



# **Field Team Leader Learner Guide**

**Wollongong City SES  
July 2017**

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# **Field Team Leader Learner Guide**

## **Aim**

The Aim of this course is to provide Field Team Leaders with the tools to successfully lead a team in an SES callout. For the purposes of this course, a Field Team Leader (FTL) is defined as an SES volunteer who can act as a Team Leader for a field team whose mission is to attend Requests for Assistance.

## **Outcomes**

The outcomes of this course are to enable a potential Field Team Leader to:

- ❖ Ensure safety is the highest priority at all times
- ❖ Fulfil administrative requirements using Beacon or manual paperwork related to the position of Field Team Leader during operations.
- ❖ Ensure that all tasks are completed to the highest quality as per SES training and standards.
- ❖ Ensure that the team responding to a task is appropriately qualified, experienced and equipped.
- ❖ Ensure that vehicles and equipment are properly maintained/stocked at the start and completion of operations.
- ❖ Ensure that the team is prepared with equipment for operational and training requirements.
- ❖ Provide support to team members and act as a mediator in member conflicts where applicable.
- ❖ Ensure that all catering and welfare requirements for the team have been addressed.
- ❖ Conduct briefings and debriefings.

## **Structure**

This course has seven sections:

- ❖ Attending RFAs
- ❖ Complete paperwork
- ❖ Briefings and Debriefings
- ❖ Team Welfare
- ❖ Safety
- ❖ Dealing with the Public
- ❖ Practical Advice

## **Assumed Knowledge**

People undertaking this training for Field Team leader are expected to have the following SES qualifications:

- ❖ Induction - NSW SES Fundamentals
- ❖ First Aid
- ❖ Storm and Water Damage (for leading SWD teams)
- ❖ Land Search (for leading Land Search teams)
- ❖ A willingness to lead a team

# **1 Assess, Organise, Lead and Review**

## ***1.1 Preparing to leave LHQ***

- Identify who the DO or IC is.
- Meet your team members
- If you are unfamiliar with them, take a brief time to learn about their skills. You can find out about team members skills on the callout sheet.
- Find out what the members have been doing prior to coming to SES to determine their current fatigue level.
- Ensure that your team has sufficient overall experience and the ratio of experienced operators to unqualified members is sufficient for the task – 2:1 for high risk jobs (SWD – Heights) or 1:2 for safer jobs (sandbagging or searches).
- Ensure that your team has all the appropriate PPE and PPC. They can request additional PPE and PPC from Logistics.
- Ensure a Vehicle List is filled out. The Vehicle List must include the printed full name of all members in the team and a contact number for the Field Team Leader. Blank Vehicle Lists are kept in the Vehicle Folder at the front desk.
- Take a vehicle phone, or if using your personal phone, ensure the number is written on the Vehicle List.
- Assign a driver where possible. You will want to try and get as much paperwork done between jobs as possible. If you have rescue (flood or vertical) capability in your team, consider the need for a driver that is able to respond if required.
- Delegate member(s) to:
  - o Take radios and spare batteries. Log the radio numbers on the radio board.
  - o Take the iPad that is assigned to the vehicle you're taking
  - o Take batteries for the power tools and check the charge level.
  - o Ensure the vehicle is stocked.
  - o Get snack packs
- Ensure you have sufficient copies of any required paperwork – Safety Management Sheets, Calling Cards, etc
- Get the *Vehicle Folder* from the Ops room. Bring your vehicle list with you. Ask Ops if they have jobs assigned for you yet.
- Assess and prioritise the jobs before departing, as they will not always be in a logical order. Consider the nature of the threats as well as the physical location of the jobs. Ask for input from the team.



## **1.2 Departing LHQ**

- Follow the radio procedure for departing LHQ – radio LHQ with the following information: Vehicle designation, number of people on board, what task you're heading to, and an ETA.
- If you're heading to a search, RHQ or SHQ might be monitoring, radio appropriately. If uncertain, find out from the DO before departing.
- If LHQ Operations is not open, send an SMS to the gateway (0407 460 639) with the vehicle designation, number of people on board, and who the FTL is.

## **1.3 On the Road**

- Whilst travelling in a marked SES vehicle, if you come across a Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA), you **MUST** stop to render assistance.
- If there are injured persons, immediately call 000 and render assistance in a First Aid capacity if you are trained to do so. Do not render any assistance for a skill in which you are not trained.
- When it is safe to do so (eg. once you have determined there is NFA for SES), you must notify the DO or Incident Controller that you stopped to render assistance. Either they or the Duty Operations Officer (DOO) will enter a support job into Beacon so you will need to provide details of the location, on/offsite times and what the team's actions were.

## **1.4 Calling Ahead**

During events calling the resident ahead of you arriving may save you the trouble of turning up to a RFA to find no one home, or the RFA completed by other persons. Consider as you leave one job calling the contact number for the next job and asking the resident if they still need assistance, and if so telling the resident that you're on the way and when you expect to arrive. You can use the phone assigned to the vehicle to make these calls.

## **1.5 Resident Not Home**

- Call the contact number to see if the resident is nearby, or if they can give you permission to enter.
- If permission to enter has been given (if in doubt check with the DO or Ops, it should be from the **resident** or **property owner**, not the neighbours), it is safe to complete the job and it is reasonably possible you should complete the job.
- If you do not have permission to enter you should not trespass on the property.
- If there is a threat to the public as a result of the damage, contact the DO or Ops to seek alternative permission to enter.
- Regardless of if you complete the job or not you should leave a Calling Card with details. Calling cards should be available in the vehicle folder.

