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Support for Volunteer Firefighters Frequently Asked Questions

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Who does it apply to?

employed or employed by small or medium-sized businesses, can claim up to \$6,000 (with a daily limit of up to \$300) to mitigate lost income they may have incurred for volunteering more than 10 days.

For example, Mark has volunteered for 15 days, in an eligible role, so can claim lost income for the 5 additional days he volunteered, over the 10 days minimum.

He works for a small business, and is paid \$200 per day, which is \$150 per day after tax. He can claim \$150 per day for his lost income.

Mark's claim would $\$150 \times 5 \text{ days} = \750 claim.

What evidence do I need to demonstrate my income loss?

You must retain relevant documentary evidence, such as timesheets, pay slips, group certificates and BAS statements, to demonstrate the amount of lost income. This evidence needs to be kept for five years and provided on request if you are selected for an audit validation. You must also declare that the information you provide is true and correct.

I am a casual or part-time worker and work different hours across the financial year. How do I calculate my lost income?

You should look at the hours you would have worked on the days you volunteered and claim the lost income for those hours. You will need to provide evidence, if requested, to support your calculation.

I've volunteered for multiple bushfires. How do I calculate the number of days I've volunteered for?

If you volunteer for any duration of time, on a given calendar day, it is considered as one calendar day towards the 10 days minimum. The amount you claim for compensation is only for the income you lost.

I volunteered to fight bushfires in other states. Does this count?

Yes – if you served in an eligible role, it can go towards your 10 calendar minimum or claimable days if you lost income.

How do I apply?

Visit www.qld.gov.au/VolunteerCompensation  to submit an online application or telephone 1800 268 462 to apply over the phone.

How will I receive my payment?

You will need to provide your personal bank account details and payments will be made through electronic funds transfer.

Do I have to choose between this payment and other disaster support if I'm eligible?

No. This payment is for a specific purpose and is in addition to any other forms of disaster support you may be eligible for.

Can I apply more than once?

Yes. You can apply more than once if you volunteer for further, eligible bushfire support. You will already have met the 10 days minimum service period for the first eligible claim.

Will volunteers from other states, who helped in Queensland, be eligible?

No. The payments are tax-free and not means-tested.

Will my payment affect or influence the Medicare levy?

No. This payment is not to considered income for the purpose of the Medicare Levy.

Will my payment affect or influence Child Support payments?

No. This payment is not to considered income for the purpose of Child Support payments.

I have taken paid annual recreation, sick or long service leave to volunteer. Am I eligible?

Yes. If you have partly or fully used these leave entitlements to undertake volunteer activities, you are eligible to claim them as lost income, once you've completed 10 days of minimum service. You can only claim up to \$300 per day.

What do I do if I'm not happy with the assessment of my claim?

The Queensland Government administers the Volunteer Firefighters Compensation Package in accordance with Australian Government eligibility requirements. Should you wish to appeal an assessment, you may contact your respective QFES Assistant Commissioner, who will, in the first instance, review your claim in accordance with Australian Government eligibility requirements. The contact details are RFS.AC@qfes.qld.gov.au (<mailto:RFS.AC@qfes.qld.gov.au>) for Rural Fire Service applicants, and SES.AssistantCommissioner@qfes.qld.gov.au

<mailto:SES.AssistantCommissioner@qfes.qld.gov.au> for State Emergency Service applicants.

Why can't volunteers who work for large businesses receive the payment?

Larger businesses have more capacity to support their staff and are encouraged to do so in the same way their volunteer staff have supported their community.

Why aren't other volunteers eligible?

The Volunteer Compensation Package 2019-2020 is to support QFES volunteers who have been directly involved in firefighting bushfires on a fire ground, or providing direct operational support.

Why do I have to register my interest?

The registration process allows you to submit your details before the program officially opens on 13 January.

Your registration will be assessed to confirm your eligibility, and if sufficient information is provided, you will not need to submit a formal application, and payment can be made. All volunteers who register their interest will be contacted to confirm the outcome and if a formal application is required.

Last updated: 6 January 2020



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