

WAIPA RURAL FIRE AUTHORITY



RURAL FIRE PLAN 2015

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This plan should be read in conjunction with the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005, National Rural Fire Authority Rural Fire Management Code of Practice, Waipa District Council Fire Ground SOP's and Policies, Waipa District Council Bylaws and District Plan.

Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to outline the processes and procedures for the management of rural fire within the Waipa District Rural Fire Authority's district.

Waipa District Council has a statutory obligation to carry out the functions of a Rural Fire Authority as set out within the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, and the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005.

This Waipa Rural Fire Plan was first adopted in September 2006, Resolution No. 1/06/184.

The following amendments have been made:

Parts 2 and 3	Reviewed in 2007 by Council at the 28 August 2007 Council meeting, Resolution No. 1/07/161.
Parts 2 and 3	Reviewed in 2009 by Council at the 8 August 2009 Policy Committee meeting, Resolution No. 2/09/88.
Parts 1 and 4	Reviewed in 2010 by Council at the 14 September 2010 Policy Committee meeting, Resolution No. 2/10/68.
Parts 2 and 3	Reviewed in 2011 by Council at the 27 September 2011 Council meeting, Resolution No. 1/11/72.
Parts 2 and 3	Reviewed in 2013 by Council at the 24 September 2013 Council meeting, Resolution No. 1/13/93.
Parts 1 to 4	Reviewed in 2015 by Council at the 6 October 2015 Strategic Planning and Policy meeting, Resolution No. 2/15/103.

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Glossary

The Forest and Rural Fires Act, defines the following terms and words used in this Fire Plan:

- Exotic forest** means a forest, woodlot, or plantation comprised principally or entirely of tree species not indigenous to New Zealand.
- Fire control** in relation to forest, rural, and other areas of vegetation, means -
- a) The prevention, detection, control, restriction, suppression, and extinction of fire; and
 - b) The safeguarding of life and property from damage and risk of damage by or in relation to fire; and
 - c) All measures conducive to or intended to further or effect such prevention, detection, control, restriction, suppression, extinction, or safe-guarding; and "fire control measure" has a corresponding meaning.
- Fire Officer or Rural Fire Officer** means a person appointed as a Rural Fire Officer by or pursuant to section 13 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act.
- Fire plan** means a statement compiled and issued by a Fire Authority defining policy, chain of command, and procedure, in relation to fire control by that Authority.
- Fire safety margin** means -
- a) In relation to a State area (other than land administered by the Minister of Conservation pursuant to section 9A of the Foreshore and Seabed Endowment Revesting Act 1991), means the land outside the State area that is within 1 km of the boundary of the State area, excluding any land:
 - (i) specified in a Gazette notice given under section 11B:
 - (ii) in a fire district within the meaning of the Fire Service Act 1975
 - (iii) in a rural fire district; and
 - b) In relation to a forest area, means the land outside the forest area but within such a distance (not exceeding 1 km) from the boundary of the forest area as is approved by the Fire Authority for the area; but

- c) Does not include any land being the whole or part of a defence area within the meaning of the Defence Act 1990.

Firebreak means a natural or artificial physical barrier against the spread of fire from or into any area of continuous flammable material.

National Rural Fire Authority means the National Rural Fire Authority constituted under section 14A(1) of the Fire Service Act 1975.

Open season, or open fire season means a period of time, whether of fixed or indefinite duration, during which period the lighting of fires in the open air in that area or district is neither prohibited nor restricted under section 22 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act.

Permit in relation to the lighting of fires in the open air, means a fire control measure in accordance with which a person may light such fires without committing an offence against section 23(1) of this Act; and includes a special permit issued pursuant to section 24 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act:

Principal Rural Fire Officer means –

- a) In relation to any State area for which a Principal Rural Fire Officer is appointed by the Minister of Conservation or any other district for which a Principal Rural Fire Officer is appointed by the Fire Authority, means that officer or, where he or she is absent or unavailable or unable to act, the person acting as Principal Fire Officer pursuant to the Fire Plan for that area or district.
- b) In relation to any district (other than a State area) for which there is only one Fire Officer, means that officer or, where he is absent or unavailable or unable to act, the person acting as Principal Fire Officer pursuant to the Fire Plan for that district.
- c) In relation to any State area for which no Principal Rural Fire Officer has been appointed by the Minister [of Conservation], means any Rural Fire Officer appointed under section 13(3) of this Act and any warranted officer appointed under section 59(1) of the Conservation Act 1987.

Prohibited season or prohibited fire season means a period of time, whether of fixed or indefinite duration, specified pursuant to this Act, during which period the lighting of fires in the open air is prohibited under the Forest and Rural Fires Act:

**Restricted season or
Restricted fire season**

means a period of time, whether of fixed or indefinite duration, specified pursuant to this Act, during which period permits or authorities are required by this Act for the lighting of fires in the open air.

Executive Summary

The 2005 Forest and Rural Fires Regulations specify the requirements of Rural Fire Plans. This Rural Fire Plan (Fire Plan) is written in accordance with those regulations. Reference is made throughout this Fire Plan to indicate how the requirements of the Regulations are met.

The New Zealand Fire Service has operational jurisdiction within the urban areas of Te Awamutu and Cambridge. The balance of the area within the Waipa District Council Rural Fire Authority with the exception of the Department Of Conservation (DOC) controlled areas with their accompanying one (1) kilometer margin is under the jurisdiction of the Waipa Rural Fire Authority (Waipa Authority). In addition a Volunteer Rural Fire Fighting Force has been established to enable the community of Pirongia to respond to and assist at emergency events while waiting for the arrival of Emergency Services.

This Fire Plan sets out the policies and procedures that the Council has developed to enable it to effectively and efficiently undertake its statutory rural fire obligations, roles, and responsibilities. The Fire Plan is supported by a number of annexes that provide further details in terms of the operational aspects of those activities.

This Fire Plan is structured around the four components of emergency management being:

- [Reduction](#)
- [Readiness](#)
- [Response](#), and
- [Recovery](#).

The Fire Hazard and Risk Management Strategies section of this Fire Plan sets the scene within which rural fire operations are undertaken in the Waipa Rural Fire District. Information on the district and the statutory framework within which the Waipa Authority operates are also detailed.

The Reduction section deals with how the risk of fire is managed and public education matters are undertaken.

Maps of the area are provided in the Readiness section. It also specifies the responsibilities of the Waipa Authority and covers the policies and procedures relating to ensuring that people are trained, and have sufficient resources to undertake fire-fighting activities.

The Response section covers the aspects required to fight and put out rural fires. Communications and fire ground activities are dealt with.

The Recovery section deals with how the Waipa Authority investigates fires, and reviews its operations following any incident.

The last section of the Fire Plan, deals with administrative matters such as financial matters, Plan reviews, and arrangements between other Rural Fire Districts.

Fire Hazard and Risk Management Strategies

Hazardscape

The climate of Waipa District is determined by its topography and its geographical location in relation to the large-scale weather systems affecting New Zealand.

Lying in the centre of the North Island the whole district is sheltered from the predominately westerly winds, which flow over the North Island by a moderate range of hills that include Mt Pirongia. The result is a temperate climate with warm summers and reasonably mild winters.

Fire risks arise from: lightning strikes, spontaneous combustion of chemicals or damp vegetation, the arcing of power lines, or chimneys, stone strike from mowers or machinery, and the direct ignition of fire caused by people.

The Waipa Authority adopts the following fire management strategies as a means towards achieving the goals identified above:

Fire Prevention Strategy

The number and impact of preventable fires (i.e. unplanned fires of human origin) will be minimised through education, management of fire hazards and fire risks, enforcement, and administration.

This strategy recognises the principle that the impacts of preventable wildfires can be minimised.