## **1.6 Decision Making Process (AOLR)**

The four parts of the AOLR process are:

- Assess
- Organise
- Lead/Do
- Review

**Assessment Considerations**

- Identify the task (what do I have to do to achieve the task I have been given)
- Scope the task (how big is the job, can my team handle it)
- Identify resources available to assist (what have I got to use now, what extra resources do I need, how long will it take to get the extra resources here)
- Identify hazards (what is going to cause injury to my team or delay the completion of the task)

**Organise**

Determine who does what and when – procedures; sequence and priorities; concurrent activity, allocate resources.

Determine how progress will be monitored – standards, measuring, and recording methods.

The following are resource and tasks that fall into the area of organise:

People

Equipment

Sequencing and priorities

Development of the initial plan

Briefing the team

Information flow to everyone

People

Know your people's capabilities and limitations

Ensure that all members are aware of what is happening

Always task jobs to an individual and not the group as a whole

Ensure all members welfare has been looked after

Equipment

Identify what equipment you have to complete the task

Identify if you're going to need extra resources to complete the task

Monitor the use of equipment during the task

Sequencing and priorities

Ensure you are meeting the priorities given by the Incident Controller

Ensure the sequencing for the plan will work; have a walk through before committing resources to the task

### **Lead/Do**

Direct team to tasks

Support the team during the task

Observe the scene – stand back and watch, don't get involved in doing the task directly

Monitor the following:

- The tasks being undertaken
- The welfare of the team
- Changes in the situation
- Communications
  - Within the team
  - And to the Unit or Duty Officer

### **Review**

Check the progress of the tasks

Conduct an After Action Review

## ***1.7 Assessing the Job***

When assessing a job consider the following things:

- Is the job a SES job?
  - Was it caused by a storm, flood, or tsunami?
  - Does it pose a risk to persons or property?
  - Does it block access?
- Skill levels in the team. Will the current team be able to complete this job safely and effectively? Does the team have sufficiently qualified/experienced operators?
- Does the Team Leader have the ability and knowledge to undertake the task?  
If unsure, don't be afraid to ask. Ring the Duty Officer or LHQ.

- Equipment. Does the team have the correct equipment for the task at hand?
- Time constraints. Will the team be able to complete this job in a reasonable time frame? If it is late at night and you have a job that will take several hours to complete, ask yourself if it is possible to leave it until the morning.
- Remember that the SES only does **temporary repairs**. Don't do jobs that you don't need to do. If it is a tree job, generally the SES makes the tree safe and ensures access is not blocked.
- Don't forget to **Take 5** and complete the **Risk Assessment**

### 1.7.1 Assessing if the job is too large for your team

Large jobs can be difficult to assess the total timeframe required. Consider dividing the job up into smaller chunks and assess the time for each of those. For example, you might be repairing a house with a tiled roof that has damage to 3 separate sections of the roof:

- Set up safety systems – 30 minutes
- Get two members up on roof to better assess damage – 10 minutes
- Move broken tiles into a singular section and ground team prepares tarp – 60 minutes
- Place tarp on roof, ground team fills sandbags for additional security – 60 minutes
- Brief resident, pack up equipment and depart scene – 20 minutes

Total estimated time for this job is 3 hours. Once you have this estimate you can assess your team's capabilities to work on a job for a prolonged time, taking in account their current fatigue, moral and willingness.

If you assess the job to be too prolonged for your team, you should request additional assistance. This could be in the form of another team, a relieving team after a certain time, or referring the job to a contractor.

### 1.7.2 Assessing the need to remove/evacuate the residents

Assess the risk the residents remaining based on:

- Is the impacted area a bedroom, kitchen, bathroom or another necessary place and is it no longer accessible/operational/functional? Does this make the building uninhabitable?
- Is there risk to the residents?
- Is there risk of further damage to the functional areas of the house?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, ask the resident if they have another location (with family or friends) they could stay at until the house is repaired.

If the house is uninhabitable report the condition to the DO or Ops, and make a note in Beacon, and ask the residents to leave the property. If they refuse, escalate to the DO or Ops and follow their instructions.

If the resident doesn't have another place they can go arrangements for welfare can be made by contacting the DO or Ops.

### **1.8 Additional factors during large scale events**

The NSW SES combat role is to protect persons from dangers to their health and safety and to protect property or minimise damage arising from floods, storms and tsunamis.

Large scale events bring a host of additional issues that need to be dealt with. The FTL needs to be able to assess each job on its urgency while maintaining a larger view of the event.

You should attempt to reduce the overall time spent on a job by considering other options, some of which have been outlined below. **You should not sacrifice safety for speed at any point.**

The residents that request our assistance will need to organise permanent repairs in the near future as a result of the storm damage and as such we do not need to perfectly protect property against further damage, just minimise further damage.

#### **1.8.1 Large scale storm event – leaking roofs**

The initial reaction of a Storm Water Damage Operator tends towards implementing a fix on the roof. Setting up a Height Safety System, getting operators up on the roof all take a considerable amount of time.

You encounter a property with a leaking roof that has caused swelling and damage to about a 50cm<sup>2</sup> area of the ceiling. You could consider:

- Getting a container, bucket, or garbage bin from the resident, placing a hole in the ceiling and draining the water into the container over attempting a roof repair.
- Replacing a tile from within the ceiling cavity, negating the need for a height safety system provided 3 solid points of contact for the person in the ceiling cavity.
- If the risk of further rain is minimal, you can consider doing nothing at all.

