

PSA/CPSU NSW members affected by bushfires

PSA/CPSU NSW members in the state's north have been dealing with fires for many weeks. Several have lost their homes, property, animals, and some have lost their workplaces. We have also been informed this morning of a member who has lost their life. PSA/CPSU NSW officers are contacting the family to make assistance available.

These conditions are predicted to extend south including catastrophic warnings for the Hunter, Central Coast, Blue Mountains, Sydney and Illawarra.

We have put together a few work tips to assist with fire emergencies and work requirements.

Most of all, the PSA/CPSU NSW wishes all members and their families are safe in the fires.

SAFETY INFORMATION FOR ALL MEMBERS

[Rural Fire Service information](#)

RFS has the most up to date fire information. Local ABC radio will also shift into emergency operations to let people know about alerts if a fire emergency arrives to your region.

All members in effected areas are encouraged to have a fire plan and obey emergency service directions. Your workplace should have one also.

WHS – Travelling for Work

Travelling for Work to or through fire areas, can be extremely dangerous, unpredictable and involve low visibility. It is highly recommended that appointments are rescheduled. In the event there is more compulsion, such as court escorts for inmates to Sydney, speak to your manager first to

seek approval to undertake alternate safe duties. If this is not approved, speak to your industrial officer or organiser about taking legal cease work action under Section 84 of the *WHS Act*.

Many PSA/CPSU NSW members may be required to attend emergency centres as part of their role. The usual safety procedures and training should be applied to assist these members' safety.

WHS – Smoke

People with asthma or other cardio-vascular conditions should be vigilant of conditions and make plans to avoid smoke.

Industrial Rights in a fire emergency

INDUSTRIAL RIGHTS FOR MEMBERS AFFECTED BY FIRES

These are the public service rights. However, enterprise agreements and other enterprise awards from other employers also have similar conditions- consult with your delegate or enterprise agreement.

Alternate Working Hours, Location or Access to FACS leave

The following is from the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009*.

17. Natural Emergencies and Major Transport Disruptions

17.1 An employee prevented from attending work at a normal work location by a natural emergency or by a major transport disruption may:



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17.1.1 apply to vary the working hours as provided in clause 16, Variation of Hours of this award; and/or

17.1.2 negotiate an alternative working location with the Department; and/or

17.1.3 take available family and community service leave and/or flex leave, recreation or extended leave or leave without pay to cover the period concerned.

Volunteering for an Emergency Service

The following details how members can access leave to attend to these emergencies.

The following clause from the *Public Service IR Guide*:

6.17 Special Leave

6.17.7 Emergencies

6.17.7.1 *Emergency volunteers and volunteer members of safety organisations* Employees who are volunteer members of the: ▪ *Bushwalkers' Federation*; ▪ *Cave Rescue Association*; ▪ *NSW Volunteer Fire Brigade*; ▪ *Public Service Support Group*; ▪ *Rural Fire Services*; ▪ *State Emergency Services*; ▪ *Volunteer Coastal Patrol*; ▪ *Volunteer Rescue Association of NSW (or affiliated groups)*; or ▪ *Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network*; may be granted special leave of up to 5 days in any period of 12 months for the purpose of assisting as volunteers in one of these organisations.

6.17.7.2 **Declared emergencies** If a situation arises requiring a major operational response, or

an emergency is declared under Section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*, under other relevant legislation or by the Premier, employees who volunteer to assist are granted special leave with no upper limit. Leave granted under this clause does not count towards the 5-day upper limit specified in "6-18.8.1 *Emergency volunteers and volunteer members of safety organisations*".

6.17.7.3 *Proof of attendance at emergencies* An application for leave must be accompanied by a statement from the local or Divisional Controller, the Fire Controller, Deputy Fire Controller or NSW Police Force certifying the times of attendance. The leave application should indicate the period and area of attendance together with the name of the organisation to which the volunteer member belongs.

6.17.7.4 *Rest periods* If a volunteer employee remains on emergency duty for several days, the agency head may grant special leave to allow reasonable time for recovery before returning to duty. If a volunteer employee assists in a rescue at a time such that it would be unreasonable to expect them to report for duty at the normal time, the agency head may grant up to 1 day special leave for rest. If the emergency referred to in the preceding two paragraphs is not a declared emergency, in accordance with "6-18.8.2 *Declared emergencies*", the leave granted is included in the general 5 day annual limit prescribed in "6-18.8.1 *Emergency volunteers and volunteer members of safety organisations*".

