



COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

Issue: No 16

Date: 30/11/07

HAZARD ALERT

SUBJECT: ROADWAY SAFETY

The Chief Officers Advisory Council has identified an opportunity to improve crew safety when working on or adjacent to roadways, following a number of near misses reported where vehicles/traffic are not slowing to pass emergency vehicles with their red and or blue lights operating.

HAZARD

For a number of years the emergency services in South Australia have had legislation to assist with crews working safely on roadways, the requirement is for all traffic to slow to 40 kph past an emergency services (Police, Fire, Rescue, Ambulance) vehicle with red and or blue flashing lights operating.

A number of occasions have been reported where this has not occurred and the risk to our people has increased due to vehicles not slowing down in these situations. A proposal has been put forward to further reduce this speed to 25 kph, inline with the obligation on vehicles passing School Buses with flashing amber lights operating. Whilst this proposal is yet to be supported the CFS and CFS Volunteers Association are lobbying for this change to occur. Should any crew encounter a situation where vehicles do not slow as required, an Accident/near Miss form should be completed and forwarded through the chain of command to ensure the frequency of this type of occurrence is captured to assist with improving safety of our personnel.

The Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 provides powers for officers of the CFS to take or cause to be taken certain actions during the control of an incident. The following is an extract from the Act outlining specifically that CFS can direct or prohibit the movement of vehicles:

Section 97—Powers

(1) An officer of SACFS may take, or cause to be taken, any action that appears necessary or desirable for the purpose of protecting the life, health or safety of any person or animal, or protecting property, relevant services or the environment, or for any other purpose associated with dealing with a fire or other emergency or the threat of a fire or other emergency (despite the fact that the action may result in damage to, or destruction of, property or any aspect of the environment or cause pecuniary loss to any person).

(2) Without limiting or derogating from the operation of subsection (1), an officer under subsection (1), or any person acting under the command of an officer, may (to such extent as appears necessary or desirable in the circumstances)—

(f) direct or prohibit the movement of persons, animals or vehicles;

WARNING

Should it become apparent that crew safety is being compromised due to traffic non compliance with section 83 of the Road Traffic Act at the scene of an incident, officers in charge should liaise with SA Police regarding the situation and request assistance with controlling the traffic. Should this not be achievable then the officer in charge may exercise the power as outlined above and close the road, this may require additional CFS or SES resources. If this occurs it is necessary to advise Police and the regional duty officer of the action taken.

It is recognised that at times the work of our crews places them at risk, where this occurs we all have a responsibility to minimise that risk whilst undertaking this work.



**EUAN FERGUSON AFSM
CHIEF OFFICER**

30 NOVEMBER 2007

