



WORDBACK

No.07/2019
15 March 2019

A B C D Day Retained

TRAVEL RECORDING & CLAIMS

Inquiries from concerned members prompted the Union to raise a query in February with the MFS HR about how our members' travel claims are being assessed and processed.

The MFS response on 5 March 2019 confirmed that while Commanders use Whereis to audit travel claims and approve or decline them using the kilometres identified, the employee is notified of any changes proposed, and through GARTAN, given an opportunity to provide an explanation as to why the travel claim is greater than the information on Whereis. All good and in keeping with the Award provision for a "reasonable journey".

On 7 March 2019 the MFS issued Memorandum 15/2019 advising that a review of the process had been undertaken "recently" and changes were being implemented "effective immediately".

Sadly, these changes were determined and implemented without any consultation with the UFU as required by the enterprise agreement. Point 2 of the Memorandum seeks to establish a new requirement in breach of the above Award provision.

Noticeably the Memorandum is absent the advice from the MFS HR Manager of 5 March 2019 that "*the employee does have the opportunity to provide an explanation as to why the travel claim is greater...*"

It may be for example, that a particular journey is rerouted due to roadworks, a requirement for refuelling, or some other reason. We are advised that the electronic measurement of distance by an App is not always reliable and one member found themselves required to drive through a reservoir as the shortest route.

Members are assured that the Union is pursuing this matter with the MFS with a view to the development and issue of a more appropriately worded Memorandum. In the meantime, please continue to make your travel claims as per the correct advice from the MFS of 5 March as above, to ensure you are remunerated appropriately for a "reasonable journey" and keep us advised of any difficulties encountered.

PFAS REPORT

The UFU has now received from the MFS a report on the testing of all stations and vehicles. That information is currently being reviewed and assessed and members can request information by calling UFU Project Officer Rhiannon Newman on 8352 7211.

Thank you to all those who have participated or are planning to participate in the PFAS blood testing program. Many of you have also participated in the UFU survey following receipt of your blood test results. These are also being collated currently and assessed against the results of the station testing in order to determine whether there are further clusters of high results and if so, to investigate the likely pathways involved and the decontamination required.

The Union is also establishing a communication network by email so if you would like to be included in this, please contact Rhiannon by sending her your preferred email address to info@ufusa.com.au and asking to be included. We will communicate with you on this subject by blind email so your address will be kept private.

The UFU is proposing to hold a meeting in the near future for any interested members to attend to discuss the results with experts in the field. Details will be provided shortly. In the meantime please let us know if you would like us to arrange a meeting of members at your station.

PFAS REMINDER:

Just a reminder that we continue to urge all UFU members and retired members to participate in the PFAS Testing Programme. You can get the referral documents for the PFAS blood test from the MFS through Clara Cipriani 0436 406 905 or by email Clara.Cipriani@sa.gov.au or Steve Pavlich on 0419 806 295 or by email steve.pavlich@sa.gov.au

Due to the higher numbers now participating in the testing program, delays are being experienced in receiving results or the interpretation of those results however if you have any difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact the UFU office on 8352 7211 for assistance.

Members in country areas are advised that you *are* able to have blood taken for testing at a number of regional locations, rather than have to come to Adelaide – please email steve.pavlich@sa.gov.au to make the necessary arrangements and obtain the written referral.

Once you have your test results it would be appreciated if you would complete the UFU survey so that we can continue to look for any other clusters of high results and take appropriate action. All information will be kept confidential.

Meantime members are strongly encouraged to keep your own records of any leave taken to ensure that your full entitlements to sick leave (and other leave, and in particular any time taken for workers' comp) are accurately reflected in the MFS records into the future.

ACTING UP ON A 9

At our meeting of 14 March 2019, State Council reviewed the issue of acting up on a 9 appliance and it was determined that further and better communication to members is required to develop an understanding of the rationale for the current Union position. We hope that the following is of assistance.

In recent years the MFS has introduced a number of specialist appliances into the fleet; Pump Hazmat appliances to increase the Hazmat capability and CAPA introduced as a replacement vehicle for the Skyjet and a further capability within Aerial operations.

Additionally, a formalised "Rope Rescue" component has been added to pump rescue stations to allow a greater capability for rescue from heights and associated incidents with the likelihood of penetrating further into urban interface/mutual aid areas.

These expanded roles are a positive development for the organisation and assist the MFS to deliver a high-level service to the community.

However, in combination with the potential outcomes of the "response to grass/wildfire" trial being conducted at Salisbury, the argument is created that the level of knowledge and expectation on individuals riding in charge of appliances is *very high*.

Skill Codes for an appliance are task oriented; being able to carry out skills on a particular appliance is not *managing a scene*. Incident control and being a rescue officer is strategy orientated i.e. tying beautiful bowlines doesn't equip us to manage a rope line rescue incident.

Currently, the SFQ and SO's alike must conform to the requirements of the MFS "Station Officer Metropolitan Operations" PID. Key outcomes listed within it include:

- identifying crew training needs and facilitating required training;
- managing station work health and safety issues;

- ensuring the operational readiness and capability of the station, personnel and appliances;
- developing strategies and tactics in accordance with relevant legislation and MFS policies and procedures.

Additionally, essential minimum requirements within the PID detail and ability to *develop pre-incident and IAP's; and determine an appropriate strategy relevant to the risk present.*

To comply with these key outcomes and after consideration of the current level of expectation surrounding these expanded roles the question must be asked, *is the level of training appropriately mapped against the expectations of these roles and the SO PID?*

This does not refer to the type training that teaches you how to turn on a detector and monitor in atmosphere, or how to site an aerial appliance, or how to rig for a steep angle rescue. The type of training that equips you to *develop strategies and tactics in accordance with relevant legislation and MFS policies and procedures and safely and effectively manage an incident.*

An act up arising first at any rescue incident in any gazetted area is both incident controller and rescue officer until another appliance arrives; it is possible that timeframe is extended in CFS areas. And along with the presence of heavy vehicles, we experience greater speed limits as we approach and head into CFS areas.

