

**NEW ZEALAND FIRE SERVICE / ST JOHN  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**RESPONSE PROTOCOLS**

**Preamble**

The New Zealand public is served by a relatively sparsely distributed ambulance service and a fire service more densely distributed with spare capacity to respond to life threatening emergencies. St John and the NZ Fire Service (NZFS) are both resourced from the community and it is in the best interests of the patient and the community if they can co-operatively utilise those resources. In so doing it is recognised that ambulance responses are not the primary role of the NZFS, and that its capacity to respond in the event of a fire cannot be compromised. While the NZFS may not always be available to assist, the capacity to assist, and their willingness to do so, meets the strategic objectives to both organisations - "improving the well-being of all New Zealand".

**1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1** It is the responsibility of St John (within contracted criteria) and the NZFS within New Zealand to provide the most effective and responsive services in their mutual areas of operation. St John recognises that NZFS have personnel and equipment available that when responded with ambulance personnel may improve selected patient outcomes. Through this Memorandum of Understanding St John aims to give NZFS the opportunity to be involved in improving the outcomes of these selected patients.
- 1.2** This Memorandum of Understanding sets out the definitions of such services, the policies and procedures that will apply to NZFS staff in each situation and the levels of expectation that each agency has surrounding such protocols.
- 1.3** This Memorandum of Understanding recognises the cultural differences of the two organisations, but undertakes that at all times the parties will actively promote working co-operatively and supportively regardless of employed or volunteer status or gender, and practically deal with any issues that may arise.

**2.0 LEVELS OF RESPONSE**

**2.1 Definitions**

**2.1.1 *Ambulance Assist***

This is the most basic level of assistance required and will be generally achieved by an urgent or non-urgent (i.e. without lights and siren) response, as appropriate, of the closest NZFS appliance to provide general assistance. No specific first aid or medical skill is required in this instance.

**2.1.2 *Co- Response (Urgent)***

All NZFS operational units are recognised by St John as potential Co-Response Units for the purpose of providing first aid and CPR.

**2.1.3 *First Response (Urgent)***

First Response Units are set up in areas of special need to provide basic ambulance aid until the arrival of, or rendezvous with, an ambulance or

ambulance personnel. St John will establish its own First Response Units where possible. However in particular circumstances or locations it may be more appropriate or practical for First Response units to be established within or by the NZFS.

- 2.1.4** On such occasions these units may only be established and continue to operate with the approval of the St John Regional Ambulance Service Manager and the Fire Region Commander. This establishment will consider setup and ongoing funding arrangements
- 2.1.5** The personnel on these NZFS units are to be endorsed and trained by St John to a consistent and nationally approved level and will respond either in a fire appliance or in a dedicated First Response vehicle to assist at selected emergencies prior to the arrival of the nearest ambulance or in some cases on behalf of ambulance. A schedule of the training requirements is attached at Schedule 1.
- 2.1.6** NZFS will ensure that there are sufficient personnel to allow for at least one medically trained person to respond to each callout.
- 2.1.7** If the requested First Response unit is unavailable the NZFS will respond a Co-Response unit if, after discussion with Ambulance Communications, that unit can locate faster than the nearest ambulance resource.
- 2.1.8** Where St John request the establishment of a First Response unit the equipment, training and establishment arrangements will be as agreed by the St John Regional Ambulance Service Manager and the Fire Region Commander and in accordance with each organisations policies.
- 2.1.9** The current approved list of NZFS First Response Units/stations and their agreed response areas is attached to this agreement as Schedule 2.

### **3.0 METHOD OF RESPONSE**

- 3.1** NZFS crews will only respond on behalf of St John when activated by the NZFS Communications Centre in response to a request from the Ambulance Communications Centre.
- 3.2** NZFS will respond the nearest available resource to all Ambulance Assist requests.
- 3.3** NZFS will respond the nearest available resource to any Co-Response request providing, after discussion with Ambulance Communications, the closest available NZFS unit can locate faster than the nearest available ambulance resource. .
- 3.4** NZFS will respond the closest First Response unit for the area required if available. Where this is not the closest appliance the NZFS will also dispatch the next closest appliance as a Co-Responder if, after discussion with Ambulance Communications, that NZFS unit can locate faster than the nearest available ambulance resource.
- 3.5** The NZFS will advise Ambulance Communications if the nearest First Response unit is not available at time of request.

