

Professional Standard: Registered Fire Investigator

Authority

This standard was endorsed by the EMPS Panel in March 2019.

Context

The AFAC Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme (the Scheme) is a program to recognise the skills, abilities and experience of emergency management practitioners.

Established by AFAC, the National Council and peak body for fire, land management and emergency service agencies in Australia and New Zealand, the Scheme is an initiative designed to promote emergency management as a profession.

The Scheme is open to career and volunteer personnel of AFAC member agencies, as well as individuals from other approved organisations.

Scope of application

This standard applies to applicants seeking registration in the role of Fire Investigator.

Hazard specific expertise is evaluated as part of the education component of eligibility and is a matter for the assessing agency to determine. Registration is limited to the role and is not separated into hazard classes.

Applicants may be career staff or volunteers of AFAC member agencies or personnel from approved government, commercial, not for profit or other entities.

Credential

The Registered Fire Investigator credential is awarded to an individual who has successfully fulfilled all eligibility requirements. Individuals will be recognised as proficient in carrying out origin and cause fire investigations, managing the chain of evidence, completing detailed fire investigation reports and presenting findings in court as a witness of fact (if required to do so), for fire scenes of moderate impact and complexity. The knowledge skills and experience required are beyond those gained through fire investigation training provided to front line firefighters by fire agencies.

Education requirements for Registered Fire Investigator

Applicants must be able to provide documented evidence of successful completion of the education components and all associated prerequisites as specified in Table 1.

Table 1:

Course or Program
PUAFIR501 Conduct fire investigation and analysis activities
A qualification which was awarded after formal assessment and which in the view of the Panel provides evidence of the Applicant’s competence to conduct fire investigations equivalent to PUAFIR501 Conduct fire investigation and analysis activities

Eligibility – Registered Fire Investigator

Applicants must be able to provide documented evidence to demonstrate that he or she:

- has committed to the EMPS Code of Ethics
- has successfully fulfilled the role of Fire Investigator at fire scenes of moderate impact and complexity for at least one year and in a minimum of five instances, including all associated reporting requirements, with at least one instance being in the 12 months before applying
- is supported by their home organisation or jurisdiction.

Definitions

<i>Fire scenes of moderate impact and complexity</i>	Is a fire scene involving factors such as substantial physical size of the fire, moderate to high value loss, criminal action, limited indicators to determine fire spread or significant destruction of the scene
<i>Instance</i>	Is a fire scene where a specialist fire origin and cause investigation has been required 1) by organisational policies and procedures or 2) for the purpose of resolving an insurance claim or in support of potential court proceedings.

Review

This standard will commence 15 March 2019. The Panel will review this standard after two years or as required.

Continuing professional development

The following Continuing Professional Development requirement, which must be recorded and reported in accordance with the EMPS Professional Standard: Continuing Professional Development applies to Registered Fire Investigators:

- ten hours of knowledge development per year, which is exposure to external learning in relation to fire investigation through training courses, seminars, conferences, online learning, reading journal articles and research
- investigating and reporting on a minimum of four fire scenes in a two-year period.

Areas of competency

Registered fire investigators should have and maintain at a minimum an up-to-date basic knowledge of the following topics relevant to the level of accreditation and area of expertise. Exposure to these topics should occur within a three year cycle. If an asterisked* topic is irrelevant to a practitioner's field of practice e.g. for a specialist bushfire fire investigator, the requirement does not apply to that topic.

1. Safety related to fire investigation
2. Fire science
3. Fire chemistry
4. Thermodynamics
5. Thermometry
6. Fire dynamics
7. Explosion dynamics*
8. Computer fire modelling
9. Fire investigation process, methodology and technology
10. Fire analysis
11. Hazardous materials*
12. Fire protection systems*
13. Evidence documentation, collection, and preservation
14. Electricity and electrical systems
15. Presenting of evidence in judicial settings as an expert witness
16. Research relating to fire cause and emerging fire trends
17. Wildfire fire behaviour*
18. Arson.

Related professional standards

- Code of Ethics (2017).
- Professional Standard: Continuing Professional Development (2018).