The current SAP 36 (10/2004) details that act ups will be restricted to General Purpose Pumpers and Skyjets.

With the introduction of the Pump Hazmat and CAPA appliances circa 2016, but significantly in the absence of an updated draft SAP which considered the implications, a position was sought from State Council by the MFS regarding the ability to act up on Pump Hazmat, CAPA and Pump Rescue Appliances.

Concerns were discussed at the time including appropriate training and qualifications, level of exposure of those in the act up role and the crews and future opportunities to contest for the SO rank.

Eventually a position was agreed which endorsed an act up on pump Hazmat and CAPA, the rationale being that although it was generally felt at the time that the training needed to be increased, that the act up had some protection at these stations due to being geographically surrounded by substantive SO's, *in most cases.*

An act up on a Pump Rescue **was not** endorsed.

The rationale being that due to the type of incident that a significant number of single appliance Pump Rescue Stations attend such as:

- RCR including Heavy Rescue in MFS gazetted areas;
- Structure fire in Mutual Aid Areas;
- RCR including Heavy in Mutual Aid Areas;
- Rescue from heights in Mutual Aid Areas;

and the expectation to assume roles of IC or Rescue Officer (or if first arrival in a mutual aid area, both) that the gap in training on how to safely and effectively manage these incidents was too great and the exposure to the act up and their crews too high.

The argument can be made "what about when a Pump Hazmat or a CAPA go COQ or are in other scenarios where they don't have that support? These are valid points.

However, with the need to compromise, it was decided at the time that in most cases the Pump Hazmat and CAPA appliances would most frequently be responding in their own area, or immediately adjacent to it. For the sake of context, the appliance configuration at Christie Downs was a GP and Pump Rescue at that time.

It's important too, to understand the provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* where the Chief (as the PCBU) is responsible for the provision of any information, training, instruction or supervision necessary to protect all persons from risks to health and safety. And the duty of workers under the Act is to "cooperate with any reasonable policy (SOP) or procedure (SAP) of the PCBU.

MFS Officers have the responsibility to exercise due diligence and to ensure that all workers are provided with the necessary information and training to effectively carry out their role and responsibilities. It is the

legislated responsibility of the MFS to train and instruct on SAPs and SOPs: it is mandated that the MFS exercises due diligence to ensure this is happening and workers are mandated to cooperate with any reasonable (all) SAPs and SOPs.

In summary, the agreement by the State Council to act up on a Pump Hazmat and CAPA was a far from ideal compromise made at the time. A lack of an updated MFS SAP to reflect current operations was, and remains, extremely problematic.

A gap in the level of training provided to achieve the SFQ rank has been acknowledged by the MFS. Work is being done on the framework to address this gap and ensure that when our members achieve this level and are deemed qualified to act up, that they are better prepared.

Your State Council works towards maintaining and improving safety for our members. We feel strongly that we cannot recognise a gap in training and therefore a gap in the safety of our members but then *increase* that risk by endorsing further acting up on Pump Rescue Appliances. We believe this matter is about improving the level of training so that we are all able to operate in a safer and more effective way.

If you have concerns or queries in relation to this matter, you are invited to contact one of the following State Councillors:

Chas Thomas 0413 002 656
Michael Riggs 0400 211 325

Chris Barry 0417 885 538
Shaun Goad 0439 849 539

RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS – TRAINING NIGHT

Clause 33.1 of the *South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service Enterprise Agreement 2017* provides that “Retained Firefighters are required to attend their station for training/drill sessions/station and appliance maintenance and cleaning on the scheduled training night once per week for three and one-half (3.5) hours duration. Of the 3.5 hours, the 0.5 hours per week can be accumulated and used in a block for specific training as approved.”

Members at some stations advise of difficulties with reaching arrangements to work and be paid for 3 hours per week with the remaining 0.5 hour to be banked for specific training.

The UFU have confirmed with both MFS management and Shared Services this week that there is no impediment to this arrangement, subject to agreement being reached with the relevant regional Commander. A record of the banked hours will be maintained by the MFS and members will be paid for their specific training time as the training is undertaken.

MOTHERS’ DAY CLASSIC REMINDER

Please remember to put the date - Sunday 12 May 2019 - in your diary and watch out for the forthcoming WordBack for directions on how you, your family, friends and workmates can participate in the award winning UFU/MFS Team. The Organising Team Leaders FYI are Jo-Anna Kenney, Carly White and Chas Thomas.

In solidarity

Max Adlam
UFU SECRETARY

**JOIN US FOR THE 20TH FIREFIGHTERS BALL.
RAISING FUNDS TO SUPPORT
FIREFIGHTERS MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

Tickets on Sale now at the Fire Service Credit Union

Or pay with credit card over the phone by ringing the APFF on 8352 7587

OUR FAMILY
HELPING YOURS

Australian
Professional
Firefighters
Foundation

**ROARING
TWENTIES**

FIREFIGHTERS BALL

ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE

25TH MAY 2019

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE
FIRE SERVICE CREDIT UNION
OR PHONE 8352 7587

PRE DINNER DRINKS 7PM

TICKETS \$150 PER PERSON

20th
ANNIVERSARY

Three course dinner - Beer wine soft drinks - Entertainment - Silent Auction