



09.08 Health Monitoring and Rehabilitation Teams (HMRT) SOP

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) To outline the requirements for the deployment of Health Monitoring and Rehabilitation Teams (HMRT).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure applies to all CFA members.

Section 3 - Procedure

Activation of Health Monitoring and Rehabilitation Teams (HMRT)

(3) The consideration to activate a HMRT is required where operations may require the constant monitoring of firefighter vital signs.

(4) When an Incident Controller or State Duty Officer (SDO) / District Duty Officer (DDO) is considering the deployment of a HMRT they should have regard to the factors outlined in Table 1 and make the request via FireCom.

Table 1 - Considerations for Activation of a HMRT

Condition	Criteria
Heat	1. Activity extended in duration and has the potential to be long-term or on days of high temperatures. 2. Where the Bureau of Meteorology has issued a heatwave warning for the area of operations.
Structure Fire	1. Stage 2 breathing apparatus has commenced. 2. Where operations extend beyond single BA cylinder use.
Hazmat and Rescue	Extended in duration or has the potential to be long-term.
Extreme cold	Extreme conditions such as alpine related incidents, cool stores and confined spaces.
Other	Toxic atmospheres, Oxygen deficiency, Elevated temperatures and Smoke (TOES).

(5) Rehabilitation of CFA members during an incident ensures that CFA members can rest and restore their hydration levels and core body temperature to a level that is appropriate to continue participating in the operational activity.

(6) Health monitoring during an incident ensures that the health and wellbeing of all CFA members are actively monitored and members can make informed decisions about managing their health whilst also ensuring CFA meets its Occupational Health and Safety Obligations.

(7) The HMRT will respond Code 3 unless specifically requested by the Incident Controller to respond Code 1.

Endorsement to be a HMRT Member

(8) The table below outlines the required endorsements to be maintained by CFA members conducting health monitoring and rehabilitation roles.

Role	Requirements
Rehab Team Member	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. HLTAID011 Provide First Aid; or2. HLTAID015 Provide Advanced Resuscitation and Oxygen Therapy;3. CFAMSF Maintain safety on the Fireground;4. CFAREH Provide Rehabilitation to Responders; and5. CFAHEA Provide Health Monitoring to Responders.6. CFATHW Tree Hazard Awareness Training (if member has not completed GFF).
HMRT Team Member	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. HLTAID011 Provide First Aid; or2. HLTAID015 Provide Advanced Resuscitation and Oxygen Therapy;3. CFAMSF Maintain safety on the Fireground;4. CFAREH Provide Rehabilitation to Responders; and5. CFAHEA Provide Health Monitoring to Responders.6. CFATHW Tree Hazard Awareness Training (if member has not completed GFF). <p>Requirements for carbon monoxide exposure management:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Advanced First Aiders should have the above qualifications or equivalent Senior First Aid qualifications from the relevant Industry Advisory Group.
HMRT Team Leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Current Health Professional Registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA);2. CFAMSF Maintain safety on the Fireground;3. CFAREH Provide Rehabilitation to Responders; and4. CFAHEA Provide Health Monitoring to Responders.5. CFATHW Tree Hazard Awareness Training (if member has not completed GFF).

Composition of a HMRT

(9) While responding to an HMRT call, HMRT team members must only provide interventions to the level of their training, within their scope of practice and with the authorised equipment approved by CFA.

(10) A HMRT comprises of two teams:

- a. Health Monitoring Team; and the
- b. Rehabilitation Team.

(11) A HMRT will deploy both the rehabilitation and health monitoring teams unless the Incident Controller directs otherwise.

(12) A HMRT will consist of at least two or three members sufficiently trained in the competencies approved by the Chief Officer in rehabilitation and at least one member trained in health monitoring. The member trained in health monitoring will be a health professional and act as the Team Leader.

- a. Where there may not be a HMRT Team Leader available to respond, the Rehab Teams can respond and on turn out, request FireCom to dispatch an Ambulance Health Commander or Ambulance crew response for firefighter welfare.