#### **1.8.2 Large scale storm event – tree/branch down**

Tree jobs can take a significant amount of time and create a very fatigued chainsaw operator. The ideal way of minimising both of these is to ensure that minimal time cutting is done.

You encounter a job with a tree blocking access or on a roof:

- You should only cut as little as is needed to restore access or to do temporary repairs.
- Consider using the vehicle and general purpose rope to assist in moving away the tree or branches. You could also consider a tiorwinch if one is available to you.
- If a tree is resting on a house and it is not leaking and there is no risk of further movement of the tree or damage (or you can reduce that risk by stabilisation), consider no further action and the resident can follow up with insurance and/or contractor.

### **1.8.3 Large scale storm event – Significant roof damage from wind**

During a large scale event that has caused significant damage to numerous houses (such as the Kiama and Kurnell tornado events) there isn't much a FTL can do to reduce the time spent on jobs but you should carefully consider the amount of damage done to the property and the residual risk to the residents if they stay there.

### **1.8.4 Large scale storm event – flooding**

Flash flooding can occur during large events due to blocked drains, poor design or other factors. If the flood level has fallen and there is no risk of further damage, then consider no further action.

An option for flooding is to give the tools to the resident to complete the job themselves if they are capable. Give the resident empty sandbags, or if there is an available sandbag collection point, let the resident know where they can get the sandbags themselves.

## ***1.9 Special Reporting Cases***

There are some cases where we need to report additional information.

### **1.9.1 Over the floor flooding**

When a property has been flooded from rising floodwater we need to be able to identify those properties after the event.

If you have identified the property has had over the floor flooding, place a note in beacon using the term "over the floor flooding" and relay that information to Ops or the DO.

### ***1.10 Referring the job***

Sometimes the job can't be done by your team. In these cases, we can task another team or refer the job to an outside contractor. These referrals may include but are not limited to jobs such as tree threatening, tree/branch on house (where the equipment is insufficient to complete safely), asbestos present, etc.

- Call the Duty Officer or radio the operations centre and ask for the job to be referred.
- Pass on details about the details about the task and why you think it needs to be referred. If you need to pass on a lot of details ask for Ops to call you.
- We can refer jobs to:
  - Arborists – complex or difficult to access tree jobs
  - FRNSW – asbestos or suspected asbestos, large pumping jobs
  - Council – tree on road or footpath, tree originated from council land and hasn't impacted a house.
  - Other contractors (roofers, builders, etc) as needed
- We can re-task jobs to other SES units if required.

### ***1.11 Requesting further resources or assistance***

Sometimes you need more equipment or personal to get a job done safely. Make your request over the radio to the DO or Ops as soon as you know you need it. Determine how long it's going to take to get the request and if you should go do another job nearby in the meantime. You can request:

- Another team to assist
- More equipment – acrow props, battens, tarps, sandbags, pickets, etc
- Specialist equipment – different chainsaws, longer ropes for HSK, etc
- Elevated Work Platform for difficult tree jobs

### ***1.12 SITREPs***

When arriving on a job, Field Team Leaders are expected to notify LHQ of their intentions — in other words, provide a SITREP. Generally, the best way to do this is to radio LHQ after you have talked to the resident and undertaken some reconnaissance.

The information you give to LHQ should include:

- The team has arrived at job 000X-XXXX (the job number on the RFA), though this will be known to ops if you have already clicked "onsite" in Beacon.
- Estimated time required to complete the job. Allow a half hour for small jobs and one to two hours for roof and chainsaw jobs. If unsure, consult with the team, and if it's a tree job, with the chainsaw operators as well.
- If you need to give more information than this to LHQ, ask them over the radio to contact you by phone or call LHQ on the silent number. Do not call the IC's mobile number
- In the event of a large job, additional SITREPs every hour are recommended. In addition, if your estimated time for completion of the job changes significantly, consider sending an updated SITREP.

### **1.13 Getting the job done**

- Don't be afraid to ask for help. If in doubt, ring your Team Leader, LHQ, or Duty Officer.
- Before starting a job, devise a plan. Ask other members of the team for their suggestions and ideas. However, the final decision and the responsibility are yours.
- Stand back and observe the team. Ensure they are working safely and the quality of their work is good.
- Draw on the skills of other team members to perform the job.

### **1.14 Completing the Job**

- Pack up all equipment. Ensure it is in good condition and if possible, clean and dry.

#### **1.14.1 Brief the resident**

- Let the resident know:
- What work you have completed
- If there were any additional issues
- Who they should contact for further work (roofer, arborist, etc)

#### **1.14.2 Equipment left on site**

- Consumable items such as plastics, cords, tarps, and natural-fibre rope do not need to be listed as equipment left on site.
- Follow the instructions for reporting in 2.1.6 if using Beacon, or 2.2.3 if using paper forms.

### **1.15 Returning to LHQ**

Do not let your team members depart instantly when you pull into LHQ. Assign tasks before arriving to each member. You will have paperwork to complete – your team can assist in things like restocking the vehicle, helping the chainsaw operator clean the saw, and other tasks as needed.

- When you arrive back at LHQ, radio LHQ letting them know the vehicle designation, the number of people on board and that you have returned.
- If LHQ operations is closed, send an SMS to the gateway with the above details.

