

Australian Fire Service Medal Guidelines



The Australian Fire Service Medal is awarded to those who have rendered distinguished service as a member of an Australian fire service.

The Guidelines have been established to provide guidance and assistance to nominating officers and recommending authorities in interpreting the requirements of the Medal under the Regulations.

The Governor-General awards the Australian Fire Service Medal on the recommendation of the responsible Commonwealth, State or Territory Minister or Premier.

1. Background

The Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) was established under Letters Patent dated 12 July 1988. The AFSM is awarded by the Governor-General and recipients are usually announced in the Australia Day and The Queen's Birthday Honours lists.

The AFSM is part of the meritorious suite of awards within the Australian honours system. The AFSM is governed by the *Australian Fire Service Medal Regulations 12 April 1988*.

2. About the Medal

The AFSM was established to recognise those members of an Australian fire service who have given distinguished service, particularly in times of emergency or disaster.

Prior to nominating, consideration must be given to whether the person's service would be more appropriately recognised by another award in the Australian honours system. Specifically, if the member is in a position that delivers service that may not meet the eligibility criteria, they may be more appropriately recognised by the Public Service Medal or an award within the Order of Australia.

The AFSM may only be awarded once to a member of an Australian fire service.

3. Definitions

Distinguished service includes:

- achievement that has an enduring benefit for the organisation; and
- actions that exceed the requirements of normal duties of a member; and
- high level achievement in the performance of their duties.

Member – for the purposes of defining an organisation's quota, a member refers to a person who is officially recognised as a full time or part time permanent, volunteer or auxiliary member for the organisation.

Australian fire service – means a Commonwealth fire service or a fire service of a State or Territory of the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth fire service – means a fire service of a Commonwealth agency (other than a fire service of the Australian Capital Territory).

External Territory – means Norfolk Island, the Territory of Christmas Island or the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Primary service - the delivery of front-line services that preserve and/or protect life or property in response to an emergency situation for which fire service member/s would be required e.g. rescue, emergency medical situations, fire response or other response to ensure community safety.

Hazard - a source or situation with the potential for harm, either injury or ill-health.

4. Eligibility considerations for Australian Fire Service members

The AFSM may be awarded to a member who has shown distinguished service when carrying out the primary functions of the organisation, particularly where the work has been inherently more hazardous than most other occupations.

Members who recently worked on the frontline for a prolonged period of time and had exposure to hazard in the service of the community, and who are now using their frontline experience to support others on the frontline, may also be eligible.

Consideration needs to be given to the following:

- **Service history:** Level of distinguished service provided to the organisation in an operational/frontline hazardous role that delivers the primary services of the organisation and experiences a long exposure to hazard.
- **Professional skills:** Includes prolonged exposure to hazard and the demonstration of exceptional skills in response to emergency incidents, or activities of an operational nature.
- **Leadership:** Performs an operational/frontline leadership to deliver the primary services of the organisation. Commands or leads on the frontline a team, in response to an emergency or disaster. Inspires and influences members of the organisation.
- **Commitment:** Relates to all of the above and represents significant commitment, devotion and goodwill towards fire services, fire management and/or public safety in general.

Australian fire service members:

- should be operational in the delivery of a primary service under hazardous conditions for the organisation; and
- should deliver products and services that have an enduring effect on the organisation or the members in hazardous roles; and

- must have been active in delivering distinguished service within two years prior to the nomination; and
- must be fully trained and certified to perform an operational/frontline role of the relevant organisation; and
- can only be considered for the AFSM if the nomination has been received by the Secretariat within one year of the person leaving the organisation.

COVID-19 service eligibility:

- must meet current eligibility criteria for meritorious awards (distinguished, frontline service, exposure to hazard, current or recent operational role); and
- must have provided outstanding service, achievement or contribution to Australia's response or recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Quotas

The number of members in the fire service or combined fire service of that State or Territory serving on 30 June in the year immediately preceding that calendar year.

States, Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory

The number of AFSM awards for each State and Territory in a calendar year must not exceed:

- one award for each 1,000, or part of 1,000 full-time permanent members of the fire service or combined Australian fire services of the State or Territory; and
- one award for each 5,000, or part of 5,000 part-time members, volunteers or auxiliary members of the fire service or combined fire service, of the State or Territory; and
- one additional award to a full-time permanent member, part-time member, volunteer or auxiliary member.

Additional Conditions

- One Medal may be awarded in a calendar year for a Commonwealth fire service.
- One Medal may be awarded in a calendar year for all of the external Territories.

Additional quota - COVID-19 Pandemic

The medal may be awarded for service in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic to a person who is eligible for the AFSM. The award may only be made in the 5-year period commencing on 25 January 2020. There is no limit to the number of awards that are made under this amendment as it sits outside the quota. *See S4 'COVID-19 service eligibility' for eligibility requirements.*

6. Process

Nominations for the AFSM are submitted to a coordinating authority who consider the nominations and submit recommendations to the responsible Commonwealth, State or Territory Minister or Premier.

The responsible Commonwealth, State or Territory Minister or Premier submit the recommendations to the Registrar of Awards for consideration. Recommendations are assessed for eligibility by the Honours Secretariat and additional information is sought if necessary.

The Secretariat provides the assessed recommendations to the Governor-General for consideration and approval.

The recipients are usually announced as part of the Australia Day or The Queen's Birthday Honours Lists each year.

Recipients are entitled to the post-nominal AFSM.

Recipients are invited to attend an Investiture Ceremony at their State or Territory Government House where they will receive their insignia.

7. Medal design and Order of Wear

Medal design - The Australian Fire Service Medal is a circular copper-nickel medal ensigned with the Crown of St Edward. The front of the Medal displays an effigy of the Queen superimposed over a seven-pointed star of flames.

The back of the Medal is inscribed with the words 'Australian Fire Service Medal', and 'For Distinguished Service' on a background of flames.

The Medal is suspended by a ribbon which has a central vertical band of gold, superimposed with a red pattern symbolising flames, flanked by bands of green.

Order of Wear - The manner of wearing of the Medal is as determined by the Governor-General.

8. Contact Us

Contact us at: ServiceAwards@gg.gov.au

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(To be finalised)