brigade is used solely in promoting the brigade's objective and not for the benefit of individual members.

Secretary's Responsibilities

- The secretary is responsible for:
 - giving notice of meetings to the members in accordance with the constitution
 - attending all meetings, and keeping minutes of the names of members present and all proceedings
 - receiving all correspondence to the brigade and preparing all outward correspondence
 - maintaining a register of brigade members.

Treasurer's Responsibilities

- The Treasurer is responsible for:
 - receiving any money paid to the brigade and depositing such receipts into the brigade's bank account
 - paying accounts when authorised by the brigade to do so
 - maintaining a record of the brigade's receipts and payments
 - preparing a balance sheet and Statement of Income and Expenditure at the end of each financial year
 - receiving any donations tendered to the brigade
 - keeping of records as required by the Australian Tax Office including preparation and submission of BAS statements.

First Officer's Responsibilities

- Section 81(1) of the Act places the First Officer in charge of brigade operations. The First Officer is a member of the management committee. The First Officer is responsible for all rural fire suppression and fire-related activities in the brigade area. They are responsible for fulfilling the powers granted or delegated under the Act.

The First Officer is also responsible for ensuring that:

- all members are trained to a satisfactory level, commensurate with the brigade's risk and the roles they are undertaking;
- training is conducted and recorded on a regular basis;
- a record is kept of all fires attended by the brigade and an Incident Report for all fires is forwarded to the Area Director. Reports on near misses or accidents are forwarded to the Area Director, Rural Operations and, when required, any other report on any fire or incident is submitted to the appropriate authority;
- firefighter and support members are supplied and are trained in the use of PPE including hygiene standards;
- brigade operations are compliant with WH&S Legislation and Operations Doctrine keeping members safe and free from harm;
- *where applicable, breathing apparatus operational and safety records are maintained*; All breathing equipment is checked and maintained in accordance with AS/NZS 1716 and the results recorded;
- an effective liaison is established and maintained with neighbouring brigades (whether permanent, auxiliary or rural) and effective plans for mutual aid are developed;
- regular contact is maintained with the Fire Warden/s for the area.

Responsibilities of the Second and subsequent Officers

- The Second and subsequent Officers are responsible for:
 - assuming the responsibilities of First Officers in their absence or when otherwise directed to do so;
 - taking on additional specialist roles such as communications, training or safety.

- Where brigade training officers are providing training towards accreditation of members, some formal training qualifications are required. For this reason, nominations for training officer positions are to be submitted for appointment through the Area Office.

Relationship between a Brigade and a Fire Warden

- Fire Wardens are appointed to their positions either by QRFS or by Governor-in-Council (for Police Officers and public servants). They are responsible for managing the pre-fire conditions of burning off (e.g., the issuing of Permits to Light Fire).
- A Fire Warden and a First Officer therefore have different roles and responsibilities. In general terms, the Fire Warden is the “pre-fire” authority and the First Officer is the “post-fire” authority.
- Although many Fire Wardens are intimately involved with brigades, the position of Fire Warden is not an office-bearer position within a brigade. A person can perform the duties of a Fire Warden without being involved with a brigade.
- It is essential that the First Officer maintain contact with the Fire Warden(s). Close co-operation between pre-fire and post-fire authorities can only enhance the management of fire in rural areas.

How I do it

To seek further information on the various roles and responsibilities of different positions within a Rural Fire Brigade refer to:

- Operations Doctrine
- Secretary Booklet
- Treasurer Booklet
- Rural Fire Brigade Manual – Business Rule: D7.27 Brigade Constitution

Or contact:

- Your Area Office

Reference Materials

- Rural Fire Brigade Manual – Business Rule: D7.27 Brigade Constitution
- Operations Doctrine
- Field Incident Guide (FIG)
- Secretary Booklet
- Treasurer Booklet