

Thank you for the support you provide as an employer of a valuable volunteer member of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES). Our volunteers are essential in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

This brochure will provide you with important information on QFES volunteers, the roles they play in protecting the community, and how you can participate in supporting this role.



Information for employers of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Volunteers

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QFES provides fire and emergency services to the communities of Queensland through Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) permanent and auxiliary firefighters, FRS specialist volunteers, Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers, and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers.

Although the character and operational method of the individual services may vary, they all have the same primary goal - to protect the people and assets of their community against the destructive forces of nature which causes impact in many forms.

Volunteers provide emergency preparation and response capability across all areas of the State, and without their highly skilled contribution the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery of Queensland would be severely compromised.

Without the on-going support of employers to grant leave of absence and release our volunteers from their regular work duties, most communities would face greatly increased risks and heightened consequences.



Employer Benefits

There are many benefits to having a member of QFES volunteer emergency services as an employee. QFES volunteers learn to work well in teams, follow instructions, communicate effectively, think quickly, take responsibility, use their initiative, and develop capabilities to keep calm in a crisis.

Throughout their time with QFES, volunteers undertake mandatory training and develop skills in a wide range of areas. They also have access to knowledge and skills training programs provided by QFES which equip them with capabilities that can be useful in the workplace.

By supporting an employee who is a QFES volunteer, you are supporting the community. Volunteers are essential to providing the services offered by QFES and essential to protecting the communities of Queensland.

Employer Incentives

QFES acknowledges the significant contribution to the community that employers make when releasing staff from their work responsibilities to respond to emergencies. Businesses release staff at their own cost, and an employer must consider the operability of their business when considering employee leave entitlement requested at short notice.

As an incentive and in recognition of their support, employers whose staff members volunteer for QFES may be eligible for an exemption on payroll tax for the hours staff spend away from work serving the community. This exemption recognises the importance of volunteers and the commitment of employers for allowing staff to take time away from work to assist in emergency operations.

Information can be found through the Queensland Office of State Revenue by calling 1300 300 734 during office hours or visiting their website at qro.qld.gov.au.

Employee Leave

QFES encourages its volunteers to discuss release from work and make suitable leave arrangements with their employers prior to the need to attend an emergency. These arrangements may be informal, such as verbal or can be made more formally in writing. The type of leave used should form part of these discussions. The decision of when and how leave of absence will be granted and processed is at the discretion of the employer.

Employers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the legislative requirements to support emergency service volunteers, such as the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* and the *Fair Work Act 2009*. For a detailed fact sheet, visit fairwork.gov.au/leave/community-service-leave.

QFES Responsibilities

QFES provides workers compensation cover for volunteers while attending training and operational activities. If a volunteer is hurt whilst undertaking QFES activities, they can apply to Workcover to claim for medical expenses or lost wages.

