



OPERATIONAL SERVICES

18 February 2008

SAFETY CIRCULAR 04 / 2008

File 00924

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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	

Drip Torches

FESA has a large number of drip torches in use across Western Australia. The use of these drip torches is underpinned by Standard Operating Procedure 50 which incorporates safe handling practices.

In 2004, SOP 50 was amended to ensure safe storage on fire appliances. For safe storage, the requirement to leave the wand tap open to prevent pressure build up in the reservoir was introduced. At that time, a requirement to introduce explosafe or explosafe type material in all **new** drip torch purchases was also introduced.

As a result of a quality control failure, a batch of drip torches was issued without any material inside. Subsequent investigations revealed that the material being used in new drip torches did not exhibit the characteristics of explosafe.

A recall of drip torches is not warranted at this time provided the safe handling and storage practices contained in SOP 50 are adhered to. Namely:

- Use only the recommended fuel mix (25% petrol and 75% diesel). If there is any doubt regarding the fuel mix currently in a drip torch, safely drain the contents and refill with the recommended fuel mix.
- Always leave the wand tap in the open position.
- Always ensure that the fuel trap loop in the wand is positioned away from the handle (refer to Safety Circular 15/2007).

Meanwhile, FESA is liaising with other Australian fire authorities and international fire authorities regarding contemporary safety practices regarding the design and use of drip torches. Early responses from within Australia and from Canada and the United States suggest that Western Australia may be the only fire authority to recommend the use of explosafe type material in drip torches.

Once formal responses have been received and assessed, FESA will revise Standing Operating Procedure No. 50 relating to the use of drip torches and refer the draft to the various consultative forums for endorsement.

**CRAIG HYNES
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A	All brigades/units/roles
AR	All Regions
While this document is specifically targeted at the above areas, all Brigades and Units should be aware of the information contained within.	