

2021 Farm Firefighting Unit Project

Frequently Asked Questions for FFU owners

EDITION 1

SEPT 2021

What is the FFU Project?

Across South Australia there are hundreds (if not thousands) of farm firefighting units (FFUs). In some areas the FFU operators are well known to their local CFS brigades. In other areas they are not.

To help better support FFU owners, the CFS is developing a statewide program to register units and provide them with consistent support and resources.

I'm already registered with my local CFS Group/Brigade. Will I need to register again?

Yes.

All FFU registrations (and stickers) in South Australia expired in May 2021, at the end of the last fire season. FFU owners will need to complete an online registration to receive an updated CFS FFU vehicle sticker.

What's happening to the registration events run by the local CFS brigades?

These will continue and be actively supported by the FFU Project. They are recognised as an important part of maintaining existing relationships between CFS and FFU owner/operators, and building new ones.

Why do I need a FFU vehicle sticker?

A sticker provided to FFUs who register online will identify you to CFS crews on the fireground. It will also assist you in accessing the fireground at SAPOL Traffic Management Points* (TMPs or 'road closures').

* The decision to allow any vehicle through a traffic management point lies with SAPOL and will only occur when it is safe to do so.

Why are the new stickers only valid for 2021/22 fire season?

The FFU project is a complex one, and CFS wants to get it right. The lessons learned, and feedback received, will lead to improvements for the 2022/23 fire season. Future stickers will be valid for 2-3 years

Will the sticker get me past SAPOL roadblocks during a fire?

Registered FFUs can be permitted access to areas under Tier 1 road closures. However, on occasions it may not be safe to do so. FFU owner/operators are required to comply with lawful instructions from SAPOL and emergency services personnel.

I'm a FFU owner/operator. How and when can I register?

Online registration is open now. <https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/prepare-for-a-fire/farm-fire-units/>

Many CFS Brigades and Groups also hold pre-fire season events with their local communities. Contact your local brigade or Region to find out more.

Why should I register my FFU with CFS?

Registering your FFU has a number of benefits, including access to:

- CFS resources and information
- vehicle stickers identifying you to SAPOL at Traffic Management Points
- insurance coverage for owner/operators and their equipment used in support of CFS during fires
- fireground safety awareness materials and online resources
- easier access to logistics support during fires, including meals and water re-supply

Your registration will also help CFS contact you with information about the ongoing improvements being made to supporting FFUs

Do I have to register?

Registration is not compulsory. However, you will not be recognised as a FFU supporting CFS operations on the fireground. You will not be covered by the insurance protections offered to those who are registered. You will not have access to areas that are closed to members of the public during a fire.

FFU registration and Logging On/Logging Off - what's the difference?

Registration is the administrative process of collecting information about FFU owner/operators so CFS can contact them during 'peacetime'. (ie: invitations to pre-season events, information sharing etc.).

Logging On/Logging Off refers to the need for FFUs to contact CFS when entering and leaving the fireground. Currently there are a number of local arrangements in place, many of which work well. Your local CFS FFU coordinator will provide information on these arrangements

Will CFS stop me from attending a fire if I'm not registered?

No. However, CFS has a duty of care for anyone working on a CFS controlled fireground. If you are not operating safely, or are not appropriately equipped, you may (in very exceptional circumstances) be directed to leave the fireground.

I'm not registered, and I damage my vehicle or equipment at a fire. Am I covered by CFS insurance?

No.

Why is CFS running this project?

The value of FFUs was widely recognised during last year's catastrophic fire season. The Independent Review into the 2019/20 South Australian Bushfire Season (the Keelty Review) acknowledged the critical role played by FFUs and recommended they be better integrated into SACFS's bushfire fighting arrangements.

CFS has a critical role to ensure the safety of all personnel on a fireground, including FFU owner/operators.

A review of FFU procedures highlighted opportunities to provide increased support to FFU owners before, during and after bushfires.

The project will give CFS better understanding of FFU capability across South Australia. This will lead to improved engagement, better communications with, and support to, FFU owners.

Registered FFUs will be easily identified when attending bushfires. This will improve the support provided to FFUs on the fireground, including access to water, meals, and other welfare. They will also receive more streamlined access to insurance cover for injuries or damages to equipment when attending a bushfire managed by CFS.

What will the FFU Project deliver?

The 1st phase of the FFU Project will trial a simple online registration process for the 2021/22 Fire Danger Season. A website will provide useful tools and information, guidelines for operating on the fireground and an online firefighting awareness presentation.

An updated Farm Fire Unit Handbook is also being developed and an information pack will be mailed out to all FFU owners that register during the trial. The pack will include an improved FFU vehicle identification sticker.

What happens after the 1st phase?

The FFU Project will be trialed for the 2021/22 fire season, with feedback sought from operators and other interested parties. The second phase will look at providing further enhancements to the support offered to FFU owners.

How can I find out more?

Check out the information on the CFS FFU web page. It will be updated regularly during the FFU project trial: <https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/prepare-for-a-fire/farm-fire-units/>

I still have questions. Who can I contact?

We encourage you to contact your local CFS FFU Coordinator if there is one in your area. Alternatively, contact your CFS Regional Office and ask to speak to the Regional FFU Coordinator.

Regional Office locations and contacts can be found on the FFU web page:
<https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/prepare-for-a-fire/farm-fire-units/>