Fire Preparedness Strategy

The potential for loss of human life and damage to landholder's assets and values will be minimised through the provision of responses that are appropriate in terms of level, time, and resources.

This strategy recognises the principle that the ability to respond to reports of fire and minimise resultant damages and losses demands a level of preparedness that is appropriate to the existing and forecasted level of fire danger and that also recognises the possibility of extreme fire conditions.

Fire Suppression Strategy

The impacts of fire within or threatening landholders assets or values will be minimised by ensuring that such fires that do occur are responded to with sufficient trained and competent firefighting personnel using appropriate equipment and apparatus, so as to undertake fast, determined, safe, and thorough suppression action.

This strategy recognises the principle that protection of human life will be given priority over all other activities and that the control of fires on or threatening the landholders lands will be given priority over normal business activities.

Fire Recovery Strategy

Any rehabilitation required as a result of damage caused by the fire or the suppression effort shall be in accordance with relevant Forest and Rural Fires legislation. Any other rehabilitation requirements shall be the responsibility of the landowner upon whose property the fire occurred.

This strategy recognises the principle that protection, and rehabilitation of, the environment from fire impacts is of importance to the fire authority, but that rehabilitation efforts remain with the landowner.

Structure of this Plan

This Fire Plan is made in accordance with Regulation 39 of the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005. Those regulations specify in detail the required structure and content of Rural Fire Plans. This Fire Plan is therefore organised into four parts.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Part One | Deals with matters of <u>Reduction</u> , in accordance with the specified requirements of the 2005 Regulations. |
| Part Two | Deals with matters of <u>Readiness</u> , in accordance with the specified requirements of the 2005 Regulations. |
| Part Three | Deals with matters of <u>Response</u> , in accordance with the specified requirements of the 2005 Regulations. |
| Part Four | Deals with matters of <u>Recovery</u> , in accordance with the specified requirements of the 2005 Regulations. |

Parts one to four of the plan contain material that corresponds with the four elements of the Waipa Authority's fire management strategy as described previously.

Further detail and information relevant to all parts of the Fire Plan is contained in a number of Appendices.

WAIPA DISTRICT RURAL FIRE AUTHORITY

Rural Fire Plan

Part 1: Reduction

1.1 Fire prevention planning

The Waipa Rural Fire Authority (Waipa RFA) plans a fire management programme directed towards mitigation or elimination of those hazards and risks that pose the greatest potential to cause unacceptable damage or losses. The focus is on preventing large and damaging fires and the associated reduction of fire suppression costs.

Hazards are areas that have a potential to burn. Risks are the uses, activities or events with the potential to cause a fire ignition.

Where fire hazards and fire risks are identified, consultation will be taken with the relevant landholders in order to manage these hazards and risks.

Where fire hazardous sites are identified the Principal Rural Fire Officer (PRFO) will request the landholder that has responsibility for the hazard to carry out fire breaking, fuel modification or fuel reduction burning, or any other action necessary, in order to reduce the hazard or to mitigate fire development.

The PRFO will ensure that as necessary an analysis of fire reports is carried out in order to identify the predominant types and cause of fire and will formulate action plans that focus on the mitigation of the impacts of fire and on the prevention of fire occurrence.

[Refer Regulation 41(1)]

1.2 Publicity and education

The Waipa RFA encourages community awareness of the threat of fire and of the responsible use of fire.

The PRFO has the authority and the responsibility to make arrangements with local print and radio media and the use of signs as necessary to ensure that local communities are aware of prevailing fire danger conditions.

Public awareness of rural fire is maintained through a multi-faceted approach including:

- Proactive media releases following fires;
- Media releases during periods of increased fire danger, e.g. Facebook;
- Erection of fire restriction or prohibition signs, and updating of fire danger indicator signs;
- Proactive investigation of fire sightings during periods of increased fire danger;
- Education initiatives through community meetings and schools;
- Advice to land owners; and
- Inspection of proposed burn-offs and issue of fire permits.

1.3 Public awareness and fire signs

Notification on the implementation / lifting of a Restricted or Prohibited Fire Season will be placed in the Public Notice Column of the Waikato times, The Te Awamutu Courier and Cambridge Edition newspapers.

During a Prohibited Fire Season 'Total Fire Ban' and 'Light No Fires' signs will be erected at strategic locations throughout the District, as soon as possible after such a season has been declared.

Other non-regulatory public educational signage may be erected from time to time.

[Refer Regulation 41(2)(c)]

1.4 Fire protection works

Protection works are those associated with the provision and maintenance of:

- Firebreaks (as provided for in legislation – refer to Section 27, Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977)
- Access (to be kept open and in useable condition)
- Water supply points (identified at roadsides and kept clear and accessible)
- Aircraft support facilities (where deemed necessary at appropriate sites)

The Waipa RFA may at any time, by notice in writing signed on its behalf by the PRFO, require any landholder of any land within the Fire District to make and clear, within the time and in the manner specified by the notice, such fire breaks, and in such positions, as the PRFO considers necessary for the purpose of fire control. All firebreaks are to be kept free of flammable material at all times.

Where flammable vegetation is present, landholders are recommended to undertake, as a fire control measure, fuel modification to provide a defensible space for structures, to the following dimensions and locations:

- Flat land (< 10° slope) - 25 metres all around

- Sloping land (> 10° slope) - 10m uphill; 15m side; 30m downhill

Note: Fuel modification is required so as to avoid concentrations of flammable vegetation or trees within the specified areas, and especially near the structure.

Any fire protection works that may be required, and which provide the infrastructure for fire suppression action, will be established in accordance with the principles of environmental care.

1.5 Use of fire as a land management tool

The policy is to permit the use of fire within the territorial area in accordance with the following provisions:

- (a) The issue of fire permits during any period that fire restrictions are in place is subject to an evaluation of current and forecasted fire danger conditions by the issuing Rural Fire Officer (RFO) or the PRFO to ensure that any permitted fires are lit during low fire risk weather conditions to minimise the potential for an escaped fire situation.
- (b) Applications for a Special Fire Permit during a period of fire prohibition may be granted under the provisions of the Forest and Rural Fires legislation.
- (c) The use of fire for land clearing operations or disease control must comply with any requirements of the District Plan, Council Bylaws, Waikato Regional Council "Clean Air" Policy, and provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991 and amendments.
- (d) All activities must comply with provisions of Sections 20 and 21 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, as well as complying with the conditions stated on permits issued pursuant to Sections 23 and 24 of the Act.
- (e) Any fire must remain contained within the property on which it is lit and shall not be permitted to spread to other properties or to structures. A burn plan must be prepared for prescribed burning during a Restricted Fire Season.
- (f) Use of fire on land adjoining Crown land, forests, or another Fire Authority requires consultation with the appropriate person responsible for those adjoining areas.

[Refer Regulation 41(2)(d)]

This strategy recognises that appropriate planning should be provided for fires that have the potential to get out of control and cause injury or damage to property.

1.6 Declared forests

There are no areas in the Waipa District that have been declared as forest areas under section 17 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act.

[Refer Regulation 41(2)(e)(i)]

1.7 Bylaws relating to fire control

Council has an urban fire bylaw which restricts open air fires within the urban areas of Te Awamutu, Cambridge, Leamington and Kihikihi. Permits can be granted at the discretion of the Environmental Officers. This bylaw also covers various rural communities which require a Rural Fire permit all year round.

1.8 Plan and policy compliance

Compliance with established and agreed standards is targeted through consultation with all parties concerned. Where necessary the Waipa RFA will apply the provisions of relevant legislation in order to gain compliance with those standards.

1.9 Access requirements and standards

Council has no specific policy or standards in terms of access (other than standards entrance requirements off its roads) to potential rural fire areas. It is, nevertheless in the interests of landowners to have suitable access to all parts of their properties, and any fire suppression activities could be hampered if suitable access is not available.

