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O.I.C. is to read this circular to all station personnel and discuss. Then sign the appropriate box above to confirm that this has been completed	

**OPERATIONAL CIRCULAR 98/2011**

**File: 00479**

**DECEMBER 2011**

**TESTING AND SERVICING OF FIRE EQUIPMENT BY VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (VFRS) BRIGADES, VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICES (VFS), AND VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES (VES) UNITS.**

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Fire Detection and Suppression Systems (thermal, smoke, sprinkler, VESDA, etc) provide building occupants and FESA with detection and alarm to fire in its early stage. Fixed and portable fire fighting equipment gives building occupants the capability to contain or extinguish a fire prior to the arrival of fire-fighters.

These systems and equipment are required under building classifications contained in the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and are generally aligned to the Australian Standards (A.S.) relevant to Fire Detection Systems (thermal / smoke ), fire sprinklers, hose reels, portable fire extinguishers, fire pumps, hydrants and fire doors, etc.

It is critical that fire systems and equipment are serviced and tested in line with manufacturer's instructions and the relevant A.S.. This is to ensure that in the event of a fire, equipment will operate automatically or can be used by occupants.

For many years VFRS Brigades have undertaken testing and servicing of fire equipment as a fund raiser or to assist the Community where no service agent was available. This practice evolved following the closing of the WAFB Extinguisher and Hose (E&H) Department where local Communities could not identify an alternative service agent following its closure.

Given the wide range of fire systems and equipment in service across the State protecting critical infrastructure, it is often difficult to keep abreast of current BCA requirements and the relevant A.S. that apply to the installation, servicing and testing of fire systems and equipment.

The continued provision of testing and servicing of equipment by FESA volunteers poses potential liability risks to FESA and individuals if the equipment fails to alert or does not work as intended, in the event of fire. It could also pose an injury risk to persons operating fire fighting equipment.

**Given the above VFRS Brigades, VFS and VES Units are advised that testing and servicing - fixed/portable fire fighting equipment and fire detection systems is to cease by the 31/12/2011.**

There is clearly no impediment to professionally qualified, currently competent persons providing testing and maintenance services on these systems, however they must not be provided on behalf of FESA

If any building occupant or owner involved in a current arrangement with a VFRS Brigades, VFS and VES Units seeks advice on a new Fire Equipment Service Agent refer them to either the Fire Protection Association of Australia (on telephone 1300 731 922) or the Yellow Pages under Fire Fighting Equipment.

Failure to comply with this Circular may have ongoing implications for insurance and liability issues.

**LLOYD BAILEY**  
**CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER**