

POLICY ON THE FORMATION OF UMBRELLA FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATIONS

Approved 2003

Background

1. The National Veld and Forest Fire Act provides for umbrella associations for a number of fire protection associations (Section 4(9)). The intention is that an umbrella would provide a variety of defined services to the fire protection associations that fall within its area.
2. The Act states that the umbrella organisation may "... perform certain duties on behalf of a fire protection association if the Minister agrees..." (section 4(10)).
3. The Disaster Management Act requires that each province must establish as disaster management centre as part of and functioning within a designated department within the provincial administration (Section 29(2)).
4. The provincial disaster management centre must exercise its powers and perform its duties within the national disaster management framework and the provincial disaster management framework. It must liaise and co-ordinate its activities with the National Centre and the municipal disaster management centres.
5. The Act requires metropolises and district municipalities to prepare and implement municipal frameworks for disaster management consistent with the provincial and national frameworks (Section 42), and establish a municipal disaster management centre. The municipal disaster management centre has powers and duties analogous to those of the provincial centre (Section 44).
6. This policy guides decisions on the formation of umbrella fire protection associations, in the context of the provisions in the National Veld and Forest Fire Act and the Disaster Management Act.

Policy goal

7. The overall goal of this policy on umbrella fire protection associations is to promote an efficient system of umbrellas that supports the activities of fire protection associations in the execution of their duties as set out in section 5 of the National Veld and Forest Fire Act and is consistent with the provisions of this Act, the Disaster Management Act, and other relevant legislation.

Policy statement

8. Umbrellas, obviously, are required only where more than one FPA exists and require supporting services in common with other FPAs served by the umbrella. Umbrella Fire Protection Associations should therefore be formed when several FPAs would benefit from shared services from such an organisation.
9. FPAs served by a single umbrella need not be contiguous.
10. Umbrellas should ideally be formed to coincide with either (a) Districts or Metropolises, or (b) Provinces, to co-ordinate with Disaster Management Centres, but need not confine their scope in this way if circumstances require jurisdictions that cut across such boundaries.
11. Formation of an umbrella association may be initiated by any one FPA, by the Disaster Management Centre or by any group of people or organisations that wish to organise for the purposes of the Act.
12. Any umbrella must include within its scope at least two FPAs or proposed FPAs. An umbrella should not include more than a manageable number of FPAs within its scope.
13. The Act does not require an umbrella to be registered but in order for it to carry powers under the Act the Minister will need to recognise the umbrella.
14. An umbrella may be formed where at least 2 FPAs have been formed or are being proposed, but it will not be recognised until the proposed FPAs have been registered.
15. The Act states that the umbrella organisation may "... perform certain duties on behalf of a fire protection association if the Minister agrees..." (Section 4(10)). The kinds of duties that may be performed by an umbrella organisation may include:
 - strategic policy and planning for the common area administered by several FPAs, e.g. for prescribed burning, common standards, common rules, joint fire preparedness and response plans, and the protection of common assets

- appointment of a common FPO who would delegate certain powers and duties to the member FPAs
- liaison and co-ordination with the provincial and local disaster management centres
- communicating fire danger ratings to FPAs and others
- weather data collection for improvements to the predictions from the NFDRS [National Fire Danger Rating System], and collection and dissemination of other relevant data and information
- providing input data for fire danger ratings on behalf of its FPAs, such as veld curing information
- training, in cases where training is not provided by the training industry
- communication to landowners and the public regarding veldfire management in the area
- supply of fire incident command specialists or support and co-ordination between FPAs and other fire fighting agencies in escalating fire conditions
- assistance to members of FPAs where court cases arise, such as providing expert witness, and statistical and weather information
- facilitating mutual aid agreements (between parties within the umbrella association)
- management and maintenance of aerial support services
- co-ordination functions, such co-ordination of equipment and other resources between individual FPAs, through such measures as mutual assistance agreements and the standard operating procedures they contain
- overall strategic direction and planning, including the contributions to local disaster management plans
- providing equipment, personnel and training standards, where the fires services have not provided these
- helping new FPAs to establish in the area covered by the umbrella organisation, in cases where FPAs are still needed

17. A proposer of an umbrella must therefore notify the Minister of the proposed organisation, supported with the following information:

- Name and address of the Umbrella Fire Protection Organisation
- Area of jurisdiction (District or Province or parts of Districts or Provinces)
- FPAs to be included
- Statements of support from FPAs
- Duties to be performed on behalf of member FPAs
- Constitution and proposed legal status (some form of legal person will be needed to allow delegations from the Minister). The Minister may ask the umbrella to amend the constitution
- Delegations desired from the Minister
- Delegations proposed to be made to FPAs by the umbrella in the case where an umbrella provides a common FPO who is empowered to make such delegations.

18. If satisfied as to the need and desirability of the proposed umbrella, the Minister will recognise the umbrella in writing and give the required written delegations.

19. An umbrella may apply for registration as a FPA, and, following this, for the recognition of its FPO.