#### **1.15.1 Administrative requirements: paperwork**

- **End of Shift Form.** Fill this in only at the completion of the shift. Make sure you answer all the questions. Ask the team for help. The form can be found at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MtQVCLHSNhe0SgnuKkt1xJf2rL8ZjaZPGDOSinO3p60/viewform>. A link to this form can be found on the Wollongong SES Intranet and on the Unit iPads.



- **Specialist Skills Log.** Remind those members with specialist skills (such as Vertical Rescue, Chainsaw, Flood Boat, etc) that they need to log their hours as a Non-Incident Time Capture in Beacon. They are responsible for ensuring their time gets logged correctly.

### **1.15.2 Vehicles and batteries**

- Ask your team to check and re-stock your vehicle. Ensure it is ready for the next team to respond.
- Write down any problems encountered with the vehicle on the vehicle board in the radio room.
- Return the batteries of all power tools to the chargers in the radio room. If the vehicle is going to be used by another team, replace the batteries with fresh ones.
- Hang up any wet equipment to dry and if possible replace it with spares. If no spares are available, make a note on the vehicle board.

### **1.15.3 Injuries**

- If an injury occurs during your shift, you must make sure the member calls **1800 SES OHS (737 647)**. You can call on their behalf if needed. Let the Duty Officer or Incident Controller know as well.

### **1.15.4 If the Operations Centre is closed**

If on returning to LHQ the Operations Centre is closed, follow the following alternative procedure:

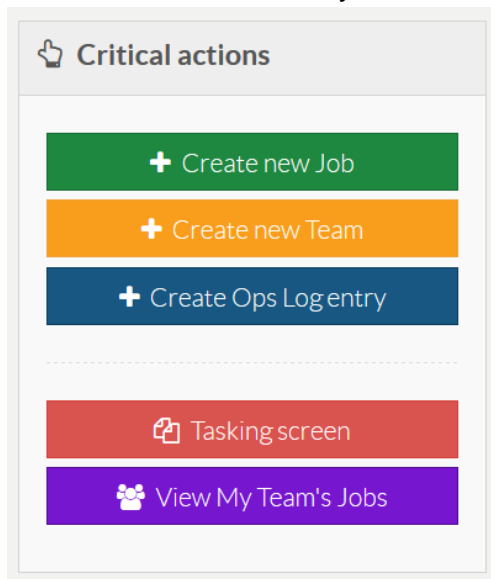
- Ensure you have notified the DO that you have returned.
- Return all completed paperwork to the Operations Officer's pigeonhole.
- If you sent an SMS at the start of your shift, send a final SMS to the same number advising the vehicle and persons returned to LHQ

## **2 Beacon and Paperwork**

There is a certain amount of paperwork you as Field Team Leader are expected to complete in the field. As of October 2013, some of this paper work can now be completed online on *Beacon*. *Beacon* can also be used to get information on new jobs,

## 2.1 *Beacon as a FTL*

Log into Beacon and click on the “*View My Team’s Jobs*” on the start page. If it is not available, ask the Duty Officer or Ops to ensure your team is set up correctly.



You can complete most things required of you as FTL in this screen.

### 2.1.1 Departing LHQ

- Ensure your team is created in Beacon, active and has jobs tasked.
- You can adjust the order of RFA in the Team Tasking display by pressing the up and down arrows next to each task. Make sure you click the “*Save changed sequence*” button that appears at the top of the screen when you re-order RFAs.
- Set your team enroute to the first task, and brief your team on the supplied

The screenshot displays the 'training' system interface. At the top is a green navigation bar with icons for Jobs, Teams, Events, Contacts, and Admin. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'Team Details' and 'Tasked Jobs'.

**Team Details:**

- Callsign:** WOL39
- Status:** Activated
- Capabilities:** Flood Rescue 1, beacon, Chainsaw - Cross Cut, Storm Ground, Storm Heights, Recon, First Aid
- Members:** Barnett, Chris; Swyer, David; Quinane, Luke; Schaaf, Menno; O'Brien, Philip

**Tasked Jobs:**

Four tasks are listed, each with a 'view details' link and up/down arrows for reordering:

- 0000-0423: 31 DYMOCK STREET, BALGOWNIE ( Tasked @ 22/08/2015 09:20 )**
  - Category: N/A
  - Caller: Dave Lowe (024289838)
  - Permission?: Yes
  - RFAs: Tree Down, Wall Damage, Roof Damage, Threat of Collapse
  - Status: Tasked, En route, Onsite, Offsite, Complete
- 0000-0422: 36 RAMAH AVENUE, MOUNT PLEASANT ( Tasked @ 22/08/2015 09:20 )**
  - Category: N/A
  - Caller: Daisy Leek (0431726353)
  - Permission?: No
  - RFAs: Ceiling Damage, Leaking Roof
  - Status: Tasked, En route, Onsite, Offsite, Complete
- 0000-0421: 10 NEW MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD, BALGOWNIE ( Tasked @ 22/08/2015 09:20 )**
  - Category: N/A
  - Caller: Jane Doe (041298328)
  - Permission?: Yes
  - RFAs: Branch Down, Animals, Aged
  - Status: Tasked, En route, Onsite, Offsite, Complete
- 0000-0420: 132 CABBAGE TREE LANE, FAIRY MEADOW ( Tasked @ 22/08/2015 09:20 )**
  - Category: N/A
  - Caller: Joe Blog (0242394832)
  - Permission?: No
  - RFAs: Tree Down, Threat of Collapse, Leaking Roof, Roof Damage
  - Status: Tasked, En route, Onsite, Offsite, Complete

details of the job while driving there.