1.10 Fire Risk and Mitigation Systems

Hazards and risks form a significant part of the wildfire threat analysis.

The following steps are presently undertaken to mitigate hazards:

- Annual roadside grass mowing programme on major roads/highways with monitoring of vegetation re-growth levels by Regulatory Officers;
- Additional roadside mowing requested as determined by seasonal variations;
- Encouraging road-side grazing by farmers in risk areas;
- Volunteer Rural Fire Force established due to isolation of resources;
- Fire appliances and equipment are maintained to a high state of readiness;
- Public kept informed of increasing fire risk through media;
- Daily graphing of fire weather indices for fire prediction purposes during restricted season;
- Restricted Fire Season declared during periods of increased fire danger.

1.11 Fire prevention measures

The Waipa RFA is committed to promoting and developing fire prevention measures in its fire bylaws and in partnership with the NZ Fire Service and National Rural Fire Authority to reduce the incidence and impact of rural fires in the Waipa District.

[Refer Regulation 41(2)(b)]

1.12 Fire danger management

Wildfires can occur throughout the year and as such, a high state of readiness is maintained for 365 days. Increased monitoring and assessment occurs as the fire danger intensifies. The Waipa RFA imposes a restricted fire season annually from 1st December until the 31st March.

The Waipa RFA monitors the risk of outbreaks of fire on a daily basis throughout the restricted season by recording, plotting, and analysing data from:

- Daily Fire Weather Indices from National Rural Fire Authority;
- Known fire hazards and previous fire history;
- Local fuel loading on the ground;
- Local climatic conditions;
- Reconnaissance and intelligence from rural communities; and when deemed necessary, by physical checks of rural areas by experienced and qualified RFOs.

This information assists rural fire management staff to ascertain local fuel loads, risk of outbreaks, ease of ignition, likely spread rates, and potential fire behaviour.

1.13 Fire management control measures

The Forest and Rural Fires Act requires each Rural Fire Authority to promote and carry out fire control measures within its district, and in the interests of public safety take appropriate fire control measures, including, in particular:

- (a) The observation of weather and other conditions, and the assessment of fire hazard; (Fire weather indices recording as above 1.12).
- (b) The giving of warnings of the imminence of fire hazard conditions; and
- (c) The giving of any information available in relation to fire hazard conditions.

As detailed within this Fire Plan, Council undertakes these and other measures to reduce the likelihood of fires occurring within its district.

The Waipa RFA has assessed and calculated its Minimum Standard of Cover Rating, as Minimum Standard 'D'. This is based on the previous Rural Fire Management Code of Practice 2000, which is accepted by the NRFA as "Best Practice".

Details of calculations are shown on Annex 3.

1.14 Regard to National and Regional Policy Statements, Regional and District Plans and regulations made under the RMA

In undertaking its Rural Fire responsibilities Council takes account of the Resource Management Act and its own District Plan and bylaws.

[Refer Regulation 41(2)(e)(iv)]

1.15 Clean air requirements

The Ministry for the Environment has produced National Air Quality Standards, which came into effect on 8 October 2004.

The Air Quality Standards:

- Ban activities that discharge significant quantities of dioxins and other toxics into the air;
- Set minimum standards for outdoor air quality;
- Provide the design standard for new wood burners installed in urban areas; and
- Establish the requirement for landfills over 1 million tonnes of refuse to collect greenhouse gas emissions.

Waikato Regional Council has developed Rules in its Regional Resource Management Plan to limit the effects of smoke from industrial, agriculture, and home based activities. The Regional Council also provides information on good burning practice, specifies what material cannot be burnt, and also has rules for the burning of waste products. Further details on the Regional Council's rules can be found on their website www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/tyres

WAIPA DISTRICT RURAL FIRE AUTHORITY

Rural Fire Plan

Part 2: Readiness

2.1 Areas of responsibility

The Waipa RFA protects an area of land consisting of 147,369 hectares within the Waipa District, consisting predominantly of pastoral land with areas of indigenous forest, plantation forest and public reserves. This area excludes those areas of land under the jurisdiction of the NZ Fire Service, State areas (Crown land, Scenic Reserves) including the one (1) kilometre fire margin administered by the Department of Conservation.

NZ TOPO 50 Series topographical maps (1:50,000 scale) of the fire district and/or the area of responsibility are held in the Emergency Operating Centre of Council and will be updated as required for any change in the Territorial area of the Fire Authority.

Electronic devices are rapidly becoming available that support other detailed mapping systems of the area. This includes being able to access grid and/or Longitudinal and lateral references to assist in determining the correct RFA jurisdiction.

A map showing the area for which the Waipa RFA is responsible, including details of principal roads and surrounding Fire Authorities are attached to this plan at the rear of this section.

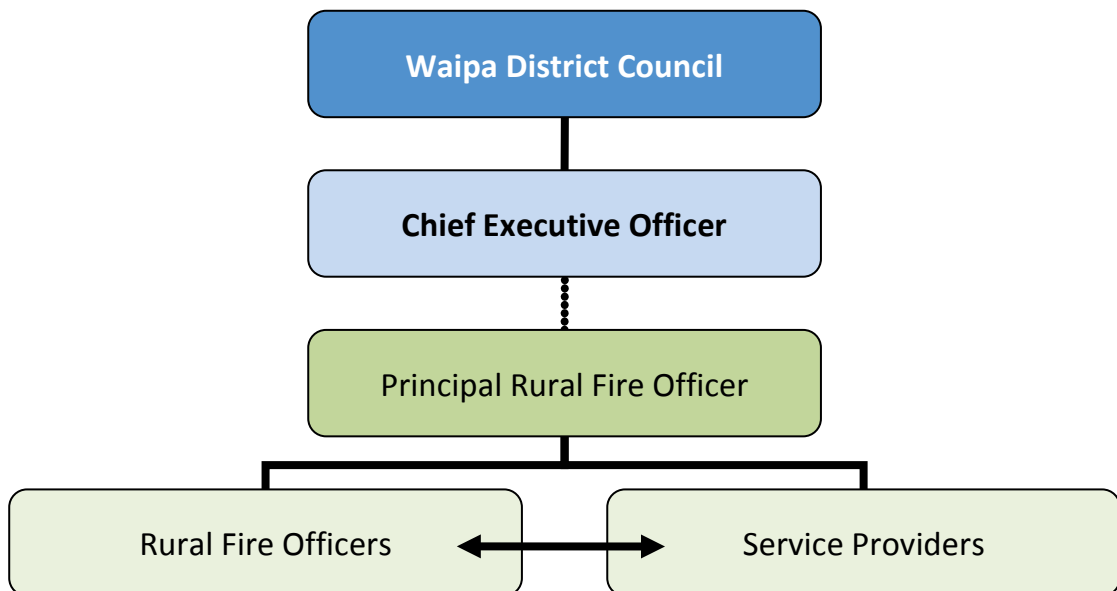
[Refer Regulation 42(2)(a)]

2.2 Responsibilities and chain of command

Council has a statutory obligation to carry out the functions of a Rural Fire Authority as set out within the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, and the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005.

The following diagram outlines the Waipa District Council Rural Fire Management Structure.

[Refer Regulation 42(2)(b)]



2.3 Appointment of officers

Council is responsible for the approval and appointment of a PRFO in terms of the Forest And Rural Fires Act 1977 on such terms and conditions as it may from time to time decide.

The Waipa RFA will appoint an appropriate number of RFOs. These appointments will be based on the experience and competency of the individual.

A confirmation letter of appointment and a Warrant of Appointment as PRFO or RFO as the case may be, will be issued by the Waipa RFA.

