

CODE OF CONDUCT (

VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS



*A reliable and trusted volunteer based organisation
building safe and resilient communities.*

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INTRODUCTION

Members of the South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) exercise authority on behalf of the Government of South Australia and manage significant financial, physical and human resources on its behalf. The community demands high standards of behaviour and ethical conduct from the people entrusted with this responsibility.

Behaving ethically is critical in the SASES and our values guide and support our people, strengthen public confidence in the service, and set out the standards of behaviour and conduct expected of every SASES volunteer and employee.

In support of our values, the SASES is also committed to actively promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of all of its members and manages its safety responsibilities as an integral part of all aspects of business, training, administration and operations.

This document provides standards and support for volunteers and staff to enable them to be effective and safe members of the SASES. It emphasises guiding values and principles of behaviour. It encourages members to be creative and exercise mature judgement and common sense. All SASES members must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values and behaviours outlined in this document.



A FRAMEWORK BASED ON VALUES AND SAFETY

Our organisation's values underpin ethical behaviours and inform decision-making at all levels. These values align with the SASES Corporate Plan, the Government of South Australia's Public Sector Values and Behaviour Framework and the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector, and provide the framework for the standards of professional conduct outlined in this document.

Our values:

- **Service**
Proudly serve the community and Government of South Australia.
- **Professionalism**
Strive for excellence.
- **Trust**
Have confidence in the ability of others.
- **Respect**
Value every individual.
- **Collaboration & Engagement**
Create solutions together.
- **Honesty & Integrity**
Act truthfully, consistently and fairly.
- **Courage & Tenacity**
Never give up.
- **Sustainability**
Work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The SASES is committed to ensuring that all of its members model the highest standards of ethical behaviour that reflect community expectations. Working for the SASES means that there are certain expectations of us. We need to be professional and accountable in the performance of our duties, work collaboratively with colleagues and the community, and play our part in creating a safe workplace. Every day, our actions, decisions and behaviour are what define the public opinion of the SASES.

Everyone can contribute to a culture in the SASES that promotes professional integrity, by conducting themselves in a manner consistent with the values and behaviours outlined in this document.

The standards of conduct below align with SASES values and the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector. All SASES members must conduct themselves according to these standards:

- **Professional and courteous behaviour**
In order to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the SASES, members exhibit the highest standards of professional conduct in undertaking their duties, including the observance at all times of lawful and reasonable direction, policies and procedures and other instruments that define what is expected or required of volunteers and staff. Being professional also means that all members strive for excellence, take pride in our work and value the contribution of others.
- **Public comment**
Any public comment by members should be restricted to details about the role that they are performing or have performed, the communities they have helped or the value in working together with other emergency service organisations. Public comment about government, the SASES or another agency's policy is not permitted at any time. Requests from media for an interview must be approved through the chain of command.
- **Handling official information**
Members will not access, attempt to access or disclose official information other than in connection with their performance of their duties and/or as authorised.
Members will not misuse information gained in their official capacity and will maintain the integrity and security of official information for which they are responsible.
- **Use of resources**
There are clear delegations that provide the authority to commit resources and incur expenditure within the SASES. Members without relevant authority must not commit to expend money, incur debts or accept financial or contractual liabilities. These authorities and the responsibilities that go hand in hand with them are the role of appointed unit officers and delegated staff within the organisation.
Equally as important as any form of financial commitment is that members must not commit their unit or the SASES to any activity, training, exercise or other enterprise without the clear and specific approval of the unit manager, district officer or regional commander.
Facilities and equipment provided by the SASES are for the delivery of emergency services to the community. Members must use these facilities and equipment in a manner that is careful, efficient and economical. Emergency equipment in particular must only be used by appropriately trained members. Any instance of damage or unserviceability must be reported immediately.
Members must not misuse or waste SASES resources or internet, email or other computer-based systems. Members must not use SASES equipment for private purposes without the express permission of their supervisor.