**3.6** Activation and response of NZFS resources to any level of medical response or assistance will be predetermined as outlined in this MOU and via Fire Service Communication Centres.

#### **4.0 RESPONSE CRITERIA AND LIMITATIONS**

**4.1** St John accepts that NZFS may not always be available to respond to a request for assistance.

**4.2** St John will request a **Co-Response** for urgent assistance in cases of known or suspected life-threatening situations if NZFS are able to locate faster than the nearest ambulance.

**4.3** St John will request a **First Response** for all urgent ambulance requests in areas specified in the attached schedule.

**4.4** It is recognised that St John are the expert agency in emergency patient care and as such all equipment carried and procedures and training carried out in relation to First Response Units will be in accordance with their requirements.

**4.5** NZFS personnel shall formally handover responsibility for patient care to the first arriving St John ambulance crew including at least a formal verbal handover report.

**4.6** Nothing in this MOU extends to the transportation of patients by the NZFS.

**4.7** Only under exceptional circumstances are patients to be transported by NZFS appliances, and then only if there is no possibility of aggravation to or deterioration in the patient's condition.

**4.8** Under no circumstances are any NZFS staff members authorised to drive ambulances under emergency conditions (i.e. Priority 1 – lights and siren). Furthermore, under no circumstances shall a St John staff member request a staff member from another emergency service to drive an ambulance under emergency conditions.

**4.9** Where requested in emergency situations, NZFS qualified drivers may drive ambulances at normal road speed where sufficient familiarisation with the vehicle prior to any journey has been undertaken.

#### **5.0 TRAINING**

**5.1** NZFS is responsible for ensuring all personnel who may be requested to co-respond with St John have current first aid qualifications and NZFS will meet these costs.

**5.2** St John will provide all ambulance related training for those personnel selected as suitable as crew for First Response units and will assist where practical when local fundraising activity is unable to cover such costs. (Reference 2.1.4)

**5.3** NZFS will ensure all NZFS personnel who are assigned to appliances carrying defibrillators (AED) receive training on how to operate them from the suppliers,

St John or NZFS accredited First Aid instructors. Re-certification will be carried out by either NZFS or St John accredited instructors.

## **6.0 EQUIPMENT**

**6.1** All NZFS appliances will carry standard NZFS First Aid equipment as listed in Schedule 3.

**6.2** St John will approve the minimum levels of equipment carried on First Response vehicles in addition to NZFS First Aid equipment. The list of minimum equipment is attached at Schedule 4.

**6.3** When NZFS respond to an Ambulance request, St John will replace any standard expendable supplies such as bandages, oxygen masks, etc. used by NZFS staff at the incident.

## **7.0 ETHICS AND MEDICAL STANDARDS**

**7.1** NZFS personnel acting in a First Response Unit capacity shall operate under the delegated medical authority of the St John Medical Director.

**7.2** The Health and Safety of NZFS and St John personnel shall remain the responsibility of their respective organisations. St John shall ensure they do not put NZFS personnel at risk and the NZFS shall ensure their staff understand their own responsibility not to harm themselves. Should an NZFS member be injured at a scene under St John control the reporting and investigation responsibility shall remain with the NZFS. In the case of a serious harm incident both organisations shall investigate the cause as both have reporting duties under the HSE Act.

**7.3** NZFS will maintain the currency of their crews' First Aid qualifications and AED operating knowledge.

**7.4** All NZFS personnel acting in a First Response unit capacity will be revalidated at least biennially by St John in respect to their ambulance related medical standards. A revalidation system will be formalised through an agreement between St John and fire region where these units are operating.

**7.5** Both NZFS and St John undertake that members of both organisations shall be treated with mutual respect at all times.

## **8.0 MEMBERSHIP**

**8.1** Co-Response crews are NZFS personnel. First Response unit crews may be either members of St John or a designated NZFS brigade. Crew members must be clearly identifiable as such by wearing the correct uniform of their parent organisation and produce on demand the NZFS or St John issued personal identification card, whichever is appropriate.