### 2.1.2 Arriving onsite

- Set your team onsite by clicking on the “*Onsite*” button in the tasking screen. This automatically sets the time to the current time without any confirmation.

### 2.1.3 Safety Management Sheet

You can now create your SMS in Beacon. For a guide on how to do this, please see the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QSwPskX67g>. (Run time 20 minutes)

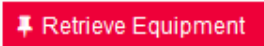

### 2.1.4 Departing the scene

- Set your team offsite by clicking the “*Offsite*” button.
- Mark yourself as “*Enroute*” to the next task.

### 2.1.5 Adding notes to jobs

- You can add more detailed notes about jobs in the “*View Job*” screen. To get to this screen you can click on the “*View Details*” button or the blue job number link.
- Once that screen has loaded and is populated with the job information, you can scroll down to the add note section and type in your note. Select tags that are appropriate for the information you are entering.
- If the job requires further action(s), select the appropriate action box (the red ones). If this must be completed before the job can be finalised, tick the “action required” checkbox that will appear.

### 2.1.6 Leaving Equipment Onsite

- Make a note in Beacon using the tag,  ensuring you tick the  checkbox. Ensure to record all details of the equipment left behind including sizes, quantities, an estimated time that the equipment will be needed for, and additional contact details.
- Place the same information onto a Team Response Sheet and have the resident sign the bottom. Give this to Ops or the DO when you return to LHQ.
- Include the information for all equipment left behind on the End of Shift form

### 2.1.7 Completing jobs

- You should complete jobs when going between jobs
- On the Team Tasking screen, click the “*Complete*” button.
- Provide details on the task, how it was completed, and what equipment you used.
- If further tasking or referral is required for this task, complete only your team. Otherwise complete the team and the job as one. This option may not be available if you do not have the required permissions.

### **2.1.8 Getting new jobs**

- After you're enroute to your last job or you've assessed the last job that is currently tasked to you, radio the Operations Centre or the Duty Officer and ask that they assign you new RFAs directly in Beacon if your team is still going to be available after completing this task. It's good to be proactive in this so the Duty Officer or Ops personal have time to organise new tasking or instructions.

## **2.2 Paper Alternative to Beacon**

If Beacon is unavailable or inaccessible you will need to revert to the paper based tracking of your tasking and completion details.

### **2.2.1 Departing LHQ**

- Ensure you have sufficient Team Response Sheets with you or in the vehicle.
- Ensure you get print outs of your teams task(s). Rearrange these so they're in the order you want to complete them in.

### **2.2.2 Arriving onsite**

- Write down a more detailed description of the issue on your Team Response Sheet as you go through it with the resident. This will help in forming a plan of attack.

### **2.2.3 Leaving Equipment Onsite**

- Ensure to record all details of the equipment left behind including sizes, quantities, an estimated time that the equipment will be needed for, and additional contact details onto the Team Response Sheet. Have the resident sign this sheet and return the sheet to the Ops team or DO at the end of the shift.
- Include the information for all equipment left behind on the End of Shift form

### **2.2.4 Completing Jobs - Team Response Sheets (Pink Sheets)**

- Ensure you record the RFA number, dates and times on and off site, what you did and any equipment left on site as above.
- You will find Team Response Sheets in the Vehicle Folders supplied by Operations or in the Team Leader Folder under the sign-on book.
- Hand these sheets back to the Duty Officer or Operations Centre when you return to LHQ.
- It is important to record any equipment left on site on the Team Response Sheet, as this is the only means Operations has of tracking and recovering equipment left behind.

### **2.2.5 Getting new jobs**

Sometimes you will be tasked to a new job over the radio.

When receiving an RFA over the radio, ensure you have the following information as a minimum:

- RFA number
- Name of the resident
- Address
- Threat
- Contact number. You may want you ring ahead to check whether the caller still needs the SES.

### **Activity 1**

- ❖ [Compulsory] Fill out and submit an End-of-Shift Form on a unit IPAD if you have not already done so before.
- ❖ Fill out a vehicle list, find your team vehicle phone and fill out the radio board.
- ❖ Where do you find the number for LHQ? Which number do you ring if you need to contact LHQ during an event?
- ❖ How would you send a pager message to the Senior Officers?
- ❖ What is the number to call in case of injury or close call?
- ❖ Complete a Team Response Sheet (Pink Sheet): RFA number 0004-6750. There are four members on your team. You arrived on site at 18.30 and completed the job at 19.45. The job involved a cracked tile on a single-storey roof, which you repaired using an HSS and silicon.

### **3 Briefings and Debriefings**

#### **3.1 *Briefings***

- Your team wants to know what's going on. It's your job to give them the big picture at the start of the shift, as well as the details of each RFA as you go along. You also need information from them for your own "big picture" about how the team is going to go during the shift.
- Give the team an initial briefing before departing LHQ.
- Discuss the types of jobs the team has been tasked to.
- Gather welfare information from the team. Including their last meal time and if anyone needs to return early. Pass any relevant information on to LHQ.

#### **3.2 *Debriefings***

- At the end of a shift, you and your team need time to talk about what happened on the shift, what went well, and what can be improved. Innovative solutions, safety issues, problems with residents or bystanders, interactions with other services — all may need to be discussed.
- Conduct "hot" (immediate, informal) debriefs at the end of the shift. These can be conducted in the car on the way back to LHQ. You can also gather information during breaks as you go.
- If possible, type up any notes from your debrief and forward them to the Deputy Unit Controller and Unit Controller.
- If any significant issues arise from the team debrief, make sure you let someone know as soon as practicable. This someone can be your Team Leader, Deputy Unit Controller, Unit Controller, Deputy Local Controller or Local Controller, depending on who you feel comfortable reporting to.

