



Working with Children Clearance Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) This policy confirms CFA's commitment to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and protection of children involved with, exposed to or part of CFA by ensuring all persons engaged by CFA are suitable to be involved in "child related work" through the application of the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#) coupled with a Working with Children Clearance (WWC Clearance), whether the person works with children or not or is exempt from holding a WWC Clearance.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applied to:

- a. CFA volunteers; and
- b. CFA employees covered under the Professional Technical Administration Enterprise Agreement, the District Mechanical Officers/Tower Overseers Enterprise Agreement, and Executive Officer Agreements.

(3) In addition to the CFA workforce cohorts noted above, CFA may require other individuals engaged or associated with the organisation to comply with this policy at its discretion or as required by law. This includes circumstances set out under Part 3.1 of the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#), for example, even if the person is exempt from holding a WWC Clearance.

(4) FRV seconded employees - though not at this time mandated by their employer (FRV) to obtain a WWC Clearance, CFA acknowledges that many FRV seconded employees have self-elected to obtain a WWC Clearance and CFA continues to actively encourage this.

(5) CFA may, in circumstances it deems necessary, undertake a further Child Safety Risk Assessment in respect of any role at CFA to assess, and mitigate, risks to children and young people.

Section 3 - Policy

(6) As a community focused emergency services organisation, CFA engages with children within the organisation and across the broader Victorian community, as part of CFA's core service delivery function. As a result, our responsibility to uphold child safety is a whole of organisation commitment, which includes involvement of those individuals who do not technically engage in child related work.

(7) CFA is committed to creating and maintaining an organisation which is safe for children and upholds a zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse.

(8) CFA considers participation in CFA events, activities, programs, and service delivery to be child-related work as defined by section 7 of the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#). These activities provide services and programs for children across various functions at CFA. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. [Country Fire Authority Regulations 2014](#), Schedule 2, which permits Junior Membership to the Authority from 11

years of age;

- b. [Country Fire Authority Regulations 2014](#), Schedule 2, which permits Senior Membership to the Authority from 16 years of age;
- c. The routine employment and/or engagement of apprentices; trainees, and staff aged under 18 years;
- d. The provision of informal, formal and accredited education and training to persons under 18 years; and
- e. The direct participation of children in CFA programs, events and activities within the community through the provision of emergency service preparedness and response.

New and Transferring Employees and Volunteers

(9) CFA aims to ensure a child safe organisation and will proactively manage risks to the safety and wellbeing of children. To this end, CFA requires that from 22 December 2021 all new or transferring employees and volunteers must:

- a. Obtain a WWC Clearance as a material condition of employment and/or enrolment to a brigade. No new or transferring person will be employed and/or enrolled by CFA without a WWC Clearance, except with the express written approval of CFA's Child Safety Officer and General Manager People & Culture.
- b. Hold and maintain a current WWCC Clearance as a material condition of ongoing employment and/or enrolment with CFA unless exempted under(7)(a).

Existing Employees and Volunteers

(10) CFA aims to ensure a child safe organisation and will proactively manage risks to the safety and wellbeing of children. To this end, CFA requires that all existing employees and volunteers employed or enrolled prior to 1 July 2023 must:

- a. Obtain a WWC Clearance by no later than the prescribed date outlined in schedules 1 to 4 of section 5 for the area of the organisation or role they are undertaking, whether engaged in child related work or not; and
- b. Hold and maintain a current WWCC Clearance as a material condition of ongoing employment and/or enrolment with CFA unless exempted under(7)(a).

Compliance

(11) These requirements constitute lawful and reasonable directions of CFA and the Chief Officer which must be complied with by all employees and volunteers. CFA requires employees and volunteers to provide evidence of a current WWC Clearance which will be recorded and stored in a secure central database approved by CFA for the duration of their engagement.

(12) A failure or refusal of CFA employees and/or volunteers to comply with these directions may result in termination of employment or cancellation of membership.

(13) Where a CFA employee or volunteer receives an WWCC Adverse Notice issued under the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#), or is unable to provide a WWC Clearance, CFA will work through a process with that person, which will include consideration of:

- a. The CFA functions and duties performed by the person;
- b. CFA's legislative obligations relating to the safety and protection of children; and
- c. The feasibility and/or appropriateness of redeployment or restriction of duties of that person to ensure that the individual is not engaged in child-related work.

The process is defined in the [Working with Children Clearance Adverse Notice - Employees Procedure](#) and the [Working with Children Clearance Adverse Notice - Volunteers Procedure](#).

