

SAWYERS VALLEY VOLUNTEER BUSH FIRE BRIGADE (INC.)

MEDIA POLICY

VERSION: 0.3

Document Control

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Change History

Version	Date	Name	Outline of changes
0.1	06/08/21	L Woodley	Initial draft
0.2	26/02/22	L Woodley	Revision to include amendments due to meeting feedback
0.3	28/02/22	L Woodley	Final Statement presented to brigade meeting for endorsement/adoption.

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1. Policy Statement

The Media Policy supports Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade members to take a consistent, appropriate and planned approach to managing and interacting with the media.

Media refers to mass communication and includes print, radio, television, film, social media and online outlets.

2. Overview

Media is a critical conduit for SVVBFB (the Brigade) to disseminate key information to the local and wider community.

Media can assist local emergency management arrangements by:

- distributing critical public information relating to fire and natural hazard situations
- communicating key preparedness and prevention messages locally
- promoting the work and achievements of the Brigade personnel and volunteers
- initiating discussion on emergency management topics and issues of relevance to the local community.

DFES Media works with the Brigade and its members to leverage media opportunities and project a professional and authoritative image.

The aim of this policy is to ensure Brigade personnel and volunteers:

- apply a consistent, appropriate and planned approach when managing and delivering public information in both emergency and normal working situations.
- present a consistent and professional image to the community via the media and through the public information the Brigade delivers.

This policy and associated procedures will guide Brigade personnel and volunteers in the processes and restrictions for communicating with the media.

3. Principles for Communicating with Media

3.1 During Operation Activities

At all times when engaging in operational activities, Brigade members are required to comply with relevant Shire of Mundaring and DFES media policies. (see Appendix A)

3.2 In non-Operational Situations

Brigade members must not respond to media enquiries, participate in interviews and/or provide comments/statements on emergency management issues/topics or matters of community interest unless prior approval is granted.

The following positions have automatic approval in the following circumstances:

- Captain, or
- Chairperson,

where the issue relates only to the Brigade e.g. volunteer recruitment, community events such as a Brigade open days, or promotion about the day-to-day activities of the Brigade.

3.3 Personal Comments

3.3.1

Brigade members must not make personal comments to the media, regarding Brigade and/or Shire and DFES related matters or incidents, including:

- discussing or making public comment to media about the performance of government agencies or the government of the day
- providing media with personal or identifying information, including address details and/or images, of injured or deceased persons
- providing any information which may prejudice an investigation or future court proceeding
- making any discriminatory comments
- commenting on any matter which, in the opinion of the Incident Controller, relevant Command Head or Commissioner may negatively impact DFES operations.

3.3.2

Brigade members are to advise the Captain or the Chairperson if they intend to comment in the media on a personal issue or if their personal circumstances may lead to media coverage that will implicate the Brigade.

3.4 Photos and Videos

Photos and electronic recordings, including videos, taken as part of the volunteer's duties at an incident or event, may become the property of DFES. This applies when both private and brigade camera or recording equipment is used. DFES will have an applied right of use and automatic copyright over the recording.

3.5 Inaccurate information

Where media reports are inaccurate or wrong, brigade members are required to refer the matter to the Captain or Chairperson, who may refer the matter to the DFES Media team for further investigation and action.

4. Use of Digital Services (Social Media)

It is important social media posts are accurate, factual, appropriate and do not pose an operational or reputational risk to individuals, the Brigade, Shire or DFES.

The priority must always be responding to incidents and the safety of those involved. Individuals must not neglect their duties by seeking social media opportunities instead

4.1 Potential for Damage

Brigade Members should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to Volunteer Bushfire Brigade entities through their use of online communication via social media.

4.2 Application of the Policy

The Policy is applicable when communication is made on a Brigade or personal electronic device and includes social media posts made anonymously or through the issue of an 'alias' or a pseudonym.

4.3 Prohibited Communication

Prohibited online communication via Digital Media Platforms (social media) includes, but is not limited to, communication which:

- disparages, discriminates, bullies, harasses and/or defames brigade entities or their colleagues
- reveals confidential, proprietary, non-released information concerning Brigade, Shire or DFES business operations
- criticises Brigade, Shire or DFES entities and/or other members/staff members
- is defamatory
- is rude, offensive or threatening towards Brigade members and/or associates
- publicises or comments on internal Brigade disputes
- implies the authorisation to speak as a representative of the Brigade or gives the impression that the views expressed are those of the Brigade
- uses a brigade email address or logo that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of personal comments
- has the potential to adversely impact the professional reputation and/or the productivity of the Brigade and/or the Shire or DFES.

Use of Photographs and Electronic Recordings

Individuals' safety and rights to privacy, in relation to the use of electronic recordings (eg captured images such as photographs, videos and voice recordings), are recognised and protected.

5.1 Photographs and electronic recordings of individuals and their property (including, but not limited to, vehicles and homes) cannot be published in any forum, by members, without the explicit permission of the individuals who are the subject of such material.

5.2 Members are prohibited from using personal cameras to capture images at incidents such as motor vehicle accidents and property fires, without the permission of the Officer In Charge and subject to the clauses of this Media Policy .

Appendix A - Reference Documents

DFES Media Policy (Number 73 2015)

https://volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/vhprocesscopy/policies-and-acts/media-policy-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=4d4591a4_6

DFES General Circular No: 4/2021 File: D15793 21 January 2021 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

https://volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/vhprocesscopy/circular/general/general_circular_04_2021-use-of-social-media-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=ce4226a4_2

Shire of Mundaring Bush Fire Brigades Local Law 2013

http://sawyersvalley.bfb.asn.au/files/sv.bfb.asn.au/CombinedVersion_SVVBFB-ByLawsAndCoC_V3.1_200929_0.pdf

Shire of Mundaring Brigade Operating Procedures

<https://www.mundaring.wa.gov.au/AboutCouncil/Policieslocallaws/Council%20Policies/Local%20Laws/Bush%20Fire%20Brigades%20Local%20Law.pdf>

Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade By Laws

<http://sawyersvalley.bfb.asn.au/files/sv.bfb.asn.au/Brigade%20Operational%20Readiness%20Plan%202017%20v1.0.pdf>