1. **PURPOSE**

To outline the protocols relating to the use and consumption of drugs and alcohol for State Emergency Service (SES) members and their ability to participate in SES activities, operations and functions.

2. **RATIONALE**

SES members may be required to operate heavy machinery, vehicles or flood boats; and perform mentally and physically challenging tasks in hazardous environments. To ensure the safety and well being of SES members and the general public, it is essential that SES members’ performance or actions are not impaired, or have the potential to be impaired, by alcohol and/or drugs.

3. **APPLICATION**

Applies to all SES members.

4. **OPERATIONS DOCTRINE INFORMATION**

Alcohol and/or drugs can impair senses and judgement, affect personal and work relationships, an individual’s health, and increase the risk of accidents and injury.

Alcohol and/or drugs can:

- make it hard to concentrate;
- slow down reaction times;
- reduce the ability to do more than one thing at a time;
- affect vision and hearing;
- make a person feel more confident which may lead them to take more risks;
- increase the chances of falling asleep; and/or
- make simple tasks more difficult.

The possession and/or use of illicit drugs at any time contravenes the provisions of the *Drugs Misuse Act 1986* and may be a criminal offence.
5. PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

5.1 ALCOHOL

5.1.1 ALCOHOL LIMIT FOR SES ACTIVITIES

To ensure the safety of an individual SES member, along with other SES members, SES members must have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of less than 0.05% to participate in SES activities. SES members over this limit should not attend or must immediately stand down from their SES duties.

5.1.2 ALCOHOL LIMIT WHEN OPERATING SES VEHICLES, FLOOD BOATS, OTHER MACHINERY AND PERFORMING THE FUNCTIONS OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

At all times SES members operating an SES vehicle, SES flood boat or other machinery must have a BAC of 0.00%. Other machinery includes, but is not limited to, heavy vehicles, or quad bikes.

In addition, it is a requirement of law (Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995), that when performing traffic management activities, SES members must have a BAC of 0.00%.

5.1.3 CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN SES ACTIVITIES

An SES member must advise their SES Group Leader or delegate before participating in any SES activities if they believe that they may have a BAC of 0.05% or greater.

If informed, or a SES Group Leader or delegate suspects (refer to Appendix B), that an SES member has consumed alcohol before attending an SES activity, the SES Group Leader or delegate, in consultation with the SES member, must determine whether the SES member:

- is not likely to still have a BAC of 0.05% or greater (or a BAC greater than 0.00% if performing functions outlined in section 5.1.2); and
- that their capacity to safely undertake an activity is not impaired.

If there is any doubt about the effects of alcohol on the capacity of an SES member to perform any tasks safely, then caution should be applied, and the SES member stood-down until it is considered the SES member can undertake SES activities safely and any actions would not be impaired by prior alcohol consumption.

5.1.4 CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

Unless authorised, SES members will not consume alcohol whilst in uniform. The SES Director may authorise the consumption of alcohol at an official SES function or activity. When authorised, the consumption of alcohol should be undertaken with due consideration to the image of the SES and should always be in moderation.

SES members when in uniform are representatives of the SES and should always conduct themselves strictly in accordance with the Code of Conduct. For further information refer to “BMH 6.0 Code of Conduct”.

If alcohol is to be provided for consumption on SES premises, it must not be resold to SES members. Donations or a collection of monies may be undertaken prior to the purchase of the alcohol which may then be consumed in accordance with this doctrine and stored on the premises.

Consumption of alcohol by a person under the age of eighteen (18) is against the law.
Refer to EMQ School of Emergency Management: SES Safety Participant Guide for information relating to the measurement of Blood Alcohol Concentration.

5.2 DRUGS

The effects of drugs depend on the type of drug, how much is used, how it is ingested, the characteristics of the person taking the drug (i.e. body type, mood), the situation or place where the drug is taken, and whether other drugs or substances are taken at the same time.