Personnel responsibilities:

(a) Principal Rural Fire Officer

The PRFO has the responsibility and the delegated authority to manage the business of the Waipa RFA.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- The discharge of all statutory requirements and the making of declarations and notifications that are pertinent to carrying out the duties and obligations of the fire authority;
- The compilation and submission of the Annual Return of Fires required under Section 50 of the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations, 1979;
- The preparation of annual budgets;
- The purchase of goods and services;

- The preparation of claims against the Rural Fire Fighting Fund, other cost recovery actions and representations or prosecutions associated with rural fires in the district;
- The preparation and presentation of reports to the Fire Authority.

(b) Rural Fire Officers

RFOs are responsible for carrying out the duties delegated to them under the conditions of their Warrant of Appointment, or other duties that the PRFO may assign to them from time to time.

The PRFO is the Rural Fire Authority's appointee to the Waikato Regional Rural Fire Committee and any other relevant Committees that may from time to time need representation by Council.

Names and contact numbers for the PRFO and other RFOs are presented in Annex 5.

2.4 Training and competency

Council will ensure that staff are trained and assessed competent in accordance with the National Rural Fire Authority Training Standards to fulfill the duties assigned to them. Council provides an annual training budget for the up-skilling of staff and volunteers. There may be occasions, particularly following staff turnover when it is not possible to have fully competent people available, and this will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Unless exceptional circumstances exist, fire fighters should only be assigned to perform tasks within their level of competency unless being trained under supervision for a higher level.

2.5 Inter-agency assistance

Agencies available to provide assistance to the Waipa RFA in respect of fire fighting and related activities are listed in Annex 6, together with relevant contact details.

2.6 Available resources

The list of resources available to the Waipa RFAs is set out in Annex 6. The resources of the Authority are kept and maintained in accordance with the following processes and procedures:

- The rural fire equipment shall be accommodated in secure and dry storage where it is easily available for immediate use.
- All mechanical equipment shall be tested at regular intervals (engines must reach operating temperature).

- All machinery including vehicles shall be kept in a state of full readiness, i.e. fuel, oil, water. All fire equipment used during an incident or training is to be checked and made ready for future events.
- All hoses including suction shall be tested at no longer than 2 yearly intervals and marked accordingly.
- All pumps shall be tested annually for output against manufacturer specifications.
- A log shall be kept of all tests carried out and any shortfalls shall be corrected immediately.

2.7 Inter-agency agreements

Council is a signatory to the following Agreements:

- Waikato Regional Rural Fire Committee Memorandum of Understanding between Fire Authorities;
- An Agreement under Section 15 of the Forest And Rural Fires Act 1977 with the New Zealand Fire Service Commission for initial response to fires, callouts, and alarms;
- An Agreement with the Pirongia Volunteer Rural Fire Force for the provision of services.

[Refer Regulation 42(2)(f)]

2.8 Specially protected areas

There are two specially protected areas within Waipa RFA. These are Lake Maratoto and a section of the Moanatuatua swamplands. They are protected because of their environmental significance. These areas are restricted all year.

2.9 Fire weather and fire danger monitoring, trigger points

The Waipa RFA is required under statute to monitor fire weather conditions on a daily basis during the fire season.

- (a) In the Waipa District Council area the local remote automatic weather station is located at Waikato Region Airport and is known as 'Hamilton Aero'. The information recorded from this site gives a good indication of the local fire conditions.
- (b) The PRFO will ensure that arrangements are in place for the monitoring and recording of fire weather and fire danger and for notification of appropriate Fire Weather Codes and Fire Behaviour Indices to key personnel.
- (c) The PRFO will ensure that weather forecasts covering a period of ten days, and specific to the territorial area are obtained as necessary.

For extreme fire danger levels, consideration will be given to media releases or alternative means of providing public awareness of the fire danger.

[Refer Regulation 42(2)(k)]

2.10 Fire season status including red flag days

Red flag days, as a means of alerting the public to elevated fire danger levels will not normally be utilized.

Council policy with regards to the fire season, is to minimise restrictions on farming operations, and to this end, the fire season status shall be 'OPEN', on condition that it is safe to be so between the 1st April and 30th November each year. During the period 1st December until 31st March each year the Fire Season shall be 'RESTRICTED'.

The fire season status shall be reviewed by the PRFO or an RFO based on Buildup Index (BUI) in combination with other data obtained from the National Rural Fire Authority, (NRFA), web site (www.fire.org.nz/rural) as outlined below:

Any changes to the fire season status will be publicly advertised in local news media, and adjoining fire authorities and the NRFA will also be notified of the changes.

2.10.1 Open fire season

When the BUI is on an upward trend but remains below 45 or is on a downward trends, below 35, the fire season status shall be "OPEN".

2.10.2 Restricted fire season

When the BUI is on an upward trend and is above 45 for a period of 7 days or more, or having reached 45 and is on a downward trend above 35, the fire season status shall be "RESTRICTED".

During a restricted fire season fire permits will be issued in accordance with sections 23 and 24 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 at the discretion of the PRFO or nominated deputies. The following general conditions pertain to the issue of permits:

- Permits will only be issued during normal working hours;
- A site visit may be required, and this shall be made within four working days of the request for one;
- Permits will be issued over the telephone if the applicant details meet standard conditions;
- There may be a charge for the permit;
- Permits for land clearing fires involving more than 5 Ha of land, may require a burn plan, prepared by the applicant and approved by the issuing officer prior to issue of the permit. Where values surrounding the planned burn area are

not considered significant, the PRFO may allow up to 10 Ha to be burnt before a burn plan is required.

2.10.3 Prohibited fire season

The Waipa RFA has a management practice not to implement the provisions of a prohibited fire season, instead if or when the BUI is on an upward trend and reaches 60 and once having reached 60, is on a downward trend above 55, the use of fire may be constrained by ceasing the issue of permits and suspending any that remain current.

When considering the BUI level, consideration will also be given to the Initial Spread Index, (ISI), in relation to the table below in section 2.12.

2.11 Fire danger indicator signs

The Waipa RFA does not utilise fire danger indicator signs.

2.12 Preparedness levels

The requirement is that the preparedness levels of fire suppression resource will be appropriate to the existing and forecasted levels of fire danger.

The PRFO will ensure that the preparedness requirements are implemented in accordance with the fire danger rating classification as described below:

FIRE DANGER RATING CLASSIFICATION

BASED ON INITIAL SPREAD INDEX (ISI) AND BUILD UP INDEX (BUI)

FIRE DANGER CLASS				
	Build Up Index Level			
	BUI <20	BUI 20-40	BUI 41-80	BUI >81
LOW	ISI <3	ISI <1	ISI <1	ISI <1
MODERATE	ISI 3-10	ISI 1-6	ISI 1-4	ISI 1-3
HIGH	ISI 10-20	ISI 6-13	ISI 4-9	ISI 3-7
VERY HIGH	ISI 20-25	ISI 13-17	ISI 9-13	ISI 7-10
EXTREME	ISI >25	ISI >17	ISI >13	ISI >10

2.12.1 Low fire danger

Working hours i.e. 0800 to 1700 hours

- PRFO or Deputy on call.

After hours

- As above.

2.12.2 Moderate fire danger

Working hours

- PRFO or Deputy on call.
- Key staff to be advised of fire danger level

After hours

- As above.

2.12.3 High fire danger level

Working hours

- PRFO or Deputy on call and available within 15 minutes.
- All action to be recorded in Fire Log.
- Key staff to be advised of fire danger level.

After hours

- As above.
- Additional staff personnel to be placed on call as the PRFO and / or Deputy consider necessary.

2.12.4 Very high fire danger level

Working hours

- PRFO or Deputy on call and available within 15 minutes.
- All action to be recorded in Fire Log.
- All staff to be advised of fire danger level.