SASES CODE OF CONDUCT VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

- **Conflicts of interest**

Conflicts of interest can pose a major risk to the appropriate management of public resources. It is vital that the community has confidence that the SASES and its members will act impartially and without prejudice. Members must not have a personal interest in decisions they make in the course of their SASES duties or role. A conflict of interest can be actual or potential where a member is or could be influenced, or there is potential for them to be influenced.

All members must avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest and ensure that their personal or financial interests do not influence or interfere with the performance of their role. They will ensure that the interests of family members, friends or associates do not influence the performance by them of their duties and/or their role as a member of the SASES.

- **Outside employment**

Paid staff of the SASES employed on a full-time basis must not engage in other employment or other remunerative activity

where the activity (1) conflicts or has the potential to conflict with their role as a public sector employee or (2) the performance of such outside employment or activity might affect their capacity to perform their duties. All paid staff must obtain written permission from the Chief Officer before engaging in any outside employment or remunerative activity (including any employment, work or service for which payment is made by way of pay, salary, honorarium, commission, fee, allowance or other reward).

- **Acceptance of gifts and benefits**

Members must not seek any personal reward for services provided to the community. There will be times when members may be given a gift, money or a benefit as thanks for a job well done. Volunteers and staff must always declare such gifts to their supervisor or unit manager. Any monetary gifts are considered to be donations to the SASES and any other tangibles must be vested in the unit for use by members as agreed with the unit manager.

The acceptance of any gifts or benefits by SASES staff has the potential to secure the influence or favour of an employee. The public expects members of the SASES to be impartial and not be improperly influenced in the performance of their duties. Therefore staff of the service will not, for themselves or others, seek or accept gifts or benefits that could be reasonably perceived as influencing them. Gifts may be accepted if they are obviously mementos or gifts of a symbolic nature. All gifts must be declared through the chain of command.

- **Criminal offences**

If an SASES member is charged with a criminal offence that if admitted or proven may impact upon their duties and/or role as an SASES member, the member must advise their supervisor (or, if they are not available, another person in management within the SASES) of the charge in writing, at the earliest possible opportunity. Members must comply with all legislation, policies, procedures and directions relevant to their duties and/or role as an SASES member.

- **Reporting unethical behaviour**

All SASES members have a duty to report formally to an appropriate authority any workplace behaviour that a reasonable person would suspect:

- violates any law
- represents corrupt conduct
- is mismanagement of public resources
- is a danger to public health or safety or to the environment, or
- amounts to misconduct.

Criminal or illegal behaviour or action will be reported to South Australia Police, while instances of serious misconduct, corruption or maladministration will be reported to the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC).

Members must report any instances of known or suspected dishonesty or corruption within the SASES. Reports of this nature will be treated confidentially, and members will be protected under the Whistleblowers Protection Act 1993 (SA).



SAFETY

SASES training and operational activities can be inherently dangerous, and are regularly performed under difficult conditions. These are managed using appropriate risk assessment techniques and the service will always strive to provide the safest possible work environment given the conditions.

Volunteers are deemed to be workers under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) and SASES volunteer members have the same work health and safety (WHS) protections and responsibilities as SASES staff. Each individual is the person most responsible for their own and their colleagues' safety; WHS considerations are critical to everything that we do, and implementation of the service's WHS arrangements is the responsibility of every SASES member.

The service will ensure that all members are provided with:

- a safe workplace environment
- safe systems of work
- plant and substances in a safe condition
- adequate facilities at workplaces that are under SASES control
- the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to perform their jobs in a safe manner
- equitable injury management (IM) and rehabilitation for all members who are injured or incur a disability in the course of their SASES service.

Everyone has a responsibility for WHS and all members are obliged to:

- operate in a safe manner, use safe work practices and follow instructions
- take due care for the safety of themselves and others
- co-operate with reasonable directions given by line management to meet WHS and IM obligations
- comply with SASES WHS doctrine, WHS legislation and codes of practice
- report any observed breach of safe work practices or an unsafe situation to their supervisor.

Any SASES member suffering from an illness or any medical, health or fitness condition that may affect their duties must:

- notify their supervisor and exempt themselves from any planned activity
- advise their supervisor of any permanent medical, health or fitness condition that may affect the roles they can safely perform.