5.2.1 DRUG USE AND PARTICIPATING IN SES ACTIVITIES

5.2.1.1 ILLICIT (ILLEGAL) DRUGS

Laws throughout Australia make it illegal for persons to produce, sell, posses, use, or drive under the influence of certain substances (drugs). Illicit drugs can impair a person’s ability to safely perform their tasks for some time, even days, after consuming the drug.

If an SES member has taken illicit drugs prior to being involved in SES activities and is still under the influence of an illicit drug, the SES member is not to attend any SES activity.

5.2.1.2 OVER-THE-COUNTER OR PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Work safety and performance can be negatively affected by the use of over-the-counter and/or prescription medications.

An SES member should discuss with a medical practitioner or a pharmacist about the potential impact of any legal drug consumed that could affect their ability to safely perform SES duties.

If an SES member is taking legal drugs (which includes prescription and over-the-counter medications), and the legal drug impairs or disrupts the SES member’s ability to perform mental or physical function(s), they must advise their SES Group Leader or delegate immediately, and either stand down from their duties until the cessation of the taking and effects of prescribed medication, or only participate in SES activities which are approved by their medical practitioner (refer form FBMH 2.0.4 Medical Report for Operational and Training Activities). The SES member does need to disclose the illness or reason for taking the legal drug.

5.3 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

SES members will be subject to disciplinary action if they:

- are found consuming alcohol while engaged in approved SES activities (excluding approved social functions);
- are found consuming alcohol while wearing an SES uniform (excluding approved social functions); or
- participate in SES activities with a BAC of more than 0.05% (or 0.00% as detailed in section 5.1.2 above).

In addition, SES members will be subject to disciplinary action if they are found supplying, in possession of or consuming an illicit drug during an authorised SES activity, while on SES premises or while in SES uniform.

Where an SES member fails to comply with these directions, disciplinary action is to be taken by the SES Group Leader in accordance with “BMH 10.0 Disciplinary Process” and “BMH 10.1
Managing Misconduct Issues”. DCS will advise the Queensland Police Service of any SES members supplying, in possession of or consuming illicit drugs.

The Department of Community Safety (DCS) takes no responsibility for any repercussions experienced by SES members as a result of consumption of alcohol or drugs. This may include workers' compensation claims being declined, and/or loss of insurance cover if a member’s conduct does not comply with this doctrine.

5.4 SES MEMBER’S RESPONSIBILITY

SES members have a responsibility to monitor their intake of alcohol and/or drugs at all times. Particular care is to be taken when consuming alcohol at approved SES functions, especially if the SES member will be driving after the function.

An SES member who suspects another SES member of being impaired by alcohol and/or drugs must immediately report the situation to their SES Group Leader or delegate.

SES members also have a responsibility to monitor their intake of alcohol at the end of an operation, especially if they are fatigued or dehydrated. The consumption of alcohol when fatigued or dehydrated can increase the effects of the alcohol.

DCS takes no responsibility for any repercussions experienced by SES members as a result of drinking at approved SES functions or after an SES operation or activity, including any accidents or incidents caused due to the SES member consuming alcohol.

6. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

In relation to the privacy and confidentiality of an SES member’s personal information, EMQ will maintain the privacy of SES members at all times in accordance with BMA 6.0 Information Privacy. Any EMQ staff and/or SES Executives who are involved with an SES member’s medical history may have access to personal information and are bound by a duty of confidentiality to ensure that all information conveyed remains confidential.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

This information is to be accessible for all relevant personnel.

8. FORMS AND TEMPLATES

Nil

9. APPENDICES

A Observations to Consider
B Guidelines for SES Executives

10. RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Disaster Management Act 2003
Liquor Act 1992
Liquor Regulation 2002
Civil Liabilities Bill 2003
Drugs Misuse Act 1986
Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995
11. DOCUMENT REVIEW

This document will be reviewed every 18 months or as otherwise required as a result of identified legislative, policy and/or procedural changes.

