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## SLOPES - Perisher Valley Fire Station - Fire safety initiatives - Triple Zero Fact Sheet and False Alarms

SLOPES <slopes.au@gmail.com>  
Bcc: frank.zipfinger@gmail.com

14 September 2012 at 15:40

Dear SLOPES Members

Further to our email of 9 September 2012 (see below), we provide some additional information.

### 1. Triple Zero Fact Sheet

We have previously circulated this but it is important, so we attach again the NSW Fire Brigades Fact Sheet No 1 - "In an Emergency Call Triple Zero (000).

*A copy of this Fact Sheet should be displayed prominently in every lodge.*

### 2. False alarms and FARNSW charges

This is a somewhat complex situation. Attached is a letter dated 2 June 2012 from FARNSW with guidelines.

To assist we provide some further background information:

1. FARNSW in an email dated 19 March 2012 said:

*Under Fire Brigade (Charges) Regulations 2000 FRNSW charges for second a(nd) subsequent false alarms during a sixty day period. The purpose of these charges is to encourage owners to reduce repeat false alarms. The Charges are invoiced monthly to the automatic fire alarm service providers who in turn invoice the premises owners. Service providers may also add an administration fee.*

2. The situation as we understand it is as follows:

If an alarm operates repeatedly within a 24 hour period there are no charges but fines can be imposed if a monitored alarm operates twice within a 60 day period. There are avenues for exemptions. Fines are not incurred on premises not remotely monitored.

3. The NSW Fire Regulations 2008 state:

The amount of \$750 is the charge prescribed for the performance of the service specified in section 42 (1) (e) of the Act (that is, the service of responding to an alarm that is afterwards discovered to have been a false alarm) if:

(a) the false alarm resulted from any activation of the alarm except in the course of a test of which prior notice was given to a fire brigade officer and that the Commissioner is satisfied was properly carried out, and

(b) it is the second or subsequent occasion of any such false alarm by the alarm during any period of 60 days.

4. Clearly the alarm must have given a false report more than once in 60 days for a charge to have been initiated. But Section 42 of the Fire Brigade Act 1989 empowers the collection of a fee, which is what the above regulation refers to, while Section 43 also empowers the Commissioner to waive such fees at his or her discretion. **In the past it appears fines were often not imposed or, if imposed, were often waived on request. Current indications are that such a lenient approach will NOT be adopted by FARNSW going forward.**

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Finally, please remember that fire safety and compliance issues are critically important in the context of your insurance cover. Please ensure that proper attention is given to these issues at all times.

Regards

Frank Zipfinger  
President  
SLOPES

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Frank Zipfinger** <[frank.zipfinger@gmail.com](mailto:frank.zipfinger@gmail.com)>  
Date: 9 September 2012 23:06  
Subject: SLOPES - Perisher Valley Fire Station - Fire safety initiatives and update  
To: Frank Zipfinger <[frank.zipfinger@gmail.com](mailto:frank.zipfinger@gmail.com)>

Dear SLOPES Members

Attached for your information is a letter dated 20 August 2012 issued by FARNSW at the request of SLOPES following the consultation meeting held in Perisher Valley on 8 August 2012.

That meeting was called to review the operation of the Perisher Valley Fire Station during the trial period of the new retained system from 23 March to 25 May 2012.

FARNSW reported that there were 36 calls during that period of which 35 were false alarms. The other call was for a motor vehicle accident where there were no injuries.

Despite the fact that there were only 3 firefighters resident in Perisher Valley with a few others often working there during the day during the trial period, meaning that in most cases a full complement of 4 firefighters needed to fully fight a fire would require resourcing from Jindabyne some 35 km away, FARNSW informed the meeting that the average response time under the retained system trial was about 14 minutes and 2 seconds compared to 12 minutes and 30 seconds under the previous rotational system where a full complement of 12 firefighters was stationed full time at Perisher Valley Fire Station and available to respond to calls. SLOPES has asked for further details behind these statistics and awaits this information.