(13) Additional resources for health monitoring are required in complex incidents where firefighters have an increased exposure to carbon monoxide (CO). When operationally practicable, HMRT Teams can also consist of advanced first aid qualified CFA members to complete general duties under the HMRT, and assist with CO specific readings and assessments. This will be overseen by a HMRT Team Leader.

(14) The HMRT shall report to Staging Area Manager/Incident Controller and work from:

- a. the Staging Area;
- b. fill point (subject to safety considerations); or
- c. another identified control point.

(15) The Incident Controller (and/or Staging Area Manager) in consultation with the HMRT Team Leader is responsible for identifying the appropriate location for the HMRT to work from.

(16) During a significant event, the HMRT may be supported by Ambulance Victoria for health monitoring purposes.

(17) Health monitoring may occur at:

- a. the commencement of each shift;
- b. each shift break;
- c. before the resumption of duty; and
- d. the completion of each shift.

Health Monitoring Outcomes

(18) Health Monitoring practices should be undertaken in accordance with the clinical guidelines outlined in [JSOP 8.05 Health Monitoring](#).

(19) All CFA members who are required to undergo health monitoring will be initially assessed by a HMRT Team Leader or Ambulance Victoria representative upon arrival at the HMRT site.

(20) Where no health concerns are identified on the initial completion of health monitoring by the HMRT, CFA members may continue with operational response duties.

(21) If health concerns are identified, initial management will include a rest period of at least twenty minutes with basic care and rehabilitation provided, this will be followed by a re-assessment of the individual.

(22) Upon re-assessment, if there are still concerns regarding the condition of the CFA member and their readings do not reasonably meet the standards set out in the above guidelines, then they should undertake an additional twenty minute rest period.

(23) In order for CFA to comply with its occupational health and safety guidelines, if health concerns are still present after re-assessment, following 40 minutes of rest, and it is considered detrimental to the health and wellbeing of a CFA member, the HMRT Team Leader may recommend the CFA member not return to operational duty and be:

- a. further assessed by an alternative medical provider (e.g. GP); or
- b. assessed by Ambulance Victoria and transported to hospital for further assessment.

(24) Where a CFA member is referred to seek further medical treatment/advice, it is recommended that this be undertaken immediately. If a member chooses not to accept this advice, they must:

- a. advise their Crew Leader or Incident Controller of their decision; and
- b. stand down from operational duties until a medical clearance certificate has been provided by a medical practitioner.

Note: Some CFA members will have a Personal Medical Management Plan (PMMP). This will assist in providing an overview of the medical history of the individual, and the PMMP must be taken into consideration by the HMRT Team, particularly in relation to health assessments and readings.

Reporting and Privacy

(25) The HMRT collect medical data of personnel at an incident and are bound by the [Privacy Data and Protection Act 2014](#) (Vic) and the [Health Records Act 2001](#) (Vic) when collecting, accessing, storing and disposing personal and health information of CFA members.

(26) HMRT personnel shall maintain a log of activities as per [Chief Officer's SOP 9.13 - Keeping Logs and Documents](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
HMRT Team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake a dynamic risk assessment to ensure the safety of the HMRT Team and CFA members undergoing health monitoring or rehabilitation. 2. Monitor persons in attendance at the scene vital signs. 3. Provide a rehabilitation service that reduces and treats the incidence of heat stress. 4. Ensure appropriate record keeping and maintain a log of activities as per Chief Officer's SOP 9.13 - Keeping Logs and Documents.
HMRT Team Leader (Health Professional)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide relevant information to the Manager, Health Monitoring and Rehabilitation. 2. Manage the HMRT site. 3. Report to and provide ongoing briefings and updates to the Incident Controller and/or Safety Officer to assist with managing personnel whilst on the fireground. 4. Liaise with the Field Safety Officer, Medical Unit Leader, HAZMAT technicians or Scientific Officers where appointed. 5. Take health monitoring readings and interpret the results. 6. Provide health advice and treatment to CFA members. 7. When required, make recommendations to CFA members to seek further medical treatment or advice.
Health Monitoring Team Member	<p>Monitor and assess the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take health monitoring readings and interpret the results. 2. Hydration levels. 3. Heat stress. 4. Biological signs and symptoms of exposures (smoke etc). 5. Hygiene. 6. Safety issues (health and wellbeing). 7. Nutrition. 8. Injury assessments.
Rehabilitation Team Member	<p>Provide support and monitor the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of the rehabilitation station in a shaded area that is free of smoke and atmospheric pollutants. 2. Providing support for Health Monitoring Teams (if activated). 3. Take health monitoring readings and interpret the results. 4. Use of rehabilitation equipment such as cooling chairs, arm bands, rest chairs etc. 5. Adequate stocks of water and electrolyte replacement drinks and snacks. 6. Responsibilities of Incident Controller, Staging Area Manager and CFA members