After hours

- As above.
- Additional staff personnel to be placed on call as the PRFO and / or Deputy consider necessary.

2.12.5 Extreme Fire Danger Level:

Working hours

- PRFO or Deputy to remain in their office.
- PRFO or Deputy to alert such manpower and other resources as is considered essential to cover the area affected by the Extreme Fire Danger conditions.
- All action to be recorded in Fire Log.
- All staff to be advised of fire danger level.

After hours

- PRFO or Deputy to be in immediate contact at home or office.
- Other District personnel to be placed on "alert" as the PRFO and / or Deputy consider necessary.

Special Note: Alert is to remain until otherwise directed by the PRFO or the Deputy.

Note: An "EXTREME" fire danger rating relates to days with high wind speeds and an extremely high potential rate of fire spread.

This level is only likely to be reached under severe, prolonged drought conditions.

Dependent upon the level of fire danger, personnel may be required to standby after normal working hours.

Standby requirements will be determined as early as possible in order to schedule personnel as required prior to weekends or holiday periods.

2.13 Fire detection

The use of the 111 system for notification of fires shall be fostered. It will be included in the Public Education Programme and the public notified that a 111 call is the quickest response method available.

An alphanumeric pager system for receiving fire notifications from the Northern COMCEN will be maintained by call centre staff during both business hours and after hours.

2.14 Arrangements and agreements made under section 15 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977

Section 15 provides for the supply of equipment and firefighting services from the NZ Fire Service Commission.

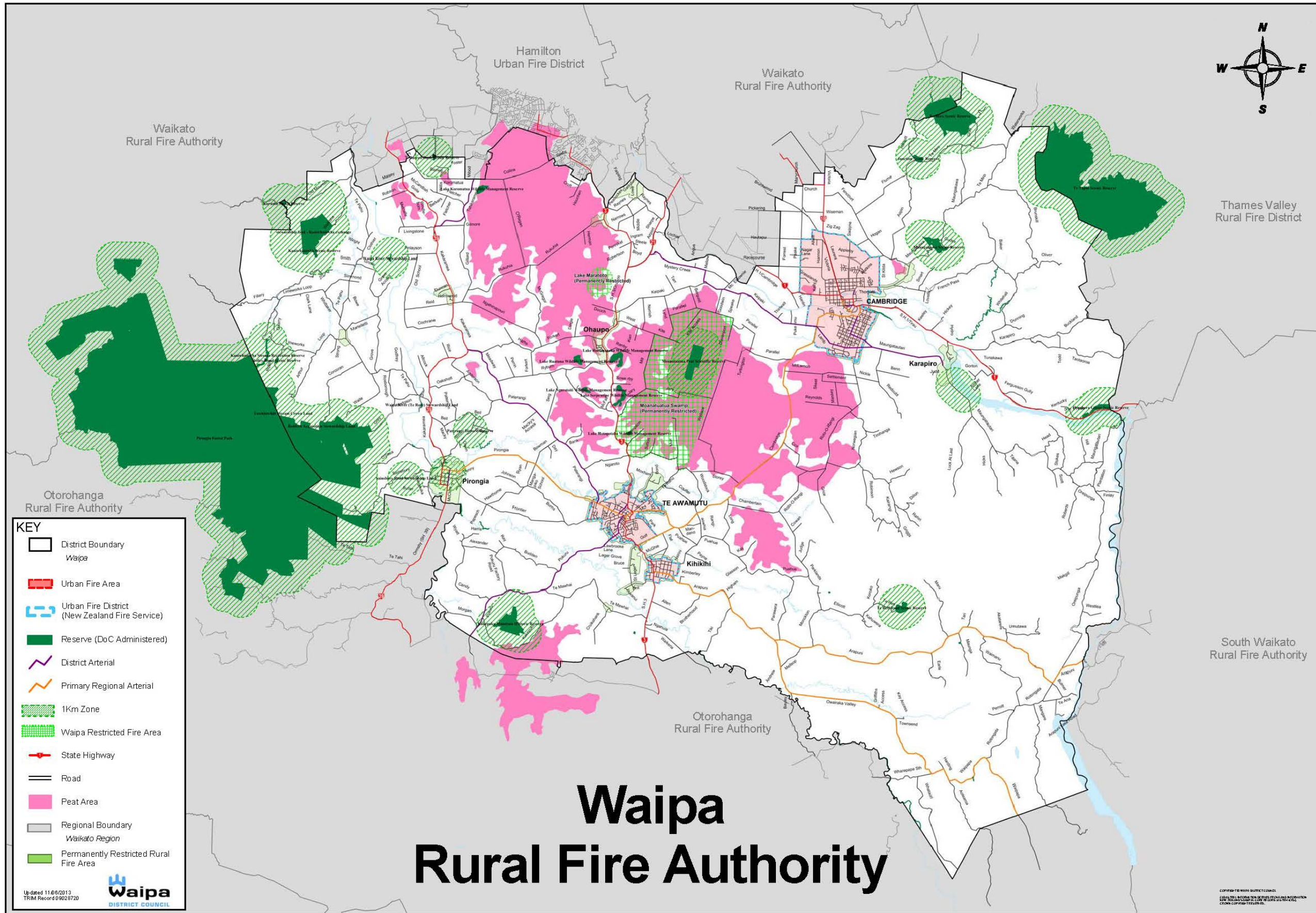
In order to maintain an efficient response to fire incidents, Waipa RFA has statutory agreements with:

- The Fire Service Commission, under Section 15 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977.

The Waipa RFA has agreements for the purpose of fire control and service provision with its volunteer fire brigades that are located within its district.

[Refer Regulation 42(2)(h)]

Map of Waipa Rural Fire Authority Area of Responsibility



WAIPA DISTRICT RURAL FIRE AUTHORITY

Rural Fire Plan

Part 3: Response

3.1 Priorities for fire fighting

The Fire Authority recognises that the saving of human life must at all times take priority over all other actions.

Fire Control operations take priority over all other operations except where danger to life exists.

The general order of priority is:

- (a) Life
- (b) Property
- (c) Vegetation.

3.2 Calls for assistance

Calls notifying of suspicious or uncontrolled fires are generally directed to the New Zealand Fire Service via the 111 system, who in turn will call out the relevant local Volunteer Fire Brigade. Callers notifying of fires by other means (for example by calling direct to Council) are directed to use the 111 system.

Members of the relevant Volunteer Brigade are notified of the incident via personal pagers and fire station sirens.

3.3 Initial response

Waipa RFA's agreement with the Waikato Bay Of Plenty Fire Region ensures NZFS personnel and designated RFO's are available 24 hours per day. Council's PRFO and RFO are available as required. The Te Awamutu Volunteer Fire Brigade also hold rural firefighting equipment on a 4x4 ute. The majority of all volunteer fire fighters in Waipa hold the unit standard in personal safety at vegetation fires.

On receipt of the alert the PRFO or service provider nominated in this plan shall refer to the 'Action for Emergency' checklist in Annex 9 and 10 and begin immediate implementation as appropriate.

Each Fire Brigade and the Rural Fire Fighting Force in Waipa have RFOs appointed who can carry out their duties. If the fire is not in the Council area, the Brigade or Council staff will notify the relevant Fire Authority.

Relevant information can be captured on the “Fire Call Questionnaire” form, an example of which is presented in Annex 9.

3.4 Deployment of additional resources

The decision whether to escalate the initial response, or not, will be made by the Incident Controller (Fire Boss) using the CIMS process.

Contact details for various service providers are included in Annex 6. These agencies may be called upon to assist should the situation escalate beyond available resource capabilities.

In the event of the Incident Controller requiring further assistance in terms of skills and expertise, or resources for a large incident, the Waikato Regional Incident Management Team (RIMT) is available to assist by contacting the COMCEN and requesting activation of the “RIMT Waikato” pager group.

