

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEER CHARTER



INTENT

The intent of this Charter is to ensure:

- consultation occurs with Volunteers about all matters that affect them,
- consideration of Volunteers' views when approving or adopting new, practices or policies,
- consideration of Volunteers' views when consulting on proposed amendments to legislation,
- consideration of Volunteers' views when reviewing current legislation, practices or policies,
- recognition that there is a mutual obligation and practical partnership based on respect between the parties,
- that a fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory approach is taken by all, and
- the safety of the South Australian community.

This Charter identifies the key roles and responsibilities of the parties as set out below.

INTRODUCTION

The Volunteer members of the South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) are fundamental to emergency management in South Australia. Their value and importance is recognised and highly regarded by the South Australian community. Volunteers and the commitment they bring to the community through prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities remain the core strength of the SASES.

SASES Volunteers selflessly bring time and life skills to minimise the loss of life, injuries and damage from emergencies and natural disasters. They do this by:

- responding to flood and storm events,
- undertaking rescue activities including road crash, vertical rescue, land search, swift water rescue, marine search and rescue, confined space rescue, structural collapse, and animal rescue, and
- assisting police, health and other emergency services in dealing with any emergency.

This Charter provides a framework for the commitment to protect the needs and interests of Volunteers.

Section 107A of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005* provides parliamentary recognition of the SASES Volunteer Charter as a statement of the commitment and principles that apply to the Government of South Australia, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) and SASES and ensures that they:

- consult with SASES Volunteers and the South Australian State Emergency Service Volunteers' Association (SASESVA) about all matters that affect them, and

- consider Volunteers' views when adopting or approving new, practices and policies or reviewing current practices or policies, and
- consider Volunteers' views when consulting on proposed amendments to current and any new legislation.

This Charter was written in consultation with the Government of South Australia, SAFECOM, SASES, SASESVA and SASES Volunteers and recognises that these parties operate under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Role

SASES Volunteers are drawn from communities throughout South Australia to participate in an integrated emergency service. This is a practical partnership based on mutual respect for the SASES, the staff employed by the SASES and personnel of other organisations. This ensures that community safety needs are met to the best of their collective abilities.

SASES Volunteers depend on the goodwill and practical support of their families, friends, employers and local communities to enable them to serve, recognising that time available to them is limited by the needs and demands of their families, employment and other obligations. SASES Volunteers do not contribute their time for financial reward, but gain satisfaction from service, achievement, personal development and camaraderie.

Responsibilities

SASES Volunteers will:

- where able, provide their services for the protection of life, property and the environment, where the emergency is caused by flood or storm, or when the need arises as provided by the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*,
- provide specialist rescue services such as road crash, vertical rescue, land search, swift water rescue, marine search and rescue, confined space rescue, structural collapse and animal rescue,
- undertake other relevant duties in order to create a safer community through a mutually respectful and active partnership with the paid staff of the SASES, other organisations and the community,
- operate safely in accordance with the policies and procedures of the SASES and SAFECOM,
- undertake appropriate training and planning to ensure their personal safety and to enhance the delivery of services in promoting a safer community,

- exercise the powers vested in them by the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005* and *Fire and Emergency Service Regulations 2021* in the best interests of the community,
- recognise and support the consultative mechanisms as agreed with the SASES,
- recognise that the SASESVA is an association that represents the interests of Volunteers,
- be committed to working in harmony and consultation with the SASES and SAFECOM, in accordance with the *SASES Code of Conduct*, and
- seek to resolve disputes appropriately within policy.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS' ASSOCIATION

Role

The SASESVA is recognised as an association that represents the interests of SASES Volunteers. It is empowered to take such steps as may be reasonably available to it to promote and advance the best interests of SASES Volunteers and provide an additional means of consultation and communication for them. On behalf of, and in the interest of SASES Volunteers, it liaises with the SASES executive management, SAFECOM and the Minister for Emergency Services to identify and develop strategic directions in providing emergency services in South Australia.

