6.02 Crew Composition (16 and 17 Year Olds) Operational Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) Under the Country Fire Authority Regulations 2014 16 and 17 year olds are eligible to be Senior Members and attend incidents. This procedure exists to ensure safe, effective and efficient management of CFA crews containing 16 and 17 year old CFA members.

(2) CFA is required by law to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards. As a child safe organisation, CFA must take deliberate steps to safeguard children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect. CFA must put children's safety and wellbeing first and embed a commitment to child safety in every aspect of the organisation.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This procedure (SOP) applies to all CFA members.

Section 3 - Procedure

(4) Safety is paramount to the conduct of any operational activity.

(5) Members aged 16 and 17 years must have completed General Fire Fighter (GFF) (or its predecessor program Minimum Skills) to be eligible for operational status.

(6) Members aged 16 and 17 years prior to attending fires and other incidents must meet the minimum training requirements and be endorsed by the Captain to be an operational fire fighter.

(7) When responding to a fire or incident, a maximum of two (2) CFA members between the ages of 16 and 17 years are permitted per appliance at any given time.

(8) 16 and 17 year old members are not permitted to participate in:

a. Rostered long-haul strike teams
b. Non rostered strike team or other deployment that requires the accommodation of crew overnight.

Responsibility of the Crew Leader

(9) The Crew Leader is responsible for ensuring an appropriate skill and experience mix exists to safely and effectively undertake operational activities on the fire/incident ground.

Prior to Response

(10) Where practical Crew Leaders must undertake a dynamic risk assessment based on available information and if appropriate restrict the 16 and 17 year old members from responding to the incident. Crew leaders should consider

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the following as part of the dynamic risk assessment:

a. The nature or type of incident and where operationally practicable limit exposure of 16 and 17 year old CFA members to potentially traumatic situations.
b. The age, abilities, and skills of the individual and overall crew.
c. The ability to ensure appropriate supervision of all members but more importantly 16 and 17 year old CFA members.

At an incident

(11) The Crew Leader shall only delegate tasks to CFA members who are competent and endorsed to carry out tasks.

(12) When an incident response involves the serious injury or fatality of a person(s), the Crew Leader must take all reasonable steps to shield the 16 and 17 year old CFA members from potentially traumatic situations.

(13) Where a 16 and 17 year old CFA member forms the composition of a crew that has been re-deployed, the Crew Leader must evaluate the composition of the crew and the suitability for the proposed new task. It may in this instance, be necessary to re-allocate tasks within the crew or, where appropriate, make arrangements to have the 16 and 17 year old CFA members replaced in the crew.

Post Incident

(14) Where a 16 and 17 year old CFA member has been in attendance, or may have been exposed to traumatic situations, including the injury or fatality of another person(s), Wellbeing Services shall be offered and parents/guardians shall be notified by a brigade officer.

Section 4 - Definitions

(15) Commonly defined terms are located in the CFA centralised glossary.

Section 5 - Related Documents

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Status and Details

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Accountable Officer	Garry Cook Deputy Chief Officer Operational Response & Coordination
Responsible Officer	Glenn Probstl Assistant Chief Fire Officer - State Operations
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

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

"Crew Leader" - Crew Leader is the person designated to have responsibility for the management of the crew.

"16 and 17 year old CFA members" - CFA members at and between the age from their 16th birthday and 17 years up to their 18th birthday with written parental consent. This does not apply to CFA members on their 18th birthday and thereafter.

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