#### **3.3 *Other comments***

- After the event, discuss any issues, questions or comments that you want to share with your Team Leader.

## **4 Team Welfare**

Team welfare does not only refer to keeping the team fed and watered. It also includes addressing the physiological, safety and belonging needs of the team members.

### **4.1 *Meals***

- Ask members about dietary requirements before leaving Local Headquarters (LHQ) and ensure that these are given to Operations. Fill out a Dietary Form if required; these are found in the Members' Folder at the front desk.
- Ask members when their last meal was; this will give you an idea of when the next meal will be required.
- In a large event or if the team will be out for long periods, snack packs are available from the kitchen.
- Refer to SOP OPS-14 for Catering Provisions during callouts. If you are having a meal from a commercial venue, ensure you ask for a receipt and that this is handed over when you return to Headquarters. Discuss the meal procedures during a callout in the Unit.

### **4.2 *Breaks***

- As a guideline, allow 30 to 45 minutes for meal breaks (lunch and dinner) and give the team a five-minute break every few jobs. This depends on the size of each job.
- There is no need to take a break after each job as this wastes time.
- Sometimes small breaks can be used to conduct rapid hot debriefs and to get an idea of how the team is going. Are they getting tired? Snappy (often a symptom of fatigue)? Are they happy and in good spirits?
- Take notes (or mental notes) of these and add them to the final debrief.

### **4.3 *Welfare of New Members***

- Sometimes newer members or not-so-new members will not speak up for themselves. Ensure they are being treated fairly. Are they being given interesting jobs? Or are they only footing the ladder? Ask them questions to prompt them.
- Take the time to explain and mentor them, or allocate an experienced member in the team to work with them and explain to them what is happening.
- Ensure that they have correct PPE/PPC before departing LHQ. Sometimes due to inexperience they will not know what to take with them. For example: Do they have wet-weather gear? If it is a hot day, what are they wearing under the overalls? If it is a search, ensure they have the correct equipment and clothes.



#### **4.4 Morale**

Team morale is important, high morale will mean your team is motivated, positive and will complete work quickly. It can only take one incident to lower morale and cause issues or friction within the team.

- Identify early if the task you are working on or the environment you are in could cause morale in your team to lower.
- If there an issue arises or exists between members you can try and mediate between the members, or request one of the members be placed in another team. Try and find an acceptable solution for everyone rather than forcing one.
- Breaks are good for morale – if you sense friction is developing, take a break.
- Keep any issues out of public

#### **4.5 Workload**

- In some situations, some members in the team will have to work harder than the rest of the team (for example, chainsaw operators). Team leaders must consider their additional needs. These include:
  - a. Ensure that the rest of the team supports the chainsaw operator: for example, they clear the area so the chainsaw operator can focus on cutting.
  - b. Ensure that you allow time for the chainsaw operator to clean and maintain equipment on returning to LHQ. Allow at least 30 minutes for this. This means that the team has to return to LHQ at least 30 minutes before LHQ closes down. Don't leave the chainsaw operator by themselves while the rest of the team goes home. Assign someone to help them if possible, and use the rest of the team to check and restock the vehicle.
- If the team is re-tasked or split, ensure the new Team Leader is aware of any team members' special needs.

## **5 Safety**

### **5.1 Risk Assessments.**

- Conduct a risk assessment at the beginning of each job using the **Take 5** approach.
- Involve the whole team in identifying risks, determining appropriate control measures and implementing them.
- Continue to monitor the situation. If anything changes, review the initial risk assessment and conduct a new one or update the initial document.
- Use Beacon where possible to complete your Safety Management Sheet where possible.

### **5.2 PPE**

- Ensure that all members are wearing appropriate PPE and PPC.

### **5.3 Asbestos**

- The SES does not carry out asbestos jobs.
- If you suspect a roof contains asbestos, update LHQ so they can refer the job to the Fire & Rescue NSW.
- If you are unsure, ring LHQ for advice.

### **5.4 Bystanders**

- Ensure that residents and bystanders do not endanger themselves while the team is on site.
- If necessary, use barrier tape to isolate your work area or advise the resident to go back inside the house. If a particular area of the house is at risk, you can ask they stay out of that room.
- Advise residents to keep children away while you attend to the job.

### **5.5 Vehicles**

- Ensure that doors and all compartments are locked if the vehicle will be left unattended.
- If it is dark and the vehicle is parked in hazardous conditions (due to heavy traffic or low visibility for other motorists), turn the beacons or the hazard lights on. The engine is required to be running during this, a team member will need to stay with the vehicle.
- Ensure there are witches' hats placed around the vehicle if available and the team is using equipment from the compartments on the road side. Use the road flares as an extra precaution.

## **Activity 2**

- ❖ Complete a risk assessment for a job you have previously done.