Responsibilities

The SASESVA will:

- fairly represent SASES Volunteers to protect and progress their interests and welfare within the emergency services sector,
- ensure that consultation occurs with Volunteers about all matters that affect them,
- consider Volunteers' views when adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices or policies,
- work to secure conditions that contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of SASES units and their development,
- represent Volunteers on various committees,
- nominate a person to the Board of SAFECOM,
- provide a single voice and proactive arm for SASES Volunteers that derives from outside Government, and
- encourage SASES Volunteers to comply with SAFECOM and SASES strategic obligations and directions.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEER CHARTER



GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Role

The Government of South Australia supports and recognises the role that emergency service Volunteers play in our community.

The Government supports the energy, dedication and enthusiasm of SASES Volunteers by providing support to emergency services. It provides appropriate facilities and equipment to ensure that members are trained and resourced. This Charter develops this relationship further for SASES Volunteers and the Government of South Australia.

Responsibilities

The Government of South Australia supports Volunteers by:

- recognising, valuing, respecting and promoting SASES Volunteers, their families and employers for their contributions to the well-being and safety of the people of South Australia,
- ensuring that relevant legislation appropriately recognises the needs and interests of SASES Volunteers who provide their service in accordance with the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*,
- providing protection for Volunteers under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*, *Volunteers Protection Act 2001*, *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* and *Return to Work Act 2014*,
- ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to enable consultation with SASES Volunteers and the SASESVA about all matters that affect them,
- applying a whole of Government approach to effectively consider Volunteers views when adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices and policies,
- committing to developing active and positive communication networks and respecting one another's confidential information, and
- ensuring Volunteers are kept informed and up to date with issues and their views are accurately represented.

The Government works through two specific agencies in supporting SASES Volunteers - SAFECOM and the SASES.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSION (SAFECOM)

Role

SAFECOM provides the governance, strategy and policy aspects of the emergency services, namely the SASES, the South Australian Country Fire Service and South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service.

Responsibilities

SAFECOM will:

- support and encourage voluntary participation in the SASES, and foster and support personal development opportunities for members of the emergency services organisations,

- recognise outstanding achievements of persons who are involved in the provision of fire and emergency services, or who take action or assist at the scene of any fire or emergency or who otherwise support the objectives or activities of the emergency services sector (or any part of that sector), within any part of the State,
- ensure that Volunteer views, opinions and concerns are considered through the SASES/SASESVA before adopting any new or revised policies, procedures or approaches which might affect them as SASES Volunteers,
- recognise and promote innovation, safety and efficiency within the SASES,
- use established SASES/SASESVA mechanisms to consult with stakeholders, unions and associations and other government agencies to discuss matters of common concern in relation to SASES Volunteers,
- promote a team based performance culture throughout the emergency services sector, and
- actively seek financial and other support from Government to ensure Volunteers are adequately resourced to meet legislated obligations and community expectations.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Role

The SASES is a reliable and trusted volunteer based organisation building safe and resilient communities; minimising the loss of life, injuries and damage from emergencies and natural disasters in South Australia.

Responsibilities

The SASES will:

- recognise, value, respect and promote SASES Volunteers,
- consult with Volunteers and the SASESVA about all matters that affect them,
- incorporate, Volunteers' views when developing, adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices or policies,
- recognise that the SASESVA is an association that represents SASES Volunteers,
- ensure that consultative mechanisms are in place,
- provide necessary resources to enable Volunteers to deliver agreed services in a safe and effective manner,
- recognise and acknowledge that a primary responsibility of the SASES and people employed by the SASES is to nurture and encourage Volunteers and to facilitate and develop their skills and competencies,
- recognise and acknowledge the value of the time that Volunteers provide to the SASES,
- ensure that Volunteers' time is used appropriately and effectively bearing in mind other commitments, and
- minimise barriers to volunteering.

SIGNATORIES

The parties commit themselves to use and apply the Charter in the spirit of mutual respect and goodwill and to work together in that spirit, in accordance with the key principles set out in this Charter.

The Charter will be reviewed as required by agreement of the parties or at the end of four years from its date of commencement.

This Charter commences on the 18th day of May, 2022.

Hon Peter Malinauskas MP
Premier

Hon Joe Szakacs MP
Minister for Emergency Services

Mrs Julia Waddington-Powell
Chief Executive, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission

Liz Connell
For Mr Chris Beattie
Chief Officer, South Australian State Emergency Service

For Mr Warren Hicks ESM
Chairperson, South Australian State Emergency Service Volunteers' Association