9.16 Management of media at an incident SOP

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) To outline the procedure for CFA members involved in dealing with the media during an incident where CFA is the control agency.

(2) To provide guidance for CFA members who are authorised to provide official statements to the media during a CFA incident.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This procedure applies to all CFA members.

Section 3 - Procedure

Making incident related statements to the media

(4) Incident Controller or authorised members may make incident related comments to the media about an incident they are in control of, having been requested by an on-scene media outlet or requested to do so by CFA media. Statements provided to the media must:

a. Only relate to the incident;
b. not criticise any aspect of the operations by CFA or any other supporting agency;
c. not prematurely identify CFA members who have or are thought to have sustained an injury; and
d. not be political, controversial or having a negative impact on CFA or emergency service agencies in general.

(5) Where CFA is the support agency in an incident, statements should not be issued by CFA. This is the responsibility of the control agency to issue on behalf of all agencies involved in the incident. CFA may issue information to the media relating only to CFA's involvement in the incident.

Authority to make statements to the media

(6) Verbal statements to the media in relation to an emergency incident should only be made by the following CFA members:

a. CFA Media
b. Incident Controller
c. Regional Controller (when in place)
d. Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) for the District the incident is located
e. State Duty Officer / District Duty Officer / Fire Services Communications Controllers (FSCC)
f. State Agency Commander (SAC)

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g. Authorised representative of the Chief Officer

> Note: The State Response Controller or Emergency Management Commissioner may also have the authority to provide information to the media on behalf of CFA.

(7) CFA members approached by media representatives whilst on the incident ground should not provide any information or comment on the incident unless authorised to do so by the Incident Controller / District Duty Officer / State Duty Officer or CFA Media.

Release of information to the media

(8) Media releases and/or media talking points (if appropriate) should be prepared and issued with the relevant authorisation by:

a. the Incident Controller; and
b. the Media Officer or Public Information Officer within an Incident Management Team (IMT);
c. Media Officer at the State Control Centre (SCC); or the
d. CFA Media where a Media Officer does not exist at an Incident Management Team (IMT) or SCC level.

(9) CFA Media team and/or the Media Unit at the State Control Centre (SCC) shall ensure that any comments they release to the media are consistent with the information provided and authorised by the Incident Controller.

Management of media representatives at the incident

(10) Media play an important role in assisting emergency services to communicate with the broader community including the dissemination of community warnings and information. Subsequently, media outlets from time to time may operate from the incident scene.

(11) Media representatives who are approved to enter the incident ground by the Incident Controller (or their authorised representative) prior to entry should ensure that they:

a. Have in their possession a current fire services media accreditation card;
b. Wear the appropriate Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) provided by their employer;
c. Not enter the incident ground unless accompanied by a Media Escort that is approved by the Incident Controller;
d. Follow the directions of the Media Escort at all times and not enter any restricted or prohibited areas unless authorisation has been received from the Incident Controller to do so.

Safety Notes

(12) Nil

Environmental Notes

(13) Nil

Section 4 - Definitions

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

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Section 5 - Related Documents

(15) Standing Order 9.0 Fires and Incidents - Management of

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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
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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.

"Personal Protective Clothing (PPC)" - Includes clothing used to provide protection to CFA members from the risks associated with performing a specific operational task for which they are competent and endorsed

"Control Agency" - The agency nominated to control the response activities to a specified type of emergency.

"Support Agency" - An agency which provides essential services, personnel or material to support or assist a control agency or another agency managing the response to an emergency.

"Incident Management Team (IMT)" - The group of incident management personnel comprising the Incident Controller, and the personnel he or she appoints to be responsible for the functions of Operations, Planning and Logistics.

"Media Officer" - Appointed to an Incident Management Team (IMT) or the State Control Centre (SCC) within the Public Information Section and responsible for managing media requirements for the incident.

"Media Escort" - Appointed to the Incident Management Team (IMT) within the Public Information Section and responsible for safely escorting external media personnel to the fire ground or incident scene.

"Public Information Officer" - Manages all functional service delivery requirements of the Public Information Section, including the appropriate dissemination of public information and warnings to affected communities, media management and community liaison.

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