If a member is injured on SASES duty, the service will provide help and support to enable them to return to normal employment and to SASES duty as soon as possible.

Injured members have a responsibility to:

- assist by getting well and focusing on returning to work
- not return to SASES duties until they are cleared to do so by their doctor and by the appointed rehabilitation officer/s working for the SASES.

Negative behaviours

- failing to use the correct personal protective clothing or equipment
- not co-operating with reasonable directions given by your supervisor to meet WHS obligations
- not notifying the SASES of a health condition that may affect your duties
- returning to SASES duties following injury before being cleared to do so by your doctor
- failing to speak up when you see a breach of safety or an unsafe situation

OUR PEOPLE

- dedicated volunteers and staff serving our community
- respected and respectful
- courageous, caring and careful
- proud of what we do

SASES have a duty to provide quality services to the citizens of South Australia. Respect for human dignity and the value of every person is at the heart of every action members take and every decision made.

When on duty, members are highly visible and possibly the subject of public scrutiny. Even when not in uniform, members may be seen as representing the service and must act in a manner that will not in any way discredit the service.

This means that all SASES members:

- display professional behaviour
- act with genuine respect for the rights of fellow members of the service, members of partner agencies, and members of the public
- demonstrate tenacity, perseverance and a can-do attitude, and strive to complete the mission regardless of the challenges, adversity or difficulties faced
- strive to create a workplace environment that is free of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation in any form
- drive all SASES vehicles in a safe and responsible manner
- follow the policies, procedures and guidelines of the service
- wear the SASES uniform properly, and ensure that their appearance is neat, tidy and clean in public
- value the identity and reputation of the SASES
- deliver on the service's promises, and do it well.

Negative behaviours

- behaving in a manner that reflects or is likely to reflect adversely on the SASES or is prejudicial to good order and discipline in the service
- behaving in an oppressive, offensive, abusive or insulting manner or making frivolous or vexatious complaints against other members of the service, members of partner agencies or members of the public
- discriminating on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity or age
- driving SASES vehicles in an irresponsible manner
- giving up in the face of difficulty
- ignoring the policies and priorities of the service
- having an 'I don't care' attitude
- engaging in destructive criticism
- appearing in SASES uniform or other item with SASES insignia in a poorly presented, dirty or untidy manner

OUR BEHAVIOURS

- trustworthy and ethical
- fair and honest
- courage to do the right thing
- supportive and compassionate

SASES members are accountable for everything they do and have an obligation to always act both within the letter and the spirit of the law. They uphold the public trust, strive to provide timely and responsive emergency management services and must always act with integrity, courage and compassion.

This means that all SASES members:

- act honestly and impartially in every aspect of their work and are open and transparent when making decisions or providing advice
- make decisions on merit and without bias, favouritism or self-interest
- ensure that decisions and actions are able to bear the closest public scrutiny
- act fairly and equitably in their dealings with the community and fellow members of the service by basing their actions on an objective consideration of all of the relevant issues
- value diversity and recognise the value of each person's contribution to the SASES
- are respectful of role, experience and background
- listen to others to gain understanding, and are open to other ideas and points of view
- treat the public and staff and volunteers from other agencies with respect and courtesy
- support internal processes and measures that provide stability, governance and accountability.

Negative behaviours

- knowingly creating a conflict of interest with your position as an SASES member
- make decisions that favour your family, friends or yourself
- discriminating on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity or age
- acting in a manner or making comments in public that a reasonable person would view as bringing you, the SASES or government into disrepute; or that is otherwise improper or disgraceful
- disclosing confidential information obtained in the course of performing duties
- improperly obtaining or seeking to obtain a benefit or advantage for yourself or another person from your position as an SASES member

OUR WAY OF WORKING

- putting our communities first
- treating people with respect and understanding
- strong leaders with well-trained volunteers and staff

Members are afforded significant powers under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (SA) and are accountable for the manner in which those powers are exercised.