## **9.0 INSURANCE**

**9.1** St John and NZFS shall respectively carry and be responsible for ensuring their personnel are covered by Public and Professional Liability insurance.

## **10.0 REVIEW PROCESS**

**10.1** Either party may call a meeting to discuss operational or administrative issue as and when required.

**10.2** All aspects of this MOU and the operational issues contained herein will be subject to a multi-service annual review.

## **11.0 DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

**11.1** If any dispute arises between the parties as to:

- (a) The meaning or application of any part of this memorandum; or
- (b) Any other matter touching or concerning this memorandum –

**11.2** The parties will use their best endeavours to settle it amicably by negotiation.

**11.3** If the parties are unable to settle a dispute by negotiation, either party may by written notice refer the dispute to the senior management of the parties to resolve.

**11.4** Within 14 working days of service of such a notice, senior management representatives of each party will meet in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

**11.5** Any resolution must be unanimous, recorded in writing and binding and signed by both parties.

## **12.0 Completeness**

**12.1** This memorandum of Understanding supersedes all existing formal and informal arrangements concerning first response currently in place between the parties.

## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **Training Requirements for NZFS First Response Personnel**

- Pre-Hospital Emergency Care (See Annex 1A)
- AED training

## **ANNEX 1A**

[Enter Heading]

### **Length of Course:**

40 Hours (over five days, with fifth day for assessment)

### **Course includes:**

- Scene Safety
- History gathering / Mechanism of Injury (MOI)
- Airway / Respiratory Assessment & Management

- ❑ Primary & Secondary Patient Surveys
- ❑ Basic Life Support: Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- ❑ Oxygen Therapy
- ❑ Familiarisation with the Automated External Defibrillator
- ❑ After Care of the Patient
- ❑ Vital Signs
- ❑ Respiratory Emergencies
- ❑ Soft Tissue Injuries
- ❑ Blood Loss
- ❑ Shock
- ❑ Cardiac Emergencies
- ❑ Fractures & Pain Relief
- ❑ Spinal Injury
- ❑ The Unresponsive Patient
- ❑ Heat and Cold emergencies
- ❑ Documentation

**Pre-Course Requirements:**

- ❑ Current Workplace First Aid Certificate (Unit Standards 6402, 6401, 6400)

**Unit Standards covered:**

14470, 14471, 14472, 14473

**SCHEDULE 2**

**Current Approved NZFS First Response Unit Sites**

**SCHEDULE 3**

**Minimum First Aid Equipment on all appliances**

**A suitable quantity of the following:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-woven swabs</li> <li>• CPR shield</li> <li>• Gloves boxed 6's</li> <li>• TELFA dressing 7.5cm x 10cm</li> <li>• TELFA dressing 7.5cm x 5cm</li> <li>• Accident register</li> <li>• Crepe bandages</li> <li>• Combine bandages</li> <li>• Eye pad</li> <li>• Elastoplast dressing strips</li> <li>• Bag minigrip 100cm x 130cm</li> <li>• Tweezers s/s fine point 9cm</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elastoplast waterproof strip 30's</li> <li>• Normal saline solution</li> <li>• Antiseptic wipes</li> <li>• Easifix dressing retention bandage</li> <li>• Cicagraf skin closure strips</li> <li>• Splinter probe</li> <li>• Triangular bandage – disposable</li> <li>• First aid tip guide</li> <li>• Tape (Transpore) – 2.5cm</li> <li>• Scissors s/s sharp/blunt 5 inches</li> </ul> |
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**SCHEDULE 4**

**Minimum First Response Equipment**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portable stretcher (eg scoop or mark 11 and or stokes basket)</li> <li>• Oxygen therapy equipment</li> <li>• Wound care equipment</li> <li>• Basic splints (eg cardboard, cervical collars)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood pressure gauge and stethoscope</li> <li>• Pillows, blankets, towels</li> <li>• Automatic defibrillator (AED)</li> <li>• Rubber gloves, vomit cartons</li> <li>• Manual suction device</li> </ul> |
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