



**Fire &  
Rescue NSW**

# **CFU Prevention of Bullying and Harassment**

**Community Fire Unit  
Operational Capability**

Version 3 - January 2015



What this policy does	This policy defines bullying and harassment, explains the conduct expected of Community Fire Unit (CFU) members regarding bullying and harassment, and outlines the process for reporting bullying and harassment.
Who this policy is for	All CFU members.
Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsibilities of CFU members</li><li>• What is bullying?</li><li>• What is harassment?</li><li>• Reporting bullying and harassment</li><li>• Criminal offences relating to bullying or harassment</li><li>• Victimisation or reprisals</li></ul>

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## **1 Responsibilities of CFU members**

The *CFU Code of Conduct* requires that CFU members do not bully, harass or discriminate against others. Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) will not tolerate bullying or harassment within the CFU Program. Failure to meet this requirement may lead to action under the *CFU Misconduct Policy* which could result in the cancellation of a member's CFU membership.

This policy relates to acts or complaints of bullying and harassment by CFU members only.

Bullying or harassment may occur between:

- CFU members,
- a CFU member and a member of the public, or
- a CFU member and a FRNSW employee.

## **2 What is bullying?**

Generally, bullying is intentional behaviour designed to cause harm to the recipient, playing on the recipient's vulnerability or distress. Bullying behaviour can become reinforced and entrenched as the recipient becomes increasingly distressed.

Bullying can be physical, verbal or emotional, and it can include online messages, statements and behaviour intended to cause distress or harm (also known as cyberbullying). Whatever form bullying takes, the results can be the same: severe distress and pain for the person being bullied.

Bullying behaviour is:

- repeated over time,
- unwelcome and unsolicited,
- offensive, intimidating, humiliating, undermining or threatening to the recipient, and
- would be considered offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening by a reasonable person.

Examples of bullying can involve but are not limited to:

- frequent yelling or verbal abuse, alone or in the presence of others
- frequent ridicule or being put down

- persistent and unjustified criticisms, especially if they involve petty, irrelevant or insignificant matters
- spreading gossip, malicious rumour or innuendo about a person
- inappropriate disclosure of personal/confidential information about a person to others
- insults about a person's appearance, race, gender or sexuality
- humiliating a person through inappropriate gestures, sarcasm, criticism or insults
- sending offensive messages by email or telephone
- engaging in practical jokes
- lodging frivolous/vexatious or otherwise mischievous grievances about someone

Isolated or one-off actions such as those described above, while not necessarily part of a system of bullying, will be treated seriously and may be dealt with under the *CFU Grievance Policy* or *CFU Misconduct Policy* depending on the circumstances.

### **3 What is harassment?**

Harassment is unwelcome or unreciprocated behaviour that offends, humiliates or intimidates another person, and targets that person because of their sex, pregnancy, race, age, marital or domestic status, homosexuality, transgender (transsexual) status, disability or carer's responsibilities. In addition, sexual harassment is any form of sexually related behaviour that is unwelcome and offends, humiliates or intimidates another person.

Although harassment is often repeated or a series of different events, a single action can be enough to amount to harassment. There are many types of verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviour that could amount to harassment.

Examples of harassment can involve but are not limited to:

- sexual or suggestive remarks, looks or leers
- making fun of someone because of their race, disability, age, sex, sexuality and so on
- unwanted sexual propositions
- repeated, unwelcome invitations to go out with someone
- offensive jokes or gestures
- intrusive comments or questions about someone's customs, religion or personal life
- the use of inappropriate language (in either verbal or written communications), such as sexual, sexist, racist, homophobic, or ageist remarks
- continually ignoring, excluding or dismissing someone
- interfering with someone's property
- unnecessary physical contact, such as pinching, patting, brushing up against someone, touching, kissing or hugging against a person's will
- unnecessarily leaning over someone or standing too close to them

### **4 Reporting bullying and harassment**

Complaints of bullying or harassment can be made by the recipient of the unwelcome behaviour or by a witness to it, and should be reported to the Station Commander of the fire station responsible for the CFU. The Station Commander will take action in accordance with the *CFU Grievance Policy* in the first instance, which emphasises local informal handling of issues where appropriate.

At any time, FRNSW management may decide to deal with any bullying or harassment issues under the *CFU Misconduct Policy*.

## **5 Criminal offences relating to bullying or harassment**

In some instances harassment or bullying may also amount to a criminal offence, for example physical assault, indecent exposure, stalking or threatening telephone calls.

Where the matter may involve criminal offences, FRNSW management may inform the Police or other relevant Government departments about the matter.

## **6 Victimisation or reprisals**

Any CFU member who:

- victimises a person who has made a complaint of bullying or harassment,
- victimises another member who has been the subject of a complaint of bullying or harassment, or
- carries out reprisals as a result of a complaint of bullying and harassment

will be subject to the *CFU Misconduct Policy*.

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### Related documents

- CFU Code of Conduct
- CFU Grievance Policy
- CFU Misconduct Policy

## 7 Document control

<b>Policy Manager</b>	Director of Operational Capability
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Manager of Community Fire Units
<b>Contact No</b>	029895 4641
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### 7.1 Revision history

Version	Date	Status	TRIM Ref	Details
1		Rescinded		
2	Sept 2011	Rescinded		
3	7 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2015	Current	FRN15/59	New policy template