Whether working in teams or individually, SASES members are responsible for the achievement of results and understand that structured teamwork and a system of performance management and development are critical to the achievement of improved disaster resilience and community safety outcomes.

This means that SASES members:

- understand the importance of working to clear goals and objectives
- understand that each individual in the chain of command plays a critical role in the effectiveness of the SASES
- follow the established chain of command for issues resolution, to communicate matters of importance and to keep the team informed
- collaborate to solve problems and improve outcomes in a positive way
- drive decisions down to the lowest appropriate level
- comply with all reasonable orders, instructions and directions from those in supervisory positions
- lead by example, accept problems and difficulties as part of the job and seek advice and support from others
- are clear, consistent, timely and accurate in their communications
- use all resources, including human resources, efficiently and effectively for public benefit
- avoid waste or misuse of resources, including internet and email systems
- understand cost implications of decisions
- strive for professional excellence and achieve at least the minimum training

standards of the SASES

- seek self-improvement, maintain their personal wellbeing and know themselves
- attend sufficient training and operational activities to maintain the category of membership they are in
- will not be absent from duty or training without appropriate reason
- obey and carry out lawful orders or duties promptly and diligently

Negative behaviours

- disobeying or failing to carry out a lawful order or duty promptly and diligently, or acting negligently in carrying out a lawful order or duty
- subverting or undermining the decisions of others or pursuing personal success at the expense of success for the team
- wasting or misusing SASES resources, internet and email systems
- failing to take appropriate action with people who do not perform or who breach SASES values and behaviours

OUR COMMUNITY VALUE

- responsive to our communities' needs
- contributing to safer and more resilient communities
- skilled, committed and accountable for our actions
- efficient, effective, agile and innovative

SASES members proudly serve the community and Government of South Australia, and work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians.

This means that SASES members:

- understand the importance of collaboration and the genuine engagement of communities in building resilience
- demonstrate their commitment to minimising the loss of life, injuries and property damage from emergencies by continually striving to improve emergency response capabilities and by adapting to changing needs through teamwork, innovation and creativity
- are polite at all times to all people and always act in the interests of the community and the citizens we serve
- act honestly at all times including when entering peoples' homes and businesses and/or when entrusted with their property
- only exercise SASES authorities and powers reasonably and for proper purposes
- recognise the contribution that diversity makes to innovation and the capacity to provide services that are respectful of the culture of people seeking those services.

Negative behaviours

- behaving in a manner that reflects or is likely to reflect adversely on the SASES or is prejudicial to good order and discipline in the service
- behaving in an oppressive, offensive, abusive or insulting manner towards members of the public
- acting in a manner that is disrespectful or invades the privacy of property owners
- removing items from properties without consent or good reason
- utilising powers that are excessive for the incident

CONCLUSION

This document describes the standards of professional and personal conduct and behaviour expected of all SASES volunteers and staff. It is designed to guide members in their service with the SASES and to help members perform their duties in a safe and effective manner. It is couched in terms of the agency's values and culture, and embeds the overarching principles associated with keeping our people and the community safe.

All SASES members must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values and behaviours outlined in this document.

Under s. 62 of the Fire and Emergency Services Regulations 2005 (SA), a member of an SASES unit who contravenes or fails to comply with the values and behaviours as detailed in this document may be liable to investigation and possibly disciplinary action.

Any action will be taken in accordance with the regulations and the SASES Volunteer Discipline Policy and Procedure. All members are entitled to representation and/or to seek advice from the SASES Volunteers' Association, a peer support member or any other appropriate area, in relation to the discipline processes.

Chris Beattie



Chief Officer



INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

[Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#)

Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (SA)

Fire and Emergency Services Regulations 2005 (SA)

[Independent Commissioner Against Corruption \(ICAC\) SA](#)

Public Sector Act 2009 (SA)

SASES Corporate Plan 2015-2018

SASES Volunteer Discipline Policy

SASES Volunteer Discipline Procedure

SASES Work Health and Safety Manual

[South Australian Public Sector Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#)

[South Australian Public Sector Values and Behaviour Framework](#)

Whistleblowers Protection Act 1993 (SA)

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)