FARNSW announced that the trial of the retained system was successful from it's point of view. As a result, after the end of the snow season FARNSW will revert to the retained system. The 2012 snow season has been extended to 5 October due to the outstanding snow cover. The agreement reached with SLOPES is that the winter rotational system will continue for 2 weeks after the end of the snow season. So, the rotational system should continue until 19 October, when the retained system should kick in.

At the meeting SLOPES indicated it needed more data to be able to form a view on the effectiveness on the trial retained period and that, for the reasons notified previously and extensively to FARNSW, SLOPES remains opposed to the use of the inadequate and inappropriate retained system at Perisher Valley Fire Station.

The critical thing now is for all Clubs:

1. to do what they can to maximise fire safety in their own lodges, including availing themselves of the service provided by FARNSW to provide guidance on shut down procedures at the end of the snow season, regularly checking fire and smoke alarms, checking the combustibility of lodge fittings and furnishings before installation, properly maintaining gas bottles, managing surrounding vegetation, notifying FARNSW if activities like welding will occur at your lodge etc
2. to be fully informed of the the call procedures in the event of a fire emergency - ALWAYS CALL 000 and NOT the Perisher Valley Fire Station. And at all times keep the FARNSW notices with details clearly posted in your lodge,
3. to make sure Club contact details are kept up to date with NPWS and FARNSW - and put the current Club contact details on the fire panel in your lodge, and
4. be aware of the significant costs (\$750+) which can be imposed by FARNSW in connection with their responses to false alarms and of the greater likelihood now of charges being imposed and not waived. Clubs should also take steps with their service providers to minimise the incidence of false alarms from their lodges and take rapid remedial action after the occurrence of any false alarm.

The attached letter addresses these issues and provides links to relevant websites. Members should read this material carefully and act accordingly.

Regards

Frank Zipfinger  
President  
SLOPES

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**2 attachments**



**1 In an Emergency Call\_000\_Ver03.pdf**  
116K



**AFA letter\_1.docx**  
197K



## FACT SHEET

### No. 1 – In an Emergency Call Triple Zero (000)

Version 04

Issued: 2 December 2010

#### FACT

Knowing how to call Triple Zero (000) for a fire emergency can be the difference between life and death, or a building or other property being saved or destroyed. The Triple Zero (000) service is the quickest way to get the right resources from emergency services to help you and should be used to contact Police, Fire or Ambulance services in life threatening or time critical situations.

Calls to Triple Zero (000) are free and can be made from mobile phones, home or work phones or payphones.

#### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Other things everyone should know in an emergency:

- If a person is unable to speak English, if they call Triple Zero (000), say “fire” and leave the phone off the hook the call will be recorded and traced and a fire engine will be sent to that address.
- Record the Triple Zero (000) emergency number beside the telephone at home and work. Take time to teach children and overseas visitors how to make an emergency call.
- Callers with hearing or speech impairments can call the one zero six (106) text-based emergency. Call service using a text-phone.

#### HOW TO REPORT A FIRE BY CALLING TRIPLE ZERO (000)

- Stay calm and call Triple Zero (000) from a safe location.
- A Telstra operator will ask you if you need Police, Fire or Ambulance. Say “Fire”.
- If you are calling using a mobile or satellite phone the operator will ask you for other location information. You will then be connected to an emergency service operator, who will take details of the situation.
- Stay on the line, speak clearly and answer the operator’s questions.
- Give them the details of where you are, including street number, name, nearest cross street, and locality.
- In rural areas it is important to give the full address and distances from landmarks and roads, not just the name of the property.
- Don’t hang up until the operator has all the information they need.
- If possible wait outside at a prearranged meeting point or in a prominent location for fire services to arrive to assist them to locate the fire.
- If you make a Triple Zero (000) call whilst travelling on a motorway or on a rural road, know the direction you are travelling and the last exit or town you passed through to assist services to correctly locate the incident.



