# 7.05 Water Supplies For Firefighting SOP

# Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) To ensure that brigades have an understanding of the relevant water resources within their area and to guide CFA members on the replacement of essential water used during fighting operations and the need to record relevant details.

# Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure applies to all CFA members.

# Section 3 - Procedure

(3) Brigade members should have knowledge where appropriate, of the location and type of all water supplies, including reticulated water supplies and hydrants, water tanks, open water sources etc within their Brigade area.

(4) Under no circumstances should hydrants be turned on to allow water flow for testing purposes.

(5) Brigades must record and report any water supply faults to the State Duty Officer / District Duty Officer or District Office for notification to the relevant Water Authority.

### Use of essential water for firefighting

(6) The section 30 and 32 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 provides powers to the Chief Officer to take water from any waterway or any other water supply on public and private land for firefighting purposes. Incident Controllers have been delegated the powers in Section 30 by the Chief Officer.

(7) The Victorian Government has a policy regarding replacing of essential water used during bushfire fighting operations.

(8) Essential water is water required to sustain:

a. the health of affected residents and pets
b. the health and productivity of their stock; and
c. Agricultural and horticultural crops, permanent plantings, and intensive industries.

(9) In the event of fire regardless of where it starts, if essential water is taken from domestic tanks and stock or irrigation dams for firefighting purposes, water needed for essential use will be replaced (quantity taken) when requested by the landholder.

(10) It is important that Incident Controllers and crew leaders ensure a log is kept of the amount of water taken from each location so that appropriate replenishment can take place efficiently and quickly. This can be as simple as the location by description or grid reference and the number of loads. A water replacement report is available within e-map (available via the relevant District).

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(11) The landholder must email emergency.recovery@deeca.vic.gov.au or submit an Essential Water replacement request authorisation form to seek replacement of the water. The relevant District shall provide all reasonable assistance to the landholder to obtain the relevant details.

### Safety Note

(12) Watch for spiders, snakes and sharp objects (e.g. glass, needles) inside hydrants.

(13) CFA members must consider the water quality when planning access to and use of water.

(14) A dynamic risk assessment should be undertaken when drawing water from static sources such as domestic tanks and stock or irrigation dams to ensure the safety of crews and appliances i.e angle of dam banks, access, and egress.

### Environmental Note

(15) Consider -

a. potential environmental issues such as blue-green algae and soil erosion when planning access to and use of water.
b. potential cross-contamination of water sources where foam may have already been used as part of a suppression strategy.

# Section 4 - Definitions

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

# Section 5 - Related Documents

(17) Standing Order 7.00 Pre-Incident Planning

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## Status and Details

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| **Accountable Officer** | Jason Heffernan<br>Chief Officer |
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## 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.

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

**"Dynamic Risk Assessment"** - The continuous assessment and control of risk in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident. DRA is an intuitive thought process and is typically not recorded.

**"Hydrant"** - A facility on a pipeline/water main where water can be drawn for firefighting purposes. Includes below ground L-type, or pillar hydrants but does not include millcocks.

**"Open water sources"** - Includes lakes, dams, rivers and channels etc.

**"Reticulated water supply"** - Permanent infrastructure provided to deliver water to lots from a water supply external to the general vicinity of the sub-division.

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