



The employer

Thank you for the support you are providing through employing a valuable member of the SES. The SES component of Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) is fundamental to providing emergency and disaster response across the state. SES volunteer members are invaluable and assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

This kit is designed to provide you with important information on the SES, the role it plays in protecting and community, and how you are participating in supporting this role.

Your commitment to your community is greatly appreciated.

Department of Community Safety

Information for Employers of SES Volunteers

Training

Queensland SES volunteers receive world class training in a range of disciplines providing them with real life skills which are used during emergencies and knowledge that stays with them through life. Basic training includes topics such as first aid, search and rescue, map reading and vehicle and equipment operation. Specialist training gives members the skills they need for road crash rescues, vertical rescues, land searches, water rescues and team leadership.

Areas that SES members may seek training and accreditation in include:

- agency support
- incident management
- flood response
- search
- road crash rescue
- special rescue
- storm response
- traffic management
- vertical rescue
- community education.



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For more information, please visit the Queensland SES website www.ses.qld.gov.au



Queensland Government



State Emergency Service (SES)

The State Emergency Service (SES) is a volunteer organisation designed to help Queensland communities in times of emergency and disaster.

Each year the SES receives thousands of calls for assistance. State government and local government maintain an important partnership in assisting SES volunteers to provide a valuable volunteer emergency service to their local communities.

The *Disaster Management Act 2003* establishes a framework for the management of the SES to ensure the effective performance and support of their functions.

For example, to perform search, rescue and disaster related activities. Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) develops and maintains SES Business Management and Operations Doctrine to assist the SES in operating effectively and efficiently.

Employer obligations

You make a significant contribution to your community when you release an SES member from work responsibilities to respond to emergencies. EMQ encourages all its members to negotiate suitable leave arrangements with their employers early in the employment relationship and prior to the need to attend an emergency. These arrangements may be informal, such as a verbal agreement.

Many employers choose to have a more formal arrangement putting the agreement into writing (refer to example clause). As with any formal employment agreement, it is wise to seek independent legal advice prior to making any commitment. Notwithstanding legislative requirements in the National Employment Standards and the *Fair Work Act 2009*, the decision as to how leave will be processed is at the discretion of the employer. Options may include leave without pay, time in lieu, fully or partly paid leave.

An equally important role is performed by employers of volunteers. It would be extremely difficult for many volunteers to attend calls to assist during emergencies and disasters without the support of employers who provide time during working hours to attend these events.

Employers who take a socially responsible approach to volunteers also contribute to the fabric and resilience of their communities. At their own cost, businesses release their staff and self-employed volunteers forgo personal income and time. Hence the role of a volunteer's employer, or a self-employed volunteer, is of paramount importance to the SES for without tolerance, understanding and support the SES as an organisation would not be able to function as effectively as it does.



Example Clause

Full-time and part-time employees involved in recognised volunteer emergency services shall be entitled to paid leave on ordinary time rate of pay, to attend emergency situations. It shall be the responsibility of the employee to keep the company informed about time off needed to attend to emergency duties. To receive authorisation of this leave, an employee shall provide the company with notice and proof of attendance at the emergency situation, as soon as practicable.

Employer tax incentives

From 1 July 2008 employers whose staff volunteer for the SES are exempt from paying payroll tax for the hours staff spend away from work serving the community. This exemption recognises the importance of those volunteers and the commitment of their employers for allowing their staff to take time away from work to assist in emergency operations.

However, exemptions do not apply to wages paid or payable as recreation leave, annual leave, long service leave or sick leave.