For more information contact your local fire station or visit:  
[www.fire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au) or [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) or [www.esa.act.gov.au](http://www.esa.act.gov.au)



**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000)**

**PREVENT PREPARE PROTECT**







Telephone: (02) 6284 2150 Facsimile:()

www.fire.nsw.gov.au info@fire.nsw.gov.au ABN: 12 593 473 110

File No: CHO/06735

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Msu- Consultative Committee  
National Parks and Wildlife Service  
Office of Environment and Heritage  
Department Of Premiers and Cabinet  
Po Box 2228 Jindabyne NSW 2627

2 June 2012

Dear Consultative committee members

Fire and Rescue NSW is committed to reducing the number of false alarms from Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs). FRNSW statistics show that approximately 96% of AFA –generated incidents are false alarms .FRNSW has a statutory obligation under the *Fire Brigade Act 1989* to attend all alarms of fire including those from AFAs. False alarms divert FRNSW resources that would otherwise be available for genuine emergencies.

FRNSW is a member of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) Unwanted False Alarm Subgroup that is actively reviewing ways to reduce the proportion of false alarms.

FRNSW works with Customers of Protected Premises, fire protection industry groups (including Automatic Fire Alarm Service Providers (AFASPs), regulatory authorities and local government to reduce false alarms.

False alarm charges are fines intended to encourage Automatic Fire Alarm Service Providers (AFASPs) and their Customers to maintain fire alarm systems efficiently and effectively. Properly maintained fire alarms ensure the safety of Protected Premises occupiers and property, and reduce the likelihood of further false alarms requiring FRNSW attendance.

FRNSW has the legislative entitlement under the *Fire Brigades Act 1989* (sections 42 and 79A) and the Agreement made between FRNSW and the AFASP, to charge AFASPs for each false alarm received by FRNSW from AFASP-monitored AFA networks. A Chargeable AFA False Alarm is an AFA false alarm which, in the opinion of FRNSW, can be attributed to any action or inaction of the Customer or other party to maintain the AFA and where the activation of that AFA could have reasonably been prevented. An AFASP has the right to apply an administration or other surcharge to the AFA false alarm amount charged by FRNSW. An AFASP must fully disclose administration or other surcharges on Customer invoices.

FRNSW applies two leniencies to AFA false alarm charges. These leniencies provide the AFASP and/or the Customer with the opportunity to have the alarm problem rectified whilst reducing the risk of incurring false alarm charges.

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FRNSW applies a 60 day leniency period in which the first in a series of AFA false alarms from the same AFA number is not charged. Therefore the second and subsequent AFA false alarms that occur within any 60 day period after the first in the series are charged. FRNSW applies a 24 hour leniency period in which repeat false alarms from the same AFA number are not charged. Therefore multiple false alarms that occur within any 24 hour period are considered to be one event. AFASP-caused AFA false alarms are not subject to leniencies.

**Note:** FRNSW officers attending incidents do not have authority to waive AFA false alarm charges.

Examples of chargeable false alarms includes but are not limited to Malicious false alarm - includes activation of Break Glass Alarm or Manual Control Point. Cooking fumes - includes toast, foodstuffs. Heat detector operated - no fire - includes heat from oven, dryer, heater, hair straightener. Alarm activation due to steam - includes shower, bath, sauna, kettle, steam room. Alarm activation due to aerosol use - includes hair spray, insecticides. Incorrect operation or service by servicing company personnel. Alarm activation due to worker or occupier activities. Alarm activation due to poor building maintenance - includes dust, cobwebs, damage, insects.

Should you have any queries or concerns regarding this matter, please contact Kenneth Murphy, Area Commander Regional South on (02) 6284 2150 or [kenneth.murphy@fire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kenneth.murphy@fire.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Chief Superintendent Kenneth Murphy  
**Area Commander Regional South  
Regional Operations**