



CODE RED

CODE RED - Samsung Appliance Phones Bulging & Attendance Management Policy

Last week, we were informed by members that the appliance phones on several appliances had been discovered with bulging batteries within them. Considering the media over the past couple of months about the dangers of lithium-ion batteries overcharging and experiencing thermal runaway, you don't need to be lectured about the safety risk that this poses to you and your crews.

We discovered that FRNSW has known about this issue for at least 3 months now and has been quietly replacing batteries and phones on a case by case basis when reported to them, but there has not been any broader notification to Firefighters or to the FBEU that this issue exists.

We wrote to FRNSW yesterday asking them to write to all staff and write to the FBEU with a plan on how to manage this issue, but we received a response today which took no responsibility for this issue and where senior management acted like FRNSW was only made aware of this recently, which is flatly untrue.

We are particularly concerned about how FRNSW has managed to procure mobile phones which don't seem to have any circuitry which prevents overcharging and thermal runaway.

We originally gave FRNSW more time to work towards a fix for this issue, but their response demonstrates a concerning lack of urgency on this issue. As we often must do, we will hold FRNSW accountable for their health & safety responsibilities in the workplace.

Effective immediately, members are hereby instructed to remove all FRNSW issued Samsung mobile phones from all appliances, remove the battery from the phone, and keep it off charge and away from anything combustible, until otherwise instructed by the State Secretary.

If ICs and Comms need to contact one another, a Duty Commander is to be requested at the fire ground, and their FRNSW issued iPhones should be utilised to communicate between one another.

We will re-assess this Code Red when FRNSW comes to the table with a plan to manage this issue.

Worker safety is Union business and we will keep repeating that until FRNSW finally gets it

Some members will be aware that starting earlier this year, FRNSW has had some renewed vigour in utilising the Attendance Management Policy for Permanent Firefighters, which requires Firefighters who hit certain triggers of leave to account for their leave.



CODE RED

The AMP was imposed on Firefighters in November 2012, and since then, has not been reviewed or amended, meaning that triggers and processes are completely out of step with the move away from 10/14 rosters, and the post-COVID world that we live in.

We have been in discussions with FRNSW to find agreement on amending the policy to make it work in the modern fire service, but FRNSW has refused to put a hold on AMP processes until that agreement is able to be reached.

This is leading to unreasonable and unfair outcomes on Firefighters which we will not support.

Effective immediately, all Permanent Firefighters are instructed to not engage in any AMP processes until otherwise instructed by the State Secretary.

Effective immediately, all Senior Officers are instructed to not pursue any AMP processes, including the issuing of letters, requesting meetings, finalising AMP matters, acting upon or actioning AMP workflow in MSS, or speaking to any Firefighter about the AMP until otherwise instructed by the State Secretary.

We will continue working with FRNSW to modernise this tool which is often used to punish members to ensure it is fit for purpose for the fire service of 2024.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary