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FAXED

23 January 2009

Derek Best
Secretary
NZ Professional Firefighters' Union
PO Box 38213
PETONE

26 JAN 2009

Dear Derek

Fire Safety changes

I have been asked to respond on behalf of Mike Hall to your letter of 14 January 2009 requesting confirmation by the NZFS of the terms and conditions of staff currently employed as Fire Safety Officers and clarification around the development plans and ongoing training.

I can confirm that your members will continue to be covered by Part 4 of the CEA regardless of whether they stay under the position description of Fire Safety Officer or move to the new position description of Fire Risk Management Officer.

As was indicated in the decision document it is voluntary for existing Fire Safety Officers to either take up the new position description or remain on their current position description. Those roles that are currently vacant or become vacant in the future will be advertised against the new position description, Fire Risk Management Officer.

Staff that wish to move to the new position description and do not wish to take up the opportunity to have a development plan and extra training put in place, can opt not to take up this offer. We do however encourage staff to take this offer up as it is an investment in their future development. As mentioned in our decision document this is a development opportunity not an assessment of their performance.

We are currently looking at the issue of rank for Fire Risk Management Officer, as previously stated the role is not a ranked role, however if the person holds rank they will continue to hold rank. The Fire Service Act section 21F denotes that a individual must hold rank to be able to enter a building to ascertain whether or not to what extent the owner of a building is complying with the requirements of section 21B of the Fire Service Act in relation to evacuation schemes. This means that where a Fire Risk Management Officer is not an operational staff member they will need to be given a brevet rank, as is done currently, to enable them to perform their role properly.

Fire Risk Management / Fire Safety roles are regional based roles. Each region sets their own structure / reporting lines for these roles.

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CBA consulting are a firm with over 15 years experience both nationally and internationally. They are very used to performing assessments of experienced staff. The assessment is not designed to assess an individual's fire safety skills, as we acknowledge that most of our fire safety officers have a high level of skill in their own area. This profiling exercise will look at the more general skills required by the role and provide development opportunities to grow skills in these more general areas. The staff concerned will have the opportunity to express their own preferences for the type of personal training they receive. Please note that the development plan will provide those staff that are experts in all areas additional growth suggestions.

You raise four points associated with Fire Safety training particularly around NZQA standards and FRSITO involvement. It is our intent to work closely with National Training to develop a training programme for Fire Risk Management. Having spoken to National Training this is a piece of work they are aware of and have on their plan to look at. At this stage there is no ability to provide any dates around when this piece of work can be started due to other higher priorities. When this piece of work does start it would involve appropriate stakeholders and staff including FRSITO, and outcomes developed will meet the NZQA standards. This is a completely separate exercise to the current personal development plan.

The question you raise around how such a training programme would be integrated within the NZFS would be discuss in this forum as would the question around time off duty for training. Such questions are not able to be answered without knowing what form such a programme would take.

I continue to look forward to the current Fire Safety Officers taking up the development opportunity associated with the transition to the Fire Risk Management Officer position description.

Yours sincerely



Dr Paula Beever
Director Fire Risk Management