



## New Zealand Fire Service

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Julian Little

By email: [fyi-request-4683-cb992829@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-4683-cb992829@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Julian

### Information Request – NZ Fire Service mandatory drug and alcohol testing at fire incidents

Thank you for your request for information about the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) drug and alcohol testing policy for career and volunteer fire fighters for fire incidents where either a member of the public has suffered injury or loss, or where a career or volunteer fire fighter has suffered injury or loss.

The NZFS manages drug and alcohol concerns under its Standards of Conduct Policy – specifically under the ‘unacceptable behaviour’ section. This section states that behaviour considered unacceptable includes:

- Consuming, or being under the influence of, any alcoholic beverage, drugs, or any other substance during working hours or on duty.
- Being charged or convicted with driving with excess breath or blood alcohol, particularly (but not limited to) offences where you’re on duty, travelling to work or when driving a Fire Service vehicle.

Otherwise, there is no NZFS mandatory policy on drug and alcohol testing in relation to incidents. NZFS personnel comply with legal testing requirements, for example, in relation to driving. Individuals have the opportunity to comply with requests for other incident-related testing on a case-by-case basis. On the rare occasions when this might be considered necessary, it is managed as part of any Human Resources, or Safety, Health and Wellbeing review or discussion regarding the incident.

Further to the Standards of Conduct Policy position, the NZFS issued a notice to all staff in December 2014 in relation to driving changes, to restate that ...“Each person within the NZFS has a responsibility to ensure we do not put ourselves, our colleagues, members of the public or the NZFS reputation at risk, through our behaviours or the choices that each of us individually make”.

This means that:

- While NZFS employees are at work or on duty there is zero tolerance to alcohol.
- NZFS volunteers must always keep within the new reduced driving limits for breath and blood alcohol when undertaking NZFS work and when driving anywhere (*e.g. when travelling to a station in order to respond to an emergency incident*).

- Wherever possible, we encourage NZFS volunteers to adopt a zero tolerance approach to alcohol by “discussing options, planning ahead and designating those who will respond to incidents.”

With guidance from its Strategic Leadership Team, the NZFS has begun discussions on developing a more detailed approach to the management of alcohol and drug impairment. This consultation will continue to include representatives from the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union, the United Fire Brigades Association, the Public Service Association and the Fire and Rescue Commanders Association.

Thank you again for your question.

Yours sincerely



**Leigh Deuchars**  
Director, Office of the Chief Executive  
New Zealand Fire Service

Released under the official information act