## **6 Dealing with the public**

### **6.1 *On the Job***

- On arrival, go to the door with another team member (not on your own) and ask the resident what the problem is. Ask the resident to show you the problem. Consider pets and access to the property. The rest of the team should either wait for you inside the vehicle or start preparing equipment that you will need to complete the job.
- Sometimes it is advisable to ring ahead before making your way to the job, especially if it is a big event and the RFA was received more than four hours ago. When you ring, identify yourself ("Good evening, this is XXX from the State Emergency Service"), tell the resident that you are calling in regards to their Request For Assistance and ask them if they still need the help of the SES.
- Always advise the resident to contact their insurance company or landlord if they haven't already done so.
- On completion of the job, approach the resident and explain to them what the problem was and what type of temporary repairs the team has done. If necessary, advise them to contact their insurance company or a tradesperson to undertake permanent repairs.
- If a resident requests that you come back at a more "convenient" time, mark the job as NFA (no further action required), complete a Team Response Sheet and notify the Operations Centre. We are an emergency service, if our attendance at a resident's request is "not convenient" then it is hardly an emergency.

### **6.2 *Donations***

- If you receive a donation, write down the details of the person (name, mailing address, and a contact number) and let them know a receipt will be mailed out to them.
- Make sure you advise the person that donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.
- Record the RFA number, receipt number and the amount received on the Team Leader Form.
- Record the donation information as a note in Beacon

### **6.3 *Insurance and requests for advice***

As FTL you may get asked questions about if insurance will cover the damages that have occurred.

- Renters should always notify their landlord or the landlord's agent if damage occurs. Contact number should be on their copy of the lease. If they have issues with the landlord they can contact Tenants NSW or Fair Trading NSW for advice. If they have contents insurance, they should contact them as well.

- Home owners should notify their insurance company for any damage, especially if the damage has occurred to their house from a neighbouring property, or if a neighbour's property has damaged theirs.
- Do not offer advice on liability. If asked say you are unable to comment on that and they should contact their insurance companies or a lawyer.

## **6.4 Complaints**

- If dealing with a complaint, be polite and keep calm.
- Do not argue with the person making the complaint or make promises.
- Do not offer advice if it is a neighbourhood complaint.
- Tell them that you are not qualified to deal with their complaint and ask them to ring headquarters (or 132 500). Give them the RFA number to write down and ask them to quote it when they call.
- Ring LHQ as soon as possible and let them know what happened so they have the background before the person calls. Make sure you give them the RFA number.

## **6.5 Media**

- Refer any media enquiries to the Operations Centre or Duty Officer.
- If the media attend your work site and ask you to comment, only talk about what you and your team are doing. Do not talk about the whole event.
- Remember that it's the reporter's job to get a story, and they may try to pressure you into saying more than you're authorised to say. If you feel even slightly pressured or uncomfortable, just keep repeating that the best method of contact is through calling the public number for the unit. Ensure you take the reporter's name, affiliation (which paper or station they are with) and mobile number so that you can pass on the information to the Operations Centre or Duty Officer. When you contact LHQ, make sure the person you spoke with gets all the reporter's details, and passes them to the Public Information Officer or Incident Controller. *Please don't put this off* until you "have a spare moment": the media are on tight deadlines, and if they don't get information from the SES, they will seek information from sources who may be uninformed, inaccurate or even hostile to the SES.
- Courtesy is absolutely crucial at all times, and particularly when dealing with reporters.

## **6.6 Frail and Distressed Residents**

- Sometimes you will attend RFAs from people (often older or disabled) who are distressed and frightened. Be courteous and empathetic - explain to them what you can or cannot do and make it clear that there are more people waiting for assistance as well.
- If there is any concern for the person's welfare, refer the task to the DO or the Operations Centre.

- Remember, we are not gardeners or free clean-up crews.

### ***Activity 3***

- ❖ Who is the Media Officer in the Unit?

## **7 Practical Advice**

This section provides practical advice for dealing with the most common types of RFAs received in a wind or rain storm. These include Water/Heavy Rain, Wind, Hail and Trees. Remember that the SES provides temporary repairs on a single-visit basis. We only make a building safe, we do not provide complete weatherproofing. Moreover, we do not do re-visits to replace/repair our previous work, so ensure you are happy with your repair.

Finally, in the event of a rain storm, if it has stopped raining and there is no more rain forecast, there is no need to make temporary repairs and you can advise the resident that there is no more rain forecast and they can contact their insurance company or a tradesperson to inspect/repair their roof.

### **7.1 *Water/Heavy Rain***

#### **7.1.1 Water running down the walls**

- This is often caused by gutters overflowing due to the large volume of water going into them. There is no fix for this.
- Check the gutters and clear any blockages. DO NOT clean the entire gutter system, as this requires too much time and is beyond our scope.
- If the problem is severe, remove the downpipe or drill holes along the gutter (with the resident's permission!).
- Advise the resident that it is their responsibility to keep their gutters cleared.

#### **7.1.2 Water through the ceiling**

- The cause is most likely a leaking roof.
- If a large pool of water is forming in the ceiling and bending the plasterboard, take a large container and place under the sagging ceiling. Make a hole in the ceiling using the handle end of a broom. Stand well clear when doing so. If the resident is reluctant, let them know that if the water remains in the ceiling space the ceiling could collapse, resulting in greater damage and repair costs.

#### **7.1.3 Leaking roof**

- The cause is often missing, cracked or moved roof tiles.
- Scan the roof and repair any visible damage. This can be done from within the roof cavity or on the roof.
- Sometimes during heavy rain, the roof and the gutter system won't be able to keep up and water will overflow the gutters and go into the house. If you can't see any visible damage, advise the resident that this is the likely cause of the leak and ask them to ring again if the problem returns.

**7.1.4 Water in a non-living area (garages, laundries, etc)**

- Put in place measures to protect any property if possible – could just be advising the resident to move things higher.
- If no risk of damage to any property, move onto the next job
- Lower priority than damage or potential damage to living areas.