(14) For the avoidance of doubt:

- a. Where a CFA employee or volunteer is legally required to hold a WWC Clearance under the Worker Screening Act 2020 but receives an WWCC Adverse Notice or is unable to provide a WWC Clearance, CFA may redeploy the person to an alternative position (at the discretion of CFA) where the employee or volunteer will not have interaction with children in the course of their duties with CFA, unless the inherent requirements of the role require the holding of a WWC Clearance. Where redeployment is not possible, is not considered appropriate by CFA or is not agreed between the person and CFA, it may be necessary for CFA to terminate the person's employment or cancel the person's membership; and
- b. Where a CFA employee or volunteer is not required by legislation to hold a WWC Clearance (for example because they are exempt under the Worker Screening Act 2020), CFA will consider (at its discretion) the reasons and rationale for non-compliance with CFA's requirements to hold a WWC Clearance and the potential for the person to have contact with children in the execution of their CFA duties. CFA will then assess whether any modifications to the person's duties are required to enable the person to continue their CFA engagement without a WWC Clearance, while maintaining CFA's obligations as a child-safe organisation and under relevant legislation. If a person unreasonably fails to agree to any of these modifications, it may be necessary for CFA to terminate that person's employment or cancel their membership.

Exemptions

(15) CFA recognises the following exemptions from holding a WWC Clearance prescribed in Part 5.1 of the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#):

- a. Children;
- b. Teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching;
- c. Victorian police officers and protective services officers; and
- d. Federal police officers.

Statutory Framework

(16) The statutory instruments enabling the implementation of this policy position include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. [Worker Screening Act, 2020 \(Vic\)](#);
- b. [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#);
- c. [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#);
- d. [Wrongs Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#);
- e. [Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#); and
- f. [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#).

Section 4 - Related Procedure

(17) [Working with Children Clearance Adverse Notice - Volunteers Procedure](#)

(18) [Working with Children Clearance Adverse Notice - Employees Procedure](#)

Section 5 - Schedules

Schedule 1

(19) Employees and volunteers listed below are required to have a current WWC Clearance within 3 months of this policy coming into effect.

Employees

- a. CFA Board Members;
- b. CFA employees working under an Executive Officer Agreement;
- c. Employees in the Child Safety Team;
- d. Employees in the Youth Programs Team;
- e. HR Business Partners;
- f. Employees in the Dispute Resolution Team;
- g. Health & Safety Advisors;
- h. Member Wellbeing Advisors;
- i. Injury Recovery Advisors;
- j. Employees in the Legal Team; and
- k. Any other person undertaking child related work as defined in Part 1.1(7) of the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#).

Volunteers

- a. Junior Leaders;
- b. Fire Safe Kids Presenters;
- c. Trainers and Assessors;
- d. FEM Technicians attending schools, kindergartens, or childcare centres;
- e. Members playing the role of Santa or Captain Koala;
- f. Authorised Accompanying Operational Firefighter (defined in SOP 6.02);
- g. Members participating in the Emergency Medical Response program;
- h. Officials at competition events; and
- i. Any other person undertaking child-related work as defined by section 7 of the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#).

Schedule 2

(20) Employees and volunteers listed below are required to have a current WWW Clearance by 30 June 2024.

Employees

- a. Regional Business Managers;
- b. District Business Managers;
- c. Managers Learning and Development;
- d. Volunteer Sustainability Managers;
- e. Managers Community Safety;
- f. Team Leaders (Community Safety & Learning and Development);
- g. Clinical health professionals;
- h. Employees of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Department;

- i. Executive Assistants;
- j. Employees in the Talent Acquisition Team;
- k. Employees in the Community Engagement Team;
- l. Community Engagement Co-ordinators;
- m. Community Liaisons;
- n. Casual presenters;
- o. Regional Brigade Administrative Support Officers;
- p. Brigade Administrative Support Officers;
- q. Regional Support Officers;
- r. District Support Officers;
- s. Learning and Development Co-ordinators;
- t. Learning and Development Support Officers;
- u. Fire Safety Educators;
- v. Mechanical Officers;
- w. Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Officer;
- x. Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Technician;
- y. HR Advisors;
- z. Employees of the Governance, Legal and Risk Directorate;
- aa. Employees of the Communications and Stakeholder Relations Department;
- ab. Employees of the Organisational Development Team;
- ac. Employees of the Volunteer Sustainability Team;
- ad. Employees of the Operational Doctrine and Training Department; and
- ae. Member of the Peer Support Program.

Volunteers

- a. All members of a Brigade Management Team in brigades with members under 18;
- b. All members nominating for election to a Brigade Management Team role post 30 June 2024;
- c. Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Officer;
- d. Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Technician;
- e. Brigade Training Officers in brigades with members under 18;
- f. Crew Leaders in brigades with operational members under 18;
- g. Community Safety co-ordinator;
- h. Members managing brigade social media;
- i. Competition running coaches;
- j. Smoke alarm installers (and any other programs involving members visiting someone in their home); and
- k. Members of the Peer Support Program.

