



Respect

Integrity

Courage

Loyalty

Trust

Employers Supporting RFSQ Volunteers



About the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ)

Rural Fire Service Queensland form a part of the Queensland Fire Department (QFD).

Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) is made up of over 27,000 volunteers, who form more than 1,400 Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs).

Brigades around the state provide essential services to the people of their community and deliver fire and incident response coverage to 93% of the state.



Queensland
Government

RFSQ – Responsibilities – Volunteer Involvement

- Fighting Fires
- Fire Risk Mitigation Activities
- Community Education – Preparedness Activities
- Permits to Light Fire
- Initial and on-going Training
- Deployments – National and International (can be requested)
- Community – Severe Event Response and Recovery Assistance



RFSQ Volunteers and their Employers

Volunteers provide fire and emergency preparation and response across all areas of the State, and without their highly skilled contribution the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery of Queensland would be severely compromised.

Without the on-going support of employers to grant leave of absence and release our volunteers from their regular work duties, most communities would face greatly increased risks and heightened out-come consequences.



Employee Leave

- Volunteers should discuss release from work provisions with their employer
- Arrangements may be informal (verbal) or formal (written)
- Determine what type of leave is to be used – e.g. Annual, Accrued, Special, Community Service, Without Pay
- The decision of leave release is at the employer's discretion



National Employment Standards – Community Service Leave Fact Sheet

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/sites/default/files/migration/723/Community-service-leave.pdf>

Community service leave and the National Employment Standards

Overview

Community service leave forms part of the National Employment Standards (NES). The NES apply to all employees covered by the national workplace relations system, regardless of any award, agreement or contract.

The NES entitles employees to be absent from work to engage in certain community service activities such as:

- a voluntary emergency management activity
- jury duty, including attendance for jury selection.

What is a voluntary emergency management activity?

An employee engages in a voluntary emergency management activity only if they:

- engage in an activity that involves dealing with an emergency or natural disaster
- engage in the activity on a voluntary basis
- were either requested to engage in an activity, or it would be reasonable to expect that such a request would have been made if circumstances had permitted
- are a member of, or have a member-like association with, a recognised emergency management body.

What is a recognised emergency management body?

A recognised emergency management body is:

- a body that has a role or function under a plan that is for coping with emergencies and/or disasters (prepared by the Commonwealth, a state or a territory)
- a fire-fighting, civil defence or rescue body
- any other body which substantially involves responding to an emergency or natural disaster.

This would include bodies such as the State Emergency Service (SES), Country Fire Authority (CFA) or the RSPCA (in respect of animal rescue).

Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: **13 13 94**

Need language help?

Contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on **13 14 50**

How much leave can an employee take?

There is no set limit on the amount of leave an employee is entitled to. They can be absent from their employment:

- for the time that they are engaged in the activity, including reasonable travelling time associated with the activity, and reasonable rest time immediately following the activity
- if the absence is reasonable in all the circumstances (jury duty is taken to always be reasonable).

Are there notice/evidence requirements?

For an employee to be covered by the community service leave provisions, they must give their employer:

- notice of the absence as soon as practicable
- the period or expected period of absence
- evidence that they are entitled to the leave, if requested by the employer.

Is community service leave paid leave?

Community service leave under the NES is unpaid, except for jury duty. Employees (except casuals) are entitled to make-up pay for the first 10 days they are absent for jury duty.

Make-up pay is the difference between jury duty pay (excluding expense-related allowances) and the employee's base pay rate for the ordinary hours they would have worked.

If requested by the employer, an employee must show:

- they have taken all necessary steps to obtain jury duty pay
- the total amount of jury duty pay that has been paid or will be payable to the employee for the period.

If the employee is unable to provide this evidence, they won't be entitled to make-up pay.

However, if state and territory laws provide more beneficial entitlements than the NES, these will apply instead. For example, if a state or territory law provides casual employees with pay for jury duty, this would apply instead of the NES.

