



Pandemic Restriction Levels

Health and Safety Branch
People and Culture

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1 Introduction

FRNSW's primary concern is the health and safety of our workforce and the extensive range of measures and procedures FRNSW has put in place in response to COVID-19 reflect that commitment. The COVID-19 IMT liaises with NSW Health, the State Emergency Operations Centre and other subject matter experts to ensure FRNSW protects the health and safety of our people and the community.

FRNSW is continually monitoring the risks to our staff associated with COVID-19 and will ensure measures put in place are appropriate and proportionate to the risk levels to allow us to best protect our staff and the community while meeting our operational responsibilities.

FRNSW is fortunate to have a very capable workforce and we are confident that the skills, knowledge and experience that firefighters have in applying operational policies and procedures in all types of situations, together with the specific COVID measures that have been put in place, will ensure safe operations during the pandemic while maintaining emergency service delivery to the communities across NSW.

2 Background

FRNSW continues to actively monitor and appropriately treat any identified risks associated with the trend and rate of infections in NSW throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the health and safety of our people.

Tiered levels of restrictions have been developed to align with the advice and restrictions issued by the NSW Government and its agencies.

These will be scaled accordingly from Level 1, being the least restrictive, to Level 4 being the most restrictive.

The restrictions are developed in consultation with key stakeholders to mitigate the exposure to FRNSW staff and the community.

3 Scope and Application

This document is prepared to provide advice and guidance on the general range of restrictions that may be employed in response to identified risk. FRNSW may be required to engage additional specific restrictions to a general category, as deemed necessary in the circumstances. Where this occurs, our staff and the FBEU will be advised.

These restrictions can be implemented on a state-wide basis or within a smaller geographical area, depending on the intelligence supplied by NSW Health and other supporting agencies.

The restrictions were developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including the FBEU, and will be applied as required by direction from FRNSW's COVID-19 IMT to mitigate the risks of exposure to FRNSW staff and the community.

The Australian and NSW Governments have the overarching authority for the management of a pandemic and can declare any area of the state, either in part or as a whole, a public health emergency.

During a pandemic, the NSW State Emergency Management Plan ([EMPLAN](#)) provides a strategic overview of emergency management in New South Wales. The EMPLAN has been prepared with input from all New South Wales Government agencies that have responsibilities and functions in disaster response and recovery, of which FRNSW is a key stakeholder.

The [NSW Health Influenza Pandemic Plan](#) provides guidance on a range of strategic response activities for NSW Health staff and agencies to effectively prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic, in order to minimise the adverse health impacts on the NSW population and reduce the burden and disruption to health-related services in NSW.

4 Activation of Restrictions

The Incident Commander (IC) of the FRNSW COVID-19 IMT will activate or rescind the relevant level of procedures and restrictions based on advice and recommendations from Australian Health, NSW Health and other specialist agencies.

The activation of these procedures will be published via FRNSW internal communications to all staff.

5 Level 1 - Prepare

1. Adherence to all FRNSW related entry [control procedures](#) is to be maintained.
 - The QR code is to be displayed at all entry points and key locations of the premises.
 - ALL staff and visitors who attend our stations, work sites, training facilities and offices including **ALL OPERATIONAL STAFF** attending these workplaces must complete a questionnaire prior to each entry. These questions are designed to manage the risk of contact with a person infected with COVID-19 at our workplace.
2. Ensure workplace signage is in place as a reminder to maintain workplace and physical distancing measures.
3. Ensure that all staff conduct personal hygiene preventative measures regularly.
4. Observance of workplace [hygiene practices](#).
 - Conduct thorough cleaning and/or disinfecting of a station or workplace by either disinfectant wiping of all hard surfaces or other proven disinfectant procedures.
5. Ensuring appliances and vehicles are cleaned and [disinfected](#) according to [SIMS](#) after use to maintain [hygiene practice](#).
6. [Flexible working arrangements](#) for an individual should be considered in the context of reducing exposure to staff.
7. Training can continue within the guidelines of the [COVID-19 Portal](#) and suitability of the venue, which is conditional on it complying with the NSW Government's [distancing guidelines](#).
8. All FRNSW premises are to ensure an adequate supply of infection

control resources are available to all personnel.

9. Appropriate precautionary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be selected and used appropriately for incidents.
10. Events may only be held with the approval of the Office of the Commissioner and the COVID-19 IMT.
11. All preparation activities can continue to be undertaken ensuring compliance with physical distancing and hygiene measures implemented.
12. Deliveries should be left outside FRNSW premises and staff should maintain physical distancing measures. After receiving goods, staff should follow hand hygiene measures. Details are to be entered with EOB with details of proof of delivery and receipted as per procedure.
13. All usual hygiene practices in fitness rooms must be adhered to and social distancing should be applied. This could result in only one staff member at a time using the gym, with all disinfecting procedures completed before and after use.
14. All community activities can be undertaken using a risk-based approach with appropriate precautions in place.
15. Operations to be underpinned by the [Major Incident Management Plan - COVID-19 Supporting Plan](#).
16. Any FRNSW staff that have been directly exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 are not to attend any FRNSW workplace and are to self-isolate for 14 days and immediately get tested. Staff are to advise their supervisor and Coronavirus.info@fire.nsw.gov.au.
17. Any staff member who has 'flu-like' symptoms is not to attend the workplace and is to self-isolate. Call your GP or Health Direct on 1800 022 222 and ask for advice regarding COVID-19 testing and safe return to work.
18. If any FRNSW staff member develops 'flu-like' symptoms while at work, they should immediately inform their supervisor and isolate themselves from other personnel. The staff member should immediately return home to seek medical advice through their GP or Health Direct (on 1800 022 222) regarding the need for screening and further isolation.
19. Any FRNSW staff members who are the subject of an NSW Public Health Alert are to immediately self-isolate for 14 days, get tested, monitor symptoms, and get retested if symptoms change. If you are unable to self-isolate at home, please advise NSW Health (on 1800 943 553) and the [COVID-19 IMT](#). Under no circumstances are they to attend FRNSW premises. Please ensure your supervisor is immediately notified and details forwarded to Coronavirus.info@fire.nsw.gov.au.