3.5 Multiple fires

When more than one fire occurs at the same time resources must respond to all incidents. Outside resources must be used when available.

If sufficient resources are not available to control all fires the PRFO or in his absence the RFO must decide on the appropriate action to take and the order in which resources will be used at each fire. For significant incidents, consideration will be given to using the combined skills and resources of the Waikato Regional Incident Management Team.

Requests for assistance to, or assistance from, Fire Authorities and organisations outside the Rural Fire District are to be channeled through the PRFO.

3.6 Command and control

The PRFO or his nominated deputy may take charge of fire fighting operations but will not become involved personally in actual “hands-on” fire fighting.

The PRFO or his nominated deputy may instruct any appropriately qualified and experienced person to take charge of any fire control activity regardless of their position or seniority.

Volunteer Fire Brigade personnel in Waipa will exercise initial command and control at rural fire incidents under the terms of the ‘Section 15’ and ‘Contract for Service’ Agreements.

The New Zealand Coordinated Incident Management System, (CIMS), will be used to assist organisation at larger fires.

3.7 Communications

Standard operating procedures for the use of New Zealand Fire Service, ‘Emergency Services Band’ (ESB), radios which will be used on the fire ground.

The NZFS has standardized on the ESB for its incident ground communications. This means that Rural Fire Forces can now communicate with NZFS personnel on the fire ground.

The type of radio transmitters, (R/T), used by the Pirongia Volunteer Rural Fire Fighting Force are ICOM F11 which are compatible with the Simoco type used by the NZFS.

Communications between the New Zealand Fire Service Communications Centre (FIRECOM) and the PRFO or Deputy shall be via telephone or cell phone.

3.7.1 Channel assignments

ICOM F11 NO#	Ch	Simoco Ch. NO#	Frequency	Description	ICOM Transmit Freq. MHz	ICOM Receive Freq. MHz
1		1	ESX 66	Fire 1	143.8250	143.8250
2		2	ESX 63	Fire 2	143.7875	143.7875
3		3	ESX 34	Fire 3	140.9250	140.9250
4		4	ESX 09	Fire 4 Air Ops	140.6125	140.6125
5		10	ESX 39	CIMS Simplex	140.9875	140.9875
6		20	ESB164	CIMS Repeater	140.0500	143.0500
7		21	ESB180	Fire Repeater	140.2500	143.2500
8		-	ESB148	Waipa District Council – Operations channel	142.850	139.850

3.7.2 Air operations

All air operators will make initial contact with the fire ground on Simoco channel ‘5’ which is Icom channel ‘10’.

The Operations Manager will confirm the arrival instructions, landing site and the designated air operations channel, (Fire '4').

All air operations traffic will use 'Fire 4' when aircraft are operating on the fire ground.

3.7.3 Other means Of communication

Cell phones are another form of communications, which can be used at rural fires. It should be noted however that there could be gaps in the coverage area for cellular use and this system should not be relied upon as the sole means of communication.

There is also available to Rural Fire, Civil Defence handheld R/T. These contain CD simplex frequencies on the ES Band, and also include the Council operations repeater channel, (Icom channel '8').

3.8 Recording of incident details

The Incident Controller will be responsible for initiating an adequate log of fire events. As well as paying due regard to the **Action for Emergency** checklist in Annex 9, an effort will be made to record all activities, issues, decisions and occurrence times.

The CIMS "**Incident Management Organiser**" or similar will be used, and forms are held by all warranted RFO's as well as in the Waipa Fire Brigade appliances.

Each key participant will be encouraged to maintain individual logs, where practicable. This will assist with the later corroboration of events and maximise the potential learning outcome of the de-brief process.

3.9 Notification of other parties

Other Fire Authorities, owners of forests and other relevant or interested parties will be notified of fire events as and when appropriate. Non-urgent notification of owners etc. will however not be attempted unless this can be done without compromising efforts to control the fire.

Enquiries by Media representatives are to be referred to the PRFO or his or her nominee.

3.10 Recording of personnel and equipment movements

Incoming and outgoing personnel and equipment shall be monitored and recorded through regular situation reports, or, where deemed appropriate, through use of a T-Card system.

3.11 Monitoring of fire behaviour

The behaviour of a fire will be monitored by the Incident Controller, who shall make use of both on site assessment of conditions using intuition and relevant data from external sources such as the 'Met Connect' weather forecasting service. The extent of monitoring required may vary between incidents, but in all cases sufficient monitoring must be conducted to limit the risk of unforeseen fire behavior to an acceptable level.

3.12 Provision of logistical support

If the fire requires more resources, a Group Officer or Operations Officer will immediately activate the Waipa District Council Emergency Operations Centre and arrange for appropriate logistical support.

Contact details for personnel and equipment are contained in Annex 6, Logistics.

3.13 Personnel health and safety

Health and safety of rural fire fighters is of paramount importance and is encompassed within the general Health and Safety Policy of Council.

Council RFOs ensure that Volunteer Fire Brigade members receive regular reinforcement.

These Officers also monitor operations at incidents to ensure that safe working practices are adhered to. RFOs have a prime responsibility for maintaining safety of crews, both at incidents and during training.

A Safety Officer will be appointed at all incidents. This position may be held in conjunction with another command role at small incidents but safety must become a separate function at larger incidents.

All accidents are to be investigated and documented as required by Council Policy.

Health and safety issues identified at fire debriefings are to be addressed as appropriate.

[Refer Regulation 46(2)(a)]

3.14 Protective Clothing

No one is permitted to take part in fire suppression or controlled burning operations unless they are suitably dressed, as defined in the National Rural Fire Authority Fire Equipment, Personal Protective Equipment Standards 2006. This includes:

- Boots with heat resistant sole
- Ankle to wrist clothing (cotton, wool or fire resistant)

- Safety helmet, and/or balaclava
- Where personnel are involved in loading water or fire fighting chemicals into helicopter buckets or aircraft, wet weather protective clothing is to be worn

3.15 Electrical hazards and gas lines

Under no circumstances are personnel to be committed to extinguishing fires near or under electrified lines without ensuring lines are dead. Hosing water or driving vehicles with radio aerials underneath electrified lines is particularly hazardous. A level of caution should be applied to pressurised gas pipes.

Confirmation of a dead power line should only be recognised when a Tranz Rail or power authority official arrives at the scene and provides confirmation.

3.16 Use of fire suppressants

Use of fire suppressants shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

Class “A” foam use

Class “A” fire fighting foam is water held in bubble form with air and should be used for direct fire suppression and mopping up.

Foam has short-term retardant properties and is best applied at, or just ahead, of the flame edge. It may be applied using either ground or aerial application methods.

Foam effectiveness is dependent upon the type of foam produced. It must be appropriate for the job that has to be done. Guideline applications for different foam types are presented in the table below.

Foam Type	Suitability
Sticky, slow draining, dry foam	Used for structure protection and is applied some time ahead of the arrival of a flame front
Medium consistency, wet foam	Used for direct fire suppression and protection of vegetation as a short term fire barrier
Sloppy, fast draining, wet foam	Used for direct fire suppression and mop up action

Application rates

These will vary between 0.1% to 0.6%. (If in doubt use 0.6% and assess the effectiveness of the foam produced).

Communications

The effectiveness of any foam application must be judged by the visual effects. Direct communications must be established with the operators applying the foam (i.e. Ground to Air; Pump to Nozzle).

Protective Clothing

Protective gloves and goggles must be worn when handling foam concentrate. Ground crews loading aircraft with foam must wear protective wet weather gear.

3.17 Use of fire retardants

Use of fire retardants shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

Firetrol and Phoschek are long-term retardants. They are chemical compounds that coat fuels and check flame development and are best applied well ahead of a fire, (generally by aircraft), to allow them time to dry and create a firebreak.

Retardants are not intended for use as a direct flame suppressant and should not be applied directly to the fire edge.

Firetrol should be added to water in the following ratios:

- Crown fires 1:4
- Fires in fern, gorse and other heavy fuels 1:10
- Fires in grass and tussock 1:15

Note: Precautions must be taken to minimise contamination of watercourses.

Protective clothing

Protective gloves and goggles must be worn when handling retardant. Ground crews loading aircraft with retardant must wear protective wet weather gear.

3.18 Mop-up and patrol procedures

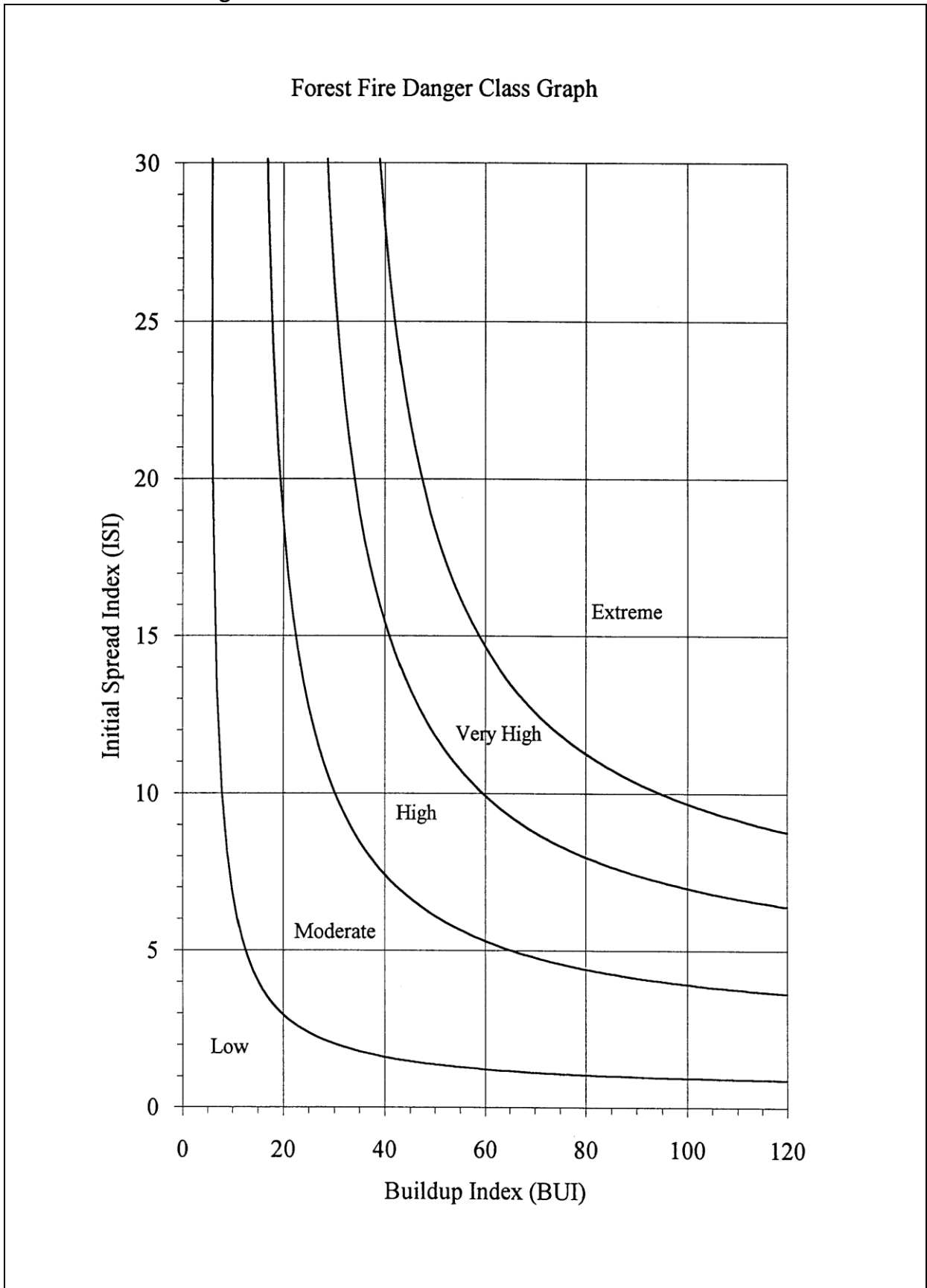
Mop-up action using hand tools and water with additives (if necessary to ensure maximum penetration) will continue until the fire is completely extinguished.

Hot spots are to be systematically searched out and burning spars are to be felled. Infra red heat detection equipment may need to be used to ensure that all hot spots are located.

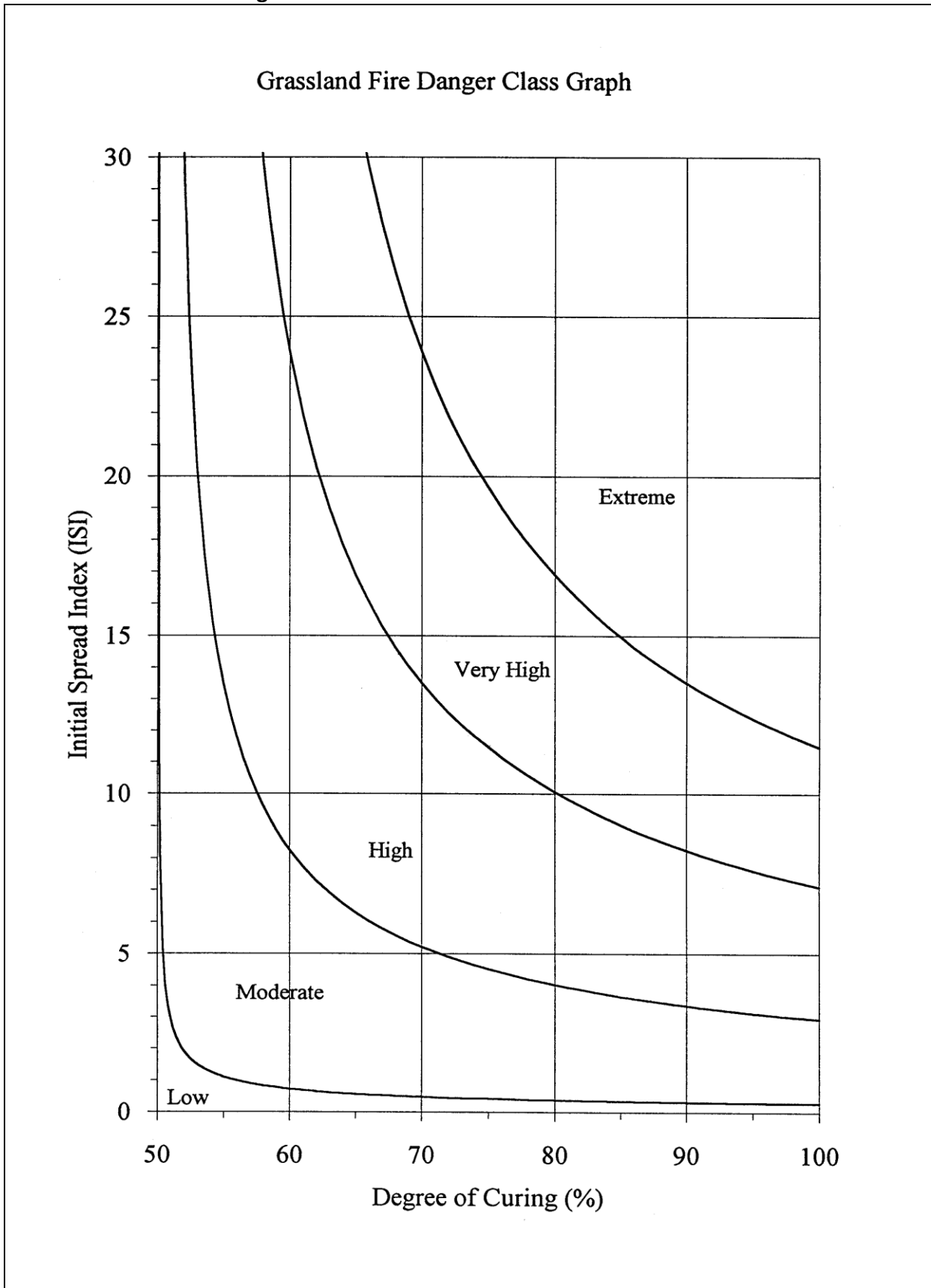
No burnt over area will be declared as safe until a personal inspection has been carried out by the Fire Officer in charge of the incident.

Particular care must be taken when declaring a fire or controlled burn to be out. All fires and controlled burns will be patrolled until the fire has been extinguished.

3.19 Forest fire danger chart



3.20 Grassland fire danger chart



WAIPA DISTRICT RURAL FIRE AUTHORITY

Rural Fire Plan

Part 4: Recovery

4.1 Fire site rehabilitation

As soon as practicable after a fire is declared safe the PRFO may, if considered necessary, arrange for an assessment of the fire site to determine what, if any, rehabilitation measures need to be taken.

Any such assessment must consider the following:

- Need for repairs to soil disturbance or exposure as a result of access track or fire control line construction
- Drainage control work on temporary access tracks and constructed fire control lines
- Removal of soil and vegetation deposited in streams or wetlands as a result of fire fighting provided this can be achieved without a resultant increase in environmental disturbance
- Collection and removal of litter, plastic containers etc. associated with fire operations.

The policy is that the costs of rehabilitation required as a result of fire damage or as a result of damage done during suppression operations will be borne by either the person responsible for causing the fire or the landholder whose land is involved.

4.2 Debriefs

A debrief conforming with the requirements and procedures set out in the “National Template for Fire Debriefs” (NRFA circular #19) will be held following each major fire incident attended by the Fire Authority.

The Waipa RFA will investigate all major fires that occur within the Fire District. Debriefs will be held following most rural fires, and full investigations, as appropriate and required by the RFMCOP will be carried out, using the services of a specialist fire investigator, if required, in one or more of the following instances:

- There has been loss of human life
- Significant property damage has occurred
- Significant environmental damage has occurred

- Suppression costs have been very high

All debriefs should occur as soon as the incident has been declared out or within ten (10) days of the fire being declared out. A record of all debriefs shall be kept by the Fire Authority.

Obligations to make changes/improvements that are identified in the debrief shall be allocated to a named person who will be responsible for the outcome.

The debrief is not intended to be a “witch-hunt” but an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of Fire Control systems, Fire Suppression, co-operation and co-ordination from an actual Fire Emergency situation.

4.3 Health and safety

Special attention shall be paid in debriefs to matters that had actual or potential adverse effects in respect of health and safety.

When fire fighting has been prolonged, or there were associated traumatic experiences (such as ‘near misses’, injury or death), critical incident stress debriefing and counseling is to be provided.

Health and safety issues identified at fire debriefings are to be addressed as appropriate.

4.4 Funding of rural fire activities

Costs associated with the management and operation of the territorial area will be provided by Council as an annual budget item, with provision for amendment as a result of unforeseen circumstances, or increase in rural fire occurrence.

The base operating costs of rural fire resources is the responsibility of Council with the exception of any resources provided under item 4.4.1 below

4.4.1 Landholder provided rural fire resources

Council recognises that the costs of provision, operation and maintenance of any fire management and fire control resources or fire protection works (such as firebreaks, water supplies, aircraft facilities, access etc.), that any landholder within the territorial area may provide for the protection of their own property or assets will be borne by the landholder(s) concerned.

4.5 Charging for services

A charge will be made for services provided by the Waipa RFA where this is deemed to be appropriate.

4.6 Cost recovery and prosecution

Council may initiate prosecution where there is clear evidence of negligence with respect to breach of fire permit conditions or where there is deliberate contravention of the provisions of the forest and rural fires legislation.

- (a) In the first instance attempts will be made to recover any costs for fire suppression from the perpetrator of the fire. If this is not successful or the perpetrator of the fire can not be identified, then procedures as per (b) below take place.
- (b) Costs for fires will be claimed against the Rural Fire Fighting Fund by the Fire Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Service Act 1975.
- (c) Landholders retain the right and are free to make their own claims from their insurers for their costs that are not recovered through the due process of civil action or that are not recovered by the Fire Authority.

4.7 Fire investigations

All fires will be investigated by Council RFOs or by a contracted investigator as required to determine probable cause and liability. The Fire Investigation Form will be used for all fires that may result in a claim on the Rural Fire Fighting Fund, or for fires that result in a reimbursement of suppression costs.

Council will endeavour to recover all fire suppression costs for all fires where liability can be determined pursuant to Section 43 Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, or impose a levy pursuant to Section 46 when appropriate.

The PRFO may initiate prosecution action for cost recovery or for offences as required.

4.8 Post fire investigations [cause]

The following actions must be undertaken after attendance at a fire call/incident:

- Within 10 days, complete a *Fire Incident Report Form* for all fires, burn offs, and smoke investigations.
- Within 10 days, of any large fire conduct an operational critique on actions taken at the fire scene. Details must be taken on any fire that may lead to legal proceedings.
- Within 28 days, initiate action to recover fire costs from National Rural Fire Authority Fund, person responsible, or charges for assistance given to another authority.
- Within 28 days ensure payment of personnel, and contractors, or other authorities utilised for assistance is initiated.

[Refer Regulation 46(2)(d)]

4.9 Operational debriefs [at incident]

Council will undertake structured operational debriefs of all fire incidents using the format and procedures developed by the National Rural Fire Authority.

[Refer Regulation 46(2)(c)]

4.10 Operational critiques [investigation]

Council is committed to continuously improving performance and service to the public in Waipa District, as such, the PRFO (within Council policy) will implement all recommendations arising from structured critiques of fire incidents. Critiques of fires will also consider the cost effectiveness of operations, particularly those where a claim may be made on the Rural Fire Fighting fund.

Operational critiques (sometimes referred to as debriefs) should be conducted within 10 days of significant events, i.e. fires involving 5 or more appliances/trailer units, more than 2 hours to suppress, or 2 or more Fire Authorities.

A format for conducting an operational critique is included as Annex 10.

4.11 Operational reviews [full audit]

Waipa RFA is committed to maintaining effective and efficient fire suppression operations by carrying out audits.

The criteria for conducting an incident audit (additional to any operational critique) are:

- All responses to Civil Defence Emergencies by Rural Fire Authority resources;
- Incidents causing significant loss to a community, e.g. property, heritage, environmental, or financial;
- When determined as appropriate by the PRFO or Deputy; or
- When the Deputy considers that the outcome of such an audit will benefit the wider Region.

The audit shall be conducted by a team comprised of a minimum of three members drawn from:

- Experienced RFO;
- Senior Fire Service Officer; and
- Experienced Rural Fire Manager from another organisation.

The audit team shall work within the terms of reference produced by the person requesting the audit. The audit team shall produce a report that contains the

following elements and is compatible with the format being developed by the National Rural Fire Authority:

- Incident overview;
- Executive summary;
- Fire ground operations;
- Associated costs;
- Safety aspects;
- Accidents and injuries;
- Fire cause investigation issues;
- Environmental issues;
- Other issues arising;
- Conclusions; and
- Recommendations.

[Refer Regulation 46(2)(b)]