

# Apply for the Volunteer Firefighter Payment

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## Introduction

The volunteer firefighter payment is for [eligible volunteer firefighters](#) who are self-employed or employed by small and medium businesses, and have lost income.

The NSW Government is administering the Australian Government's Volunteer Firefighters Financial Support Program, which is designed to help volunteer firefighters who have been called out for more than 10 days since 1 July 2019.

Payments of up to \$300 per day, with a total cap of \$6000, will be available in the 2019–2020 financial year. The payments are tax-free and not means tested.

**Note:** Applications close 11.59pm Friday 31 July 2020.

## Eligibility

To be eligible you must be a volunteer firefighter who has lost income and:

- is registered with the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) or NSW State Emergency Service (SES)
- has been volunteering as part of an operational response to bushfires for more than 10 days since 1 July 2019. The days do not need to be consecutive. This can include reasonable travel and recovery time but does not include training or participating in non-emergency operations (for example, hazard reduction burns).
- is self-employed or employed by a small or medium business (a business with an annual turnover of less than \$50 million in the 2018–2019 financial year).

You are **not eligible** if you work for:

- a large business. Large businesses have more capacity to support their staff to help the community and are being encouraged to do so.
- government (state, federal or local). Talk to your employer about special leave provisions.

## Calculating payments

- A day of service means any 24-hour period (12:00am to 11:59pm) where you volunteered as part of an operational response to bushfires. This includes weekends.
- There is no minimum or maximum amount of time you need to serve on a day of service. If you start a shift before midnight and finish the next day, you can claim both days (if you lost potential income on both days).
- You cannot claim for the first 10 days of volunteering. You can claim payment for each day you've volunteered from **day 11** and any following days.
- The days do not need to be consecutive.

## Example

Ahmed has volunteered for 17 days as part of an operational response to bushfires. He had the potential to work in his carpentry business on all 17 of these days. He deducts 10 (non-claimable days) from his total of 17 volunteer days. He claims 7 days.

- The amount you receive is the number of days you volunteered from day 11, paid at your average net daily income (up to a maximum of \$300 per day). Total payments are capped at \$6000.

## Examples

- Gary works 30 days as a volunteer firefighter. His normal income is \$400 per day. Gary is eligible for 20 days at \$300 per day; a total of \$6000.
  - Cindy works 25 days as a volunteer firefighter. Her normal income is \$200 per day. Cindy is eligible for 15 days at \$200 per day; a total of \$3000.
  - Luke works 45 days as a volunteer firefighter. His normal income is \$200 per day. Luke is eligible for 30 days at \$200 per day, which reaches the cap of \$6000.
- If your daily income varies, you need to calculate your average net daily income. To do this, add up your income over the days you would have worked and divide it by the number of days.

## Example

Sally's daily income is \$200 but she receives \$300 (time-and-a-half) on weekends. She is claiming payment for a Sunday, a Monday and a Tuesday. Sally adds together her daily income (after tax) which equals \$700. She then divides \$700 by the number of days she worked (3 days). Sally's 'average net daily income' across the 3 days is \$233.33; rounded up to \$234.

- If you're self-employed, enter your average net daily income loss to the best of your knowledge. If you need more help, we suggest you speak with your accountant or the ATO.
- You can claim up to \$200 per day without providing written evidence for your claim. If you claim \$201–300 per day, you may be asked to provide written evidence in the form of payslips or previous tax statements.

## Example

Chris is a primary producer who didn't have a successful crop last year. He volunteered for 15 days. Chris can claim for 5 days at \$200 per day without having to provide supporting documentation to show his average daily loss of net income.

# What you need

- a MyServiceNSW Account
- 2 proof of identity documents – the names on the 2 documents must match
- your personal and contact details (name, date of birth, address, email and phone number)
- NSW RFS membership number or NSW SES member number
- business name, ABN or ACN
- number of days volunteered since 1 July 2019
- number of days you are claiming for a loss of net income
- your average daily loss of net income (net income is your take home pay after tax)
- deployment details (dates being claimed and brigade, district or SES unit name)
- bank account details for payment.

# How to apply

1. Check the [eligibility requirements](#).
2. Select the 'Apply online' button.
3. Log in, or create your MyServiceNSW Account.
4. Follow the prompts to apply for the payment.

If you need help, call us on [13 77 88](#). You can also apply in person at a [Service NSW Centre](#).

You can submit more than one application until you reach the \$6000 cap for the 2019–2020 financial year. There is no limit to the number of applications you can make.

### Example

You could make an application totalling \$4000 in January for days worked up until that time, and then submit a second application in February for \$1000 for days worked in February, and so on until you reach the \$6000 cap.

## More information

- Service NSW will deposit the money into your bank account within 5 business days of notifying you that your application was successful. If you haven't received payment after 5 business days, please call us on [13 77 88](#).
- NSW volunteer firefighters who helped in other states can apply for the payment provided they meet the [eligibility requirements](#).
- If your identity documents have been lost or destroyed, find out about replacing [personal documents](#).
- These payments will not affect other government benefits or entitlements you receive.