



FIRE AND RESCUE SENIOR OFFICERS

Sustainability

September 2020

An overview

Queensland Fire and Rescue Senior Officers have a proud history delivering fire and emergency services in Queensland; a service that is built on a unique history of courageous individuals with strong values to serve and protect the community and to deliver on the priorities of Government.

In recent times the Queensland Fire and Rescue Senior Officer role has expanded from the tradition of firefighting to a skilled and experienced commander, leader, and manager of the 'all-hazard emergency and disaster frontline' and the 'board room'. Unlike many leaders within government Fire and Rescue Senior Officers are required to manage their normal business responsibilities and accountabilities as well as providing emergency management leadership whenever emergency and disaster events occur.

This expanding role is driven by the high degree of internal and external change that typifies a modern organisation¹. Our fire and emergency service is experiencing change like no other government department and the organisation—and all its component parts—must be agile to smoothly transition to emergency and disaster response operations, which may occur locally, interstate or internationally.

Our evolving role is commensurate with this and the expectation of QFES to deliver the right resources, in the right time, to the right place to alleviate any emergency, disaster and/or humanitarian situation.

The Fire and Rescue Senior Officer cohort is represented by the ranks of **Inspector**, **Superintendent** and **Chief Superintendent**. Fire and Rescue Senior Officer occupy both state and regionally based positions to lead and deliver strategic and operational outcomes in partnership with the Assistant Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and Commissioner, and our partner agencies.

How many Fire and Rescue Senior Officers are there?

In the current Fire and Rescue Service model, there are approximately 17 Chief Superintendents, 34 Superintendents, and 108 Inspectors positioned across Queensland's geographic area of 1,730,648km².

Fire and Rescue Senior Officer modelling is typically based on span of control and command surge capacity for emergency response operations, including multiple, large scale and/or long duration incidents.

Currently, there are 8 temporary over established Fire and Rescue Senior Officer positions undertaking critical roles that are delivering the foundations of future operational capabilities and essential business capabilities that will enable a safer Queensland community.

How can we maintain sustainability with the evolving role of the Fire and Rescue Service Senior Officers?

Fire and Rescue Service Senior Officers are strategic leaders and senior managers that command and coordinate all facets of QFES service delivery including operations in an environment of fiscal constraints as well as fluctuating resourcing.

There are many options which will further enhance the sustainability of Fire and Rescue Service Senior Officers which is being considered as part of the Safe Crewing Taskforce² which is due to deliver the report by 30 June 2021.

This sustainability paper focusses on the preservation of Fire and Rescue Service Senior Officers during absences such as annual leave (AL) and long service leave (LSL). Currently the AL accrual rate per officer is 190hrs for each full year of employment (190 hrs is 5 calendar weeks) and the accrual rate for LSL is 1.3 weeks for each full year of employment.

Adopting an AL and LSL preservation model for Fire and Rescue Senior Officers similar to that currently provided for station officers and firefighters will provide benefits including a reduction in overtime and maintain stable operational service delivery whilst they are absent.

Currently, there are 147 Fire and Rescue Senior Officer positions in the fire and rescue service, servicing state to regional roles with standard hours of 38hr/ week. It should be noted that Fire and Rescue Senior Officers continually work well in excess of these hours every week to meet the needs of QFES and the community.

Using the formula to calculate the required staffing model to cover AL and LSL, the required numbers are;

AL- 147 x 5 weeks (190 hrs) = 735 weeks, therefor 735/52= 14.1 officers.

LSL- 1 additional Fire and Rescue Senior Officer per 40 officers = 4 additional Fire and Rescue Senior Officers.

It is important to note that these calculations only relate to AL and LSL and don't include other absences including professional development and other departmental initiated absences, which will create additional shortages of Fire and Rescue Senior Officers.

The diverse geographical service delivery model of QFES based on 7 regions and the relevant employment locations will necessitate the following additional Fire and Rescue Senior Officers per region.

Far Northern Region - 2	Northern Region - 2	Central Region - 2	North Coast Region - 2
Brisbane Region - 4	South Eastern Region - 3	South Western Region - 2	TOTAL – 21*

* The employment locations/arrangements for LSL preservation (4) is to be confirmed.

It would be envisaged that these positions are appointed at the rank of Inspector which will allow preservation of Inspector, Superintendent and Chief Superintendent ranks with minimal movements whilst ensuring an effective and reliable staffing model servicing the Queensland community.

¹ Lyons, J., Swindler, S. & Offner, A. 2009. The impact of leadership on change readiness in the US military. *Journal of Change Management*. 9 (4):459-475.

² Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Certified Agreement 2019, Clause 12.