Schedule 3

(21) Employees and Volunteers listed below are required to have a current WWC Clearance by 30 June 2025.

Employees

- a. Employees who manage other employees; and
- b. Employees of the ICT Directorate.

Volunteers

- a. All members of a Brigade Management Team;
- b. All Group Officers (including deputies); and
- c. All members of a brigade that has members under 18.

Schedule 4

(22) Employees and volunteers not listed in schedules 1 to 3 are required to have a current WWC Clearance by 30 June 2026.

Summary of Schedules - Volunteers

Group or Role	Schedule
Junior Leaders	1
Fire Safe Kids Presenters	1
Trainers and Assessors	1
FEM Technicians attending schools, kindergartens, or childcare centres	1
Members playing the role of Santa or Captain Koala	1
Authorised Accompanying Operational Firefighter (defined in SOP 6.02)	1
Members participating in the Emergency Medical Response program;	1
Officials at competition events	1
Any other person undertaking child-related work as defined by section 7 of the Worker Screening Act 2020	1
All members of a Brigade Management Team in brigades with members under 18	2
All members nominating for election to a Brigade Management Team role	2
Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Officer	2
Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Technician	2
Brigade Training Officers in brigades with members under 18	2
Crew Leaders in brigades with operational members under 18	2
Community Safety coordinator	2
Members managing brigade social media	2
Competition running coaches	2
Smoke alarm installers (and any other programs involving members visiting someone in their home)	2
Members of the Peer Support Program	2
All members of a Brigade Management Team	3
All Group Officers	3
All members of a brigade that has members under 18	3
Volunteers not listed in schedules 1 to 3	4

Summary of Schedules - Employees

Group or Role	Schedule
CFA Board Members	1
CFA employees working under an Executive Officer Agreement	1
Employees in the Child Safety Team	1
Employees in the Youth Programs Team	1
HR Business Partners	1
Employees in the Dispute Resolution Team	1
Health & Safety Advisors	1
Member Wellbeing Advisors	1
Injury Recovery Advisors	1
Employees in the Legal Team	1
Any other person undertaking child related work as defined in Part 1.1(7) of the Worker Screening Act 2020	1
Regional Business Managers	2
District Business Managers	2
Managers Learning and Development	2
Volunteer Sustainability Managers	2
Managers Community Safety	2
Team Leaders (Community Safety & Learning and Development)	2
Clinical health professionals	2
Employees of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Department	2
Executive Assistants	2
Employees in the Talent Acquisition Team	2
Employees in the Community Engagement Team	2
Community Engagement Coordinators	2
Community Liaisons	2
Casual presenters	2
Regional Brigade Administrative Support Officers	2
Brigade Administrative Support Officers	2
Regional Support Officers	2
District Support Officers	2
Learning and Development Coordinators	2
Learning and Development Support Officers	2
Fire Safety Educators	2
Mechanical Officers	2
Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Officer	2

Group or Role	Schedule
Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Technician	2
HR Advisors	2
Employees of the Governance, Legal and Risk Directorate	2
Employees of the Communications and Stakeholder Relations Department	2
Employees of the Organisational Development Team	2
Employees of the Volunteer Sustainability Team	2
Employees of the Operational Doctrine and Training Department	2
Member of the Peer Support Program	2
Employees who manage other employees	3
Employees of the ICT Directorate	3
Employees not listed in schedules 1 to 3	4

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Status and Details

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Effective Date	To Be Advised
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Approval Authority	
Approval Date	To Be Advised
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Torbjorn Servin General Manager People and Culture
Responsible Officer	Greg Davis Program Manager Child Safety
Author	Greg Davis
Enquiries Contact	Child Safety

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"CFA employee" - Any person who is directly employed by CFA, including those employees on a fixed term or casual employment contract.

"CFA volunteer" - An officer or member who receives no remuneration for their services in relation to a brigade but does not include an officer or member of an industry brigade.

"WWCC Adverse Notice" - Means an interim exclusion notice, exclusion notice, or other revocation notice issued pursuant to the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) regarding a WWC clearance. An interim exclusion notice can either: Allow the recipient to continue to work with children while their WWC clearance is reviewed; or Prohibit the recipient from working with children while their WWC clearance is reviewed.

"Working with Children Clearance" - A working with Children Clearance is issued by the Department of Justice and Community Safety after a successful Working with Children Check. A Working with Children Check is a background check that aims to prevent people from working or volunteering with children if records indicate that they may pose an unacceptable risk to children.

"Child related work" - Work undertaken in either a paid or voluntary capacity, at or for a service, body or place and that usually involves direct contact with a child.