Incident Controller	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage task rotation of crews to assist with heat stress, fatigue and exposure to smoke. 2. Establish and request activation of HMRT. 3. Ensure firefighters are replaced to relieve fatigued or injured crew members. 4. Appoint a Safety Officer/Medical Unit Officer/HAZMAT Technician/Scientific Officer if required.
Staging Area Manager (or IC if not established)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select an appropriate location for the establishment of the HMRT.
CFA members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report through their chain of command if they feel unfit for duty prior to or whilst responding to an operational incident. 2. Maintain responsibility for their own health and safety, including managing fatigue levels, monitoring adverse reactions to smoke or air quality and maintaining adequate hydration. 3. Undertake regular health monitoring and rehabilitation services, if established.

Safety Note

(27) Nil

Environmental Note

(28) Nil

Section 4 - Definitions

(29) Commonly defined terms are located in the CFA [centralised glossary](#). Document-specific definitions are listed below.

Section 5 - Related Documents

(30) [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#) (Vic)

(31) [Privacy Data and Protection Act 2014](#) (Vic)

(32) [Health Records Act 2001](#) (Vic)

(33) [JSOP J08.05 - Health Monitoring - Emergency Personnel](#)

(34) [EMV - Standard for Managing Exposure to Significant Carbon Monoxide Emissions - Responder Health](#)

(35) [EMV - State Smoke Framework V3.0](#)

(36) [Chief Officers SOP 9.31 Welfare of CFA members](#)

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Status and Details

Status	Not Yet Approved
Effective Date	To Be Advised
Review Date	To Be Advised
Approval Authority	
Approval Date	To Be Advised
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Jason Heffernan Chief Officer
Responsible Officer	Garry Cook Deputy Chief Officer Operational Response & Coordination
Author	Emma Pollard
Enquiries Contact	David Harris Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Occupational, Health & Safety <hr/> Operational Response and Coordination

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"**CFA member**" - Refers to all CFA volunteers, volunteer auxiliary workers, officers, employees and secondees.

"**Incident Controller**" - The individual designated by the control agency to have overall management of the incident and who is responsible for all incident activities.

"**Code 3**" - Driving under normal driving conditions obeying the Road Safety Road Rules 2017. This is generally in response to a routine event.

"**FireCom**" - The callsign for day to day / normal radio communications to CFA vehicles and aircraft.

"**Code 1**" - Code 1 refers to driving under emergency response conditions (lights and/or siren) which may require utilising the exemption for drivers of emergency vehicles under the Road Safety Rules 2017.

"**Safety Officer**" - An advisor to the Incident Controller on all aspects of potential and current safety and risk management issues present at the incident.

"**Field Safety Officer**" - A position allocated to the Sector or Division Commander to advise on all aspects of potential and current safety and risk management issues present at the sector or division. This role may also liaise with the Incident Safety Officer where appointed.

"**HMRT**" - The Health Monitoring and Rehabilitation Team is a specialist team established within a brigade with the relevant training and equipment to help support the health and wellbeing of CFA Members during an operational incident.

"**Carbon Monoxide**" - Carbon monoxide is an odourless, colourless gas. It is a combustion product made by burning substances such as petroleum products (eg. gas, oil, kerosene, diesel, petrol), wood and tobacco. Very high levels of carbon monoxide can cause loss of consciousness, seizures and death.