**7.1.5 Water coming under the door**

- Half fill sandbags with dirt, sand or wet towels.
- Place these on the outside of the door, on top of a sheet of plastic, pressed tightly together.
- NEVER place the sandbags directly at the base of the door (without plastic), as this tracks water inside.

**7.1.6 Water coming in from floor drainage grates or the toilets**

- Happens when the sewerage system overflows with storm water to low lying houses
- Most likely to happen to “wet” rooms (bathrooms, laundries, etc)
- Most likely contaminated with sewerage – use appropriate PPE/PPC.
- Use flood sacks and black plastic to contain the flow to the room. It will drain when the water recedes
- Advise the resident that the room will be contaminated and needs to be cleaned thoroughly.

**7.2 Hail Damage****7.2.1 Leaking roof**

- Check the gutters, especially if they are box gutters, as they may be blocked by hailstones.
- If it is a tile roof, the cause may be cracked or broken tiles.

**7.2.2 Minor Flooding**

- Check the nearest drain as it may be blocked with hail stones.

**7.3 Wind****7.3.1 Power lines down or damaged**

- If you encounter power lines down or damaged, do not approach them, but report them to LHQ. The situation will be referred to Integral Energy and you need take NFA other than completing any applicable paperwork (for example, if the downed or damaged power lines prevent you from completing an RFA).

**7.3.2 Window blown in**

- Move all furniture away from the window.

- Cover the window with battens and plastic or board it up.

### **7.3.3 Tin shed blowing away**

- Trample the remains flat and place heavy object/s onto it.
- Ram two pickets at opposing angles through the sheet metal and into the ground to hold.

### **7.3.4 Roof damage**

- High winds can blow sheeting or tiles off the roof
- Sheets of metal are high risk to the team and public
- Secure only if safe to do so
- Secure loose tiles, if no forecasted rain no need to waterproof
- Can use cordage to secure loose sheets, tie across and use sandbags on sharp edges to prevent cutting of the cord.

## **7.4 Trees**

### **7.4.1 Tree has fallen onto house**

- Ensure there are no residents in the house and that the power and services are isolated.
- Secure the tree and discuss removal of the tree with the chainsaw operator.

### **7.4.2 Tree fallen into yard**

- If the tree is not blocking damaged structures or access, advise the resident that since the tree is down and safe and has not caused damage, it is up to them to organise removal through their insurance company.
- Put a note on the Team Response Sheet stating such.
- It is the resident's responsibility to dispose of the remains of any trees down. Council WILL NOT collect the waste for them.

### **7.4.3 Tree on driveway or path/blocking access**

- Trim the tree enough to restore access.
- There is no need to completely cut and neatly stack the tree.

### **7.4.4 Tree fallen with power lines down or damaged**

- Refer this job to LHQ for Integral Energy to be called to isolate the power.
- You may be able to move on to the next job and return once you have been notified that the power is off.
- Give the resident the RFA reference number and ask them to call 132 500 once the electricity has been isolated.

### **7.4.5 Suspicious damage to tree**

- Refer to DO or Ops to pass onto council
- Photograph evidence where possible



- Do not do the job where the damage is the result of previous cuts to the tree

***Activity 4***

- ❖ Have you been involved in any situations as described above? Share your experiences with the group.
- ❖ Have you attended any unusual or unexpected RFAs? Share your experiences with the group.

## **Parting Words**

This course has given you the basic skills you need to lead teams safely and effectively in the field. While you may feel unsure at first, if you keep your team's safety as your highest priority, you will soon gain experience and confidence. It is important to remember that your team is relying on you to guide them and keep them safe, and that it is **your** job to see that every member of your team operates safely and responsibly.

You should also remember that everyone in the Unit wants to see you succeed. Don't be afraid to ask for help or advice from Senior Officers or experienced members, and don't be afraid to listen to suggestions from your team members. Most important of all, your skills, desire for excellence and commitment to the Unit are what put you in a leadership position — you can rely on yourself!

## **Appendix 1    Supplementary Documentation**

The following supplementary documentation applies specifically to the Wollongong City Unit and will be useful during this course:

### **A1.1    *Forms***

- Vehicle Form
- Blank Request For Assistance Form
- Team Response Sheet (Pink Sheet)
- Team Leader Form
- Battery Requisition Form
- Risk Assessment Form

### **A1.2    *Other Documents***

- Team Leader Callout Procedure Summary Card
- Sample Roof Job Risk Assessment
- Sample Tree Job Risk Assessment
- SES Code of Conduct
- Team Leader Position Description

### **A1.3    *SOPs***

- OPS-01    Callout Procedure for Rescue Members
- OPS-02    Personal Equipment for Storm/Flood Callouts
- OPS-03    Local Area Search Response Procedure
- OPS-14    Catering Provision on Callouts
- ADMIN-09    Vehicle Accidents & Incident Reporting

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## Appendix 2 Glossary

The following terms are used in this guide:

Incident Controller (IC)	The member responsible for managing all activities to see the resolution of the event
Public Information Officer (PIO)	The member in the Operation Centre responsible for creating warnings, information and liaison with media
Operations Centre (Ops)	The location from which the event is monitored and managed. All communication goes through here when operational.
Duty Officer (DO)	The member responsible for initially responding to requests for assistance, and sending out the initial team(s)
LHQ	Local Headquarters
RHQ	Region Headquarters
SHQ	State Headquarters
RFA	Request for Assistance