

QUEENSLAND FIRE SERVICE
SENIOR OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Union of Employees
P.O. Box 217
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NEWSLETTER

Issue 12

27 June 2008

Emergency Response Vehicles (ERV's) - Outcome

Previous Newsletters have provided information on the issue of ERV's and the potential impact of the new DES policy on use of government-owned motor vehicles. This issue was a key agenda item on the Deputy Commissioner's Forum that was held on 26 June. The three current issues with ERV's have been the potential for changes to the:

- use and operation of ERV's;
- type of ERV's that are to be used; and
- hands-free kits.

Use and operation of ERV's

I am pleased to report to members that the submission to continue the current practices for the use and operations of ERV's that are assigned to all Inspectors, Superintendents and Chief Superintendents has been approved by the Commissioner and Director-General. This means that ERV's are to be used and operated in accordance with the associated policies and practices. This includes abiding by QFRS driving codes and operating requirements, including home garaging conditions. It is recommended that members re-acquaint themselves with the policies and practices, especially the conditions related to home garaging and when ERV's may, and may not, be used.

Types of ERV's

State Operations Directorate has been providing the Deputy Commissioner with advice on what types of vehicles are suitable for use as ERV's. Depending upon the different locations and operating requirements across Queensland, one type of vehicle is not suitable for all situations. Information provided by the State Operations Directorate is that three different models are being considered to cater for the different operating requirements and all of these will be "fit for purpose". Therefore, as the key criterion meets the position of the SOA (being "fit for purpose") the SOA supports the models that are being developed by the State Operations Directorate.

Hands-free kits

Another issue that has arisen is a draft policy on mobile phones with a particular concern being the issue of hands-free kits for mobile phones. For several reasons, including safety and efficiency of operations, it is an expectation that Inspectors, Superintendents and Chief Superintendents have hands-free communications within ERV's. Through technology, this can be achieved by several means, whether it is a hands-free kit, Bluetooth or other electronic means that permits phone communications when the ERV is mobile.

Other issues resolved through the Deputy Commissioner's Forum

It is timely to reflect on the value to members on the consultation process the SOA undertakes with the QFRS through the Deputy Commissioner's Forum. These forums are held on a regular basis and the SOA representatives present to this forum issues that are raised by members.

This process has resulted in numerous issues being resolved very early and before they become contentious. Some recent resolutions include:

- Addressing the issue of annual leave accrual for the Senior Operations Coordinators, and to the satisfaction of the Senior Operations Coordinators.
- Relieving arrangements whereby Senior Officers have access to EOI's for temporary vacancies and access to temporary opportunities in higher positions is in accordance with the CA 2006.
- Issues surrounding support and operational requirements when officers from the Urban Operations seek career opportunities in Rural Operations.
- Other issues related to individual enquiries where responses have been provided to these individuals.

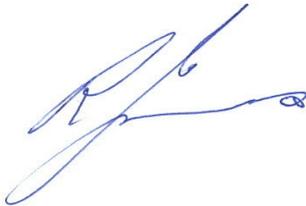
Leave audit

One issue still outstanding is the annual leave audit to ensure accrual and access of leave since 1 July 2006 is in accordance with the CA 2006. Regular feedback indicates this is being pursued with energy by officers from DES Industrial Relations and, although it has taken longer than desired, an outcome is expected soon. The delays will not mean a loss of entitlements as this will reconcile leave accruals and access to ensure balances are correct. Information will be provided as soon as this process is complete.

Acknowledgement

The SOA President and Secretary would like to acknowledge all the participants in these forums, including representatives from the QFRS and Industrial Relations, for the way in which the issues that are raised are addressed. Attitudes displayed within these forums and the associated outcomes are balanced and positive. It is hoped and expected that the balanced manner in which these forums have occurred will continue, as it is expected this will be for the benefit to all parties represented at these forums.

If any member has any questions related to points raised in this Newsletter, please contact either the State President or State Secretary.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ron James', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ron James
STATE SECRETARY
Queensland Fire Service
Senior Officers' Association –Union of Employees