Hearing & speech assistance

Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

For TTY: **13 36 77**. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline **13 13 94**

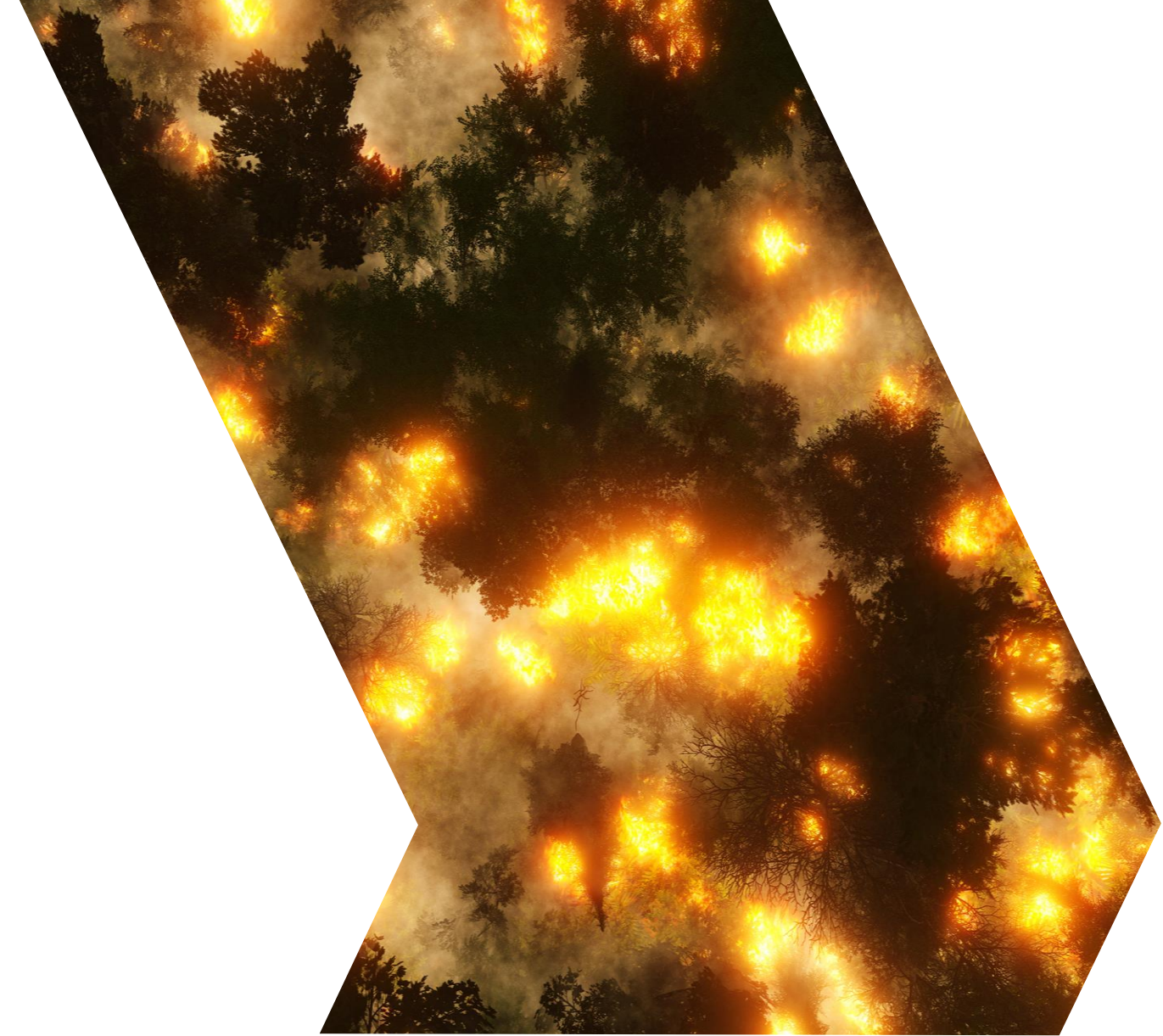
Speak & Listen: **1300 555 727**. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline **13 13 94**



Benefits

RFSQ volunteers make valuable employees and are equipped with a broad range of capabilities that are useful in the workplace.

- working well in teams and following directions
- communicating effectively
- thinking on their feet
- taking responsibility
- using personal initiative
- remaining calm in a crisis



Employer Incentives

Employers make a significant contribution to the community when releasing staff to respond to emergencies.

The Queensland Government recognises this through payroll tax exemptions for the hours staff spend away from work to assist in emergency operations.

For more information on payroll tax exemptions call the Queensland Revenue Office on 1300 300 734 during office hours or [visit their website](#).



Want to know more ?

Visit:

<https://www.fire.qld.gov.au/about-us/frontline-services/rural-fire-service-queensland>



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