



# CODE RED

## **Work Health and Safety on Assist Ambulance sees member suspended Assist Ambulance Bans**

A Station Officer was suspended this morning after a complaint was received from Ambulance NSW (ANSW) about an extrication plan to remove a patient from a house.

For the record, the crew were responding to an Assist Ambulance call and the patient suffered no injury through the extrication process. The Station Officer assessed the risks associated with the critical factors and implemented a risk management plan. He even altered this plan after input from the ambulance officers to make it safer.

The Station Officer, having led the crew in safely extricating the patient, was suspended before any formal investigation into the matter.

The emerging trend of allowing other services to drive the direction and procedures of FRNSW whether it be ANSW or the RFS is disturbing. Also concerning is the Department's suspension of an employee who took action at the incident to deal with safety concerns fully in accordance with the SOGs.

Members should note that the Union recently raised concerns over the lack of a risk assessment and the recent changes to response for Assist Ambulance calls. We have seen a huge increase in the number of Assist Ambulance calls and we've seen an increasing number of "Assist Ambulance" that are far from assisting. Members are reporting increasing risks of injury in doing this work.

The FBEU, represented by State Committee, staff and a number of station delegates, were due to meet with the Department about Assist Ambulance on this coming Wednesday and discuss this very matter.

I remind members that:

- It is the Employer's duty to provide a safe workplace
- It is the Employer's duty to provide adequate training and tools to complete work safely
- It is the Employer's duty to minimise risk of injury
- The Employer cannot victimise an Employee who has raised a safety concern
- The Employer must consult when proposing changes that may affect the health or safety of workers

We believe that members would agree with the State Committee that the Department are failing on most if not all of the above. This work is not only unsafe operationally, but now with a member suspended, industrially.

**Therefore, effective immediately, with the exception of members who are rescue qualified and attached to rescue stations and/or CFR members, all Assist Ambulance calls that do not come from the Rescue Coordinator and do not meet the SERM Act definition of a domestic rescue (attached below) are hereby banned, and members are not to respond to these incidents until further notice from the State Secretary.**



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**Any other calls that fall outside of this incident type, but are related to primarily assisting ANSW, are to be responded to and members are to decide whether it is appropriate to perform work in line with this ban or call for a rescue appliance.**

I understand there may be questions about which incident to perform work at or not. Unfortunately, this only points out what a shambles the Department has made of this type of work. I trust crews to make the right calls and you will have the full support of our Union in making those calls. That said, I offer the following advice. We expect that calls that are of a Rescue nature are to be confirmed by calling Comms and/or resources requested appropriately. Rescue is part of our core role, and we are to continue to perform rescue duties.

We will not accept members being suspended for doing their job. We will not accept the Department taking disciplinary action like this, especially around a matter that we are currently in discussions with them about.

Strength in Unity,

**Leighton Drury**  
**State Secretary**

NSW State Rescue Policy extract

1.22 Industrial and Domestic Rescue (IRDR) means the capability required to gain access to and extricate entrapped casualty/ies from a range of industrial and/or domestic incidents while minimising the potential for further injury and preserving the integrity of evidence.

Industrial Rescue (IR) involves the safe removal of persons who have had an accident in the workplace such as factories, warehouses and building sites. It involves disentanglement from machinery and extrication from heavy machinery such as cranes. Rescue of occupants trapped in elevators and escalators is also included.

Domestic Rescue (DR) – **involves the rescue of occupants trapped in household settings.** This includes such things as children with fingers in drain plugs, removal of rings, **and individuals who are incapable of leaving their home due to ill health.**

1.30 Rescue means the safe removal of persons or domestic animals from actual or threatened danger of physical harm.