Original Signed
Bruce Grady
Assistant Director-General
Emergency Management Queensland
Appendix A

OBSERVATIONS TO CONSIDER THE IDENTIFICATION OF SES MEMBERS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL or DRUGS

Some observations to consider when determining whether an SES member’s capacity to undertake duties safely, due to affects of alcohol and/or drugs may include, but not limited to the following:

- Bloodshot, glassy, blank, watery eyes;
- Speech which is thick, slurred or incoherent;
- Unsteady swaying or stance;
- Walk which is unsteady, stumbling, staggering, shuffling, slow or uncoordinated;
- Unusually messy and untidy appearance;
- Behaviour which is dazed, uncommunicative, uncooperative, disobedient, argumentative, talkative, pessimistic;
- Abnormal fluctuations in concentration and energy;
- Poor coordination and judgement;
- Perception alterations including problems understanding and responding;
- Unusual irritability or aggression; or
- Breath smelling of liquor (for alcohol consumption).

While the above observations may be indicators of impairment due to alcohol and/or drug/s, consideration should be given to other possible causes of these indicators (e.g. a medical illness/disease, fatigue or stress).

For a checklist on monitoring fatigue symptoms refer to BMH 18.0 Fatigue Management and Duty Time Limitations Appendix B.
GUIDELINES FOR SES EXECUTIVES

IDENTIFICATION OF SES MEMBERS SUSPECTED TO BE AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS

Reasonable Suspicion
Any SES Group Leader or delegate, who reasonably suspects that an SES member has a BAC of 0.05% or greater, or reasonably suspects that an SES member has taken a drug (i.e. either illicit, prescribed or over-the-counter) that may impair their ability to undertake an SES activity safely is to discuss the matter with the SES member.

Factors that an SES Group Leader or delegate may consider to form an opinion as to whether an SES member is adversely affected by alcohol and/or drugs, are outlined in Appendix A. While these observations may be indicators of impairment by alcohol and/or drugs, consideration should be given to other possible causes for these indicators (e.g. illness, fatigue – refer ‘BMH 18.0 Fatigue Management and Time Duty Limitations’ for more information).

Process
An SES Group Leader or delegate that considers an SES member to be affected by alcohol and/or drugs should approach the SES member to:

- explain to the SES member their observed behaviour and the concern; and
- ask the SES member to explain a reason for this observed behaviour.

If the SES member discloses that they have consumed alcohol and/or drugs prior to attending the SES activity, then the SES Group Leader or delegate is to complete a risk assessment (as per above) prior to the SES member being approved to continue/participate in an SES activity.

However, if the SES member states, or does not disclose, that they have consumed any alcohol and/or drugs prior to attending the SES activity, and the SES Group Leader or delegate remains concerned about their capacity to undertake duties safely, then the SES Group Leader or delegate should:

- explain to the SES member their concerns;
- stand-down the SES member;
- take reasonable steps to arrange safe transport to a safe location (which may include the SES member nominating a person to be contacted to seek their assistance to transport them. If the SES member is unwilling or unable to provide a contact name, the SES member will be advised an attempt will be made to notify the next of kin). Transport expenses will be the responsibility of the SES member;
- make a record of the event and reasons why impairment was considered; and
- collaboratively work with the SES member, at a mutually convenient time, to determine the most appropriate duties or functions that the SES member may be able to undertake safely within their capacity.

Further assistance
If an SES member’s decreased capacity is as a result of an injury/illness, the process of determining suitable SES duties must involve the advice and agreement from the SES member’s treating medical practitioner (refer form FBMH 2.0.4 Medical Report for Operational and Training Activities).

The SES Group Leader or delegate must contact the EMQ Area Director if assistance is required for the management of an SES member. The EMQ Area Director should contact the EMQ Workplace Health and Safety Unit if assistance is required for advice and assistance in determining appropriate duties for the SES member.

Refer to EMQ School of Emergency Management, “SES Safety Participant Guide” for information relating to services available to SES members who may need assistance with alcohol and/or drug consumption.