

# Volunteering with CFA

## Frequently Asked Questions



### **Do I have to live in a CFA area to Volunteer?**

Yes, you need to live reasonably close to your local Brigade.

### **What will it cost to become a member of CFA?**

The only cost to become a CFA Volunteer is your time. All training and equipment is provided by CFA as it is needed.

### **How many hours a week will I have to commit to?**

The time commitment will depend on the individual Brigade and the type of role that you choose. Generally a Brigade will train weekly and hold meetings monthly, plus any incidents that occur. You will be able to talk with your local Brigade to determine what your availability could be.

### **Can I still Volunteer if I have a full time job or kids at home?**

Yes, most training is conducted on weeknights or weekends, and you can discuss with your local Brigade when you would be able to attend incidents.

### **Who can join?**

The minimum age to become a CFA member is 16 years (16 & 17 years olds will need parental consent), and some Brigades also run a Junior Program for 11-15 year olds. People from all walks of life become CFA Volunteers, including young people, women of all ages, active retirees and people from culturally diverse communities.

### **Will being a Volunteer give me an advantage when applying for a career position?**

Both Volunteers and non-Volunteers are required to go through the same application process. If you are successful in obtaining a firefighter position, you will still need to complete the entire recruit training course. More information on career firefighting can be found at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/joining/career\\_ff/index.htm](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/joining/career_ff/index.htm)

### **How long will training last for?**

On average it takes 3-6 months to complete a recruit course. Recruit courses vary from 2-6 hours per week depending on the brigade you join. In your initial training you will learn all the basic skills and safety requirements to be able to commence attending incidents. Once you have completed this, you will have the opportunity to attend regular training with the Brigade, to maintain your skills and learn new ones. The first 6 months with CFA is a probationary period.

### **What will training involve?**

There are many different skills you can learn through CFA. The particular ones you learn will be relevant to the role you choose. They could include basic firefighting, fire safety awareness, endorsed truck licence, first aid, leadership training, communications, wildfire behaviour, wildfire suppression, map reading, radio communications and fireground safety and other skills which may also be valuable to you.

Training is conducted at the local Brigade, and at various training grounds around the state. Training times will differ between each Brigade, but are generally held on a weeknight or weekend.

### **Are there any fitness/skill requirements?**

You do not need any prior skills before you join CFA, as all the training is provided. Firefighting will involve strenuous and physically challenging activities, so a certain level of fitness is required to undertake this role. You can discuss this with your local Brigade to determine your suitability for this role.

### **What do Volunteers do?**

CFA Volunteers can either be firefighters or support roles.

Firefighting and emergency roles include:

- Attending fires – wildfires and structural
- Conducting fuel reduction burns
- Attending road accident rescues
- Attending incidents involving hazardous materials
- Attending other emergencies including flood assistance
- Attending other types of rescue

Some of the support roles include:

- Community education programs
- Fundraising activities
- Brigade training
- Brigade equipment maintenance
- Media and public relations
- Multicultural liaison
- Brigade administration
- Junior members program

### **What is the process for joining?**

1. May involve an information session at the Brigade to find out more about what's involved and see if there is a role suited for you.
2. May involve an individual meet and greet session with Officers of the Brigade.
3. Fill out an application form & consent for police record check. (Not seen by Brigade, managed corporately)
4. Approved by Operations Manager

### **Can I be a Volunteer only for major bushfires?**

Brigades need members who are able to provide support and respond to incidents throughout the year, not just in times of major fires. Members are also required to be fully trained before attending any incidents.

### **Are there any health restrictions? Asthma etc.**

CFA's primary concern is for the safety and health of its Volunteers. Brigades are responsible for ensuring that Volunteers perform their role in a safe manner. CFA needs to know if a prospective Volunteer has a condition which may place limitations on their role in the Brigade. When CFA is aware of any limitations or restrictions that a person has, the Brigade can then avoid placing the Volunteer in an environment that is unsuited to their health. As such, you may have to undertake a medical assessment.

### **What benefits will there be for me?**

CFA Volunteers develop leadership and management capabilities, meet new friends, learn new skills, achieve personal goals, put something back into the community and often involve their whole family in CFA activities.

Other benefits include:

- Valuable work and personal experience in the community
- A sense of achievement
- Personal satisfaction
- Skill development that can be used in other areas of your life
- Access to member support services, including counselling and a rewards/benefits program.

### **What compensation is payable to CFA Volunteers who are injured?**

CFA provides comprehensive insurance cover for medical, loss of wages and property damage.

### **What area does CFA cover?**

CFA covers 60% of metropolitan Melbourne generally bordering the inner suburbs. Areas included in CFA's area are Dandenong, Eltham, Bayswater, Caroline Springs and Greenvale.

For more information visit... [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or call 1800 232 636 alternatively we encourage you to approach your local Brigade.