6 Level 2 - Reduce

All aspects of Level 1 operational procedures are to be applied in addition to the following:

1. All stations/work locations should limit visitors to authorised personnel as per

the COVID-19 [Coronavirus Portal](#).

2. FRNSW issued community masks are to be worn when while representing FRNSW.
3. Attendance management policy is still in place; however, members will not need to produce a medical certificate. Members may be required to sign a statutory declaration regarding their absence.
4. All staff who can work remotely are to work from home and only visit FRNSW workplaces with authorisation. Managers are responsible for staff wellbeing and allowing flexible work practices.
5. Where possible, all forums and meetings should be conducted remotely
6. Renovations and station maintenance can continue as long as contractors and staff are complying with COVID-19 Policies and safety guidelines provided by FRNSW.
7. Community Fire Unit (CFU) initial skills training limited to one member of the CFU Management Team per 10 trainees, with a maximum of 20 trainees.
8. CFU activations for bushfires by the CFU activity app only. CFU Management Team to contact activated unit immediately and conduct a safety risk assessment to determine activation limitations and conditions.

7 Level 3- Restrict

All aspects of Level 1 and Level 2 operational procedures are to be applied in addition to the following:

1. Urgent operational meetings at incidents must maintain physical distancing.
2. Stations/appliances are to abate attendance at other stations and/or other FRNSW locations unless it is in the course of responding to an emergency or other operational requirement, such as a standby or move up.
3. [At risk personnel](#) not to attend FRNSW premises to mitigate potential exposure.
4. Training that is required to maintain operational capability or essential training, must consider alternative delivery methods to face to face. If face to face training is the only method, enhanced hygiene routines must be adopted. This must comply with advice provided by NSW Health and is further described on the [relevant toolkit](#). Multi-station training exercises require pandemic risk assessment and plan.
5. FRNSW Safety Visits will only occur on the request of the community member to ensure vulnerable and at-risk members of the community have working smoke alarms.
6. Essential and critical PIPs (high risk hazards, buildings with cladding) and Brigade Exercises for new AFA connections can continue to be undertaken ensuring compliance with physical distancing rules and regulations.

7. Random drug and alcohol testing is suspended.
8. Secondary employment to be reviewed and risk assessed on a case by case basis as per the [Secondary or Other Employment Policy](#).
9. Retained stations are to comply with the On Call Retained Firefighters COVID-19 Operational Exposure Management policy for all ongoing training and operational requirements. All staff are to maintain all station training programs.
10. FRNSW fitness drills will be suspended.
11. CFU Initial skills training limited to one member of the CFU Management Team per five trainees and a maximum of 10 trainee.
12. CFU skills maintenance limited to a maximum of 10 volunteers.

8 Level 4 - Confine

All aspects of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 operational procedures are to be applied in addition to the following:

1. All stations/work locations should not receive visitors to the location and only on-duty/on-call personnel, essential staff and existing contractors are permitted entry.
2. All face to face external community engagements that are non-emergency related are to be suspended (noting that on-line arrangements should continue).
3. Duty Commanders, Senior and Executive Officers should reconsider the need to visit Stations unless critical to operational needs, safety or organisational priorities.
4. If an urgent issue (such as provision of first aid) requires a visitor to enter the stations/work locations, practice physical distancing wherever possible and as a precaution, disinfect the area and any utilised equipment afterwards.
5. Renovations and station maintenance programs to be suspended unless critical to maintain service.
6. Limitation of movements of staff across the organisation
 - Relieving firefighters to remain within the respective zones of their base station
 - E-recalls are minimised with distance limitations imposed, and
 - Alternative staffing arrangements to ensure operational capability is maintained.
7. Movements of appliances and staff are to be limited to maintain the essential requirements to maintain operational capability.
8. Secondary employment to be reviewed and risk assessed on a case by case basis. Secondary employment that causes potential high risk to FRNSW

operations may need to cease.

9. Recruitment Physical Aptitude Tests (PAT) and medicals for permanent firefighter recruitment are to be suspended. PATs for Retained Firefighter recruitment are to be suspended. Medical assessments are with the applicant and their GP and may proceed at the discretion of the individual's doctor.
10. Review of permanent firefighter rosters to reduce exposure to staff over time as per recommendation of epidemiologists.
11. CFU initial and skills maintenance training to be suspended.

9 Further information

For further information, see the [Human Influenza Pandemic Plan](#) (PDF) under the State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) on the [Resilience NSW](#) website.

Document information

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Policy Manager	Executive Director People and Culture
Contact Officer	Director Health and Safety
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