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VICTORIA

Victorian Bushfire Handbook

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Contents

Introduction

This handbook summarises the operational management structures and systems used by Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) and Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) (the Fire Agencies) for bushfire preparedness, readiness and response in Victoria. It reinforces agency specific procedures and common doctrine (e.g. SOP J03.14 – Control of Class 1 emergencies).

The content included in this Handbook was correct at the time of printing.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide responder and support agency personnel with a convenient reference to the key fire agency structures and systems required to undertake effective and safe fire fighting operations at bushfires in Victoria.

This handbook is an important reference for all those involved in managing bushfires in Victoria but is particularly relevant for those involved in incident management in the roles of Division Commander and above.

It is important to note that the Handbook is a subordinate document to the State Emergency Response Plan (SERP), Part 3 of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV), procedures produced by the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) and to all other agency procedures and manuals. At the time of printing, the handbook is consistent with these procedures and manuals. However, the overarching procedures and manuals remain the primary reference documents at all times.

Authorisation

This handbook has been approved by the following:

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Review Process

This document will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. It remains in effect until terminated or modified in writing by the participating agencies. The current version is available on the Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) website.

Changes in this edtion from version 5.0 have been indicted with a green line in the outer margin of the page. e.g.

State Context

State Emergency Management Priorities

The State emergency mangement priorities provide clear direction on the factors that are required to be considered and actioned during response to any emergency. The intent is to minimise the impacts of emergencies and enable affected communities to focus on their recovery as early as practicable.

The following state emergency management priorities underpin the planning and operational decisions made when managing the response to emergencies:

- Protection and preservation of life is paramount. This includes
  - Safety of emergency services personnel; and
  - Safety of community members including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists located within the incident area
- Issuing of community information and community warnings detailing incident information that is timely, relevant and tailored to assist community members make informed decisions about their safety
- Protection of critical infrastructure and community assets that supports community resilience
- Protection of residential property as a place of primary residence
- Protection of assets supporting individual livelihoods and economic production that supports individual and community financial sustainability
- Protection of environmental and conservation assets that considers the cultural, biodiversity and social values of the environment.

Principles of Emergency Management

The Principles of Emergency Management underpin the activities undertaken by the agencies to address a range of hazards, including fire. These principles are not in priority order; they are all critical to the effective management of emergencies.

Primacy of life - The protection and preservation of human life, including the lives of both agency personnel and those of the community, takes priority over all other considerations.

Community centric - The community and individual community members will be at the core of everything we do. Focussing on the impact, outcomes and support to the community underpins decision making and actions undertaken in planning and responding to all hazards. The intent is to minimise the impacts of emergencies and enable affected communities to focus on their recovery as early as practicable

Unified - Working together to achieve common objectives as one team with the community, government and business before, during and after emergencies. Common goals and interoperability in our systems of work, doctrine, training, equipment and infrastructure.

Progressive - Anticipation, foresight and continual improvement to predict, prepare, plan and respond to likely, unexpected and worst case scenarios. Our actions have a positive effect that enable public value.

Risk driven - Our actions and investments are prioritised by risk. Sound risk management, involving risk assessment (identification, analysis and evaluation), treatment and ongoing monitoring, is applied to the assigning of priorities and resources.

Integrated and collaborative - Unity of effort towards achieving shared outcomes founded on a willingness to work together, share responsibility and act with respect, integrity and trust developed through teamwork and strong relationships.

Flexible - Being agile and adapting and applying creative and innovative approaches in responding to and solving the challenges of emergencies. Understanding that the dynamic nature of emergencies sometimes means that plans will change and adapt to new circumstances.

Communicating information - Providing clear, targeted and tailored information to those that need it and those at risk. This provides the basis for effective management of emergencies and better decision making through a shared understanding, accurate situational awareness and enabling the community, government and business to make informed decisions.

Fire Preparedness

The key to the success and safety of all is the preparedness of individuals and teams. It is critical that everyone involved in responding to bushfires in Victoria – from Regional Controllers, to Incident Controllers, to Strike Team Leaders, to Crew Members – understand their responsibilities and take the necessary actions to prepare prior to the summer period

Such efforts in preparedness are an essential element of the shared responsibility for bushfire safety that exists between the emergency management agencies, state and local government, communities, households and individuals. All of us are team members that rely on each other.

First response (also known as initial response or first attack) to fires and other emergencies will be fast, determined and thorough and will take precedence over normal agency activities.

In the context of protecting human life as the paramount concern, early advice to communities is as critical as operations. The Incident Controller may need to vary the strategic control priorities in some circumstances. This shall be done in consultation with the Regional Controller and State Response Controller based on sound incident predictions and risk assessments.

To assist the Incident Management Team (IMT) and Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT) achieve the strategic control priorities, the Incident Controller should be mindful of the following activities:

- dynamic risk assessment
- continuous situational awareness
- issuing community warnings and advice
- incident intelligence
- incident prediction
- weather prognosis
- mapping
- resources
- incident management structure – division (field) command, incident, regional and state control
- understanding community impact and consequences – discuss with IEMT
- communications – maintain two way communications with IMT, IEMT and regional/state control.

Agencies Working Together as One Integrated Team

The management of emergencies is a shared responsibility involving many organisations and people in the community. Although some organisations have specialist roles, emergency management is not something done by one single organisation or sector to or for the rest of the community. Emergency management sector works in conjunction with communities, government, agencies and business.

The management task is to bring together, in an integrated organisational network, the resources of the many agencies and individuals, who can take appropriate and timely action to prevent, mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

Interoperability provides a mechanism for achieving better outcomes by allowing the emergency services and support agencies to effectively work together before, during and after a fire. It also provides a foundation for meaningful connections with the community and a wide range of partner organisations.

To achieve a cooperative response to fire, each agency needs to have an understanding of the systems, structures, resources, capabilities and statutory obligations of the other agencies. Interoperability maximises the capability of the agencies to work effectively and efficiently together to deliver seamless information, communications, and technology

Relief and recovery activities start at the outset of response, and often continue beyond the control of the fire. Long term positive community outcomes require effective relief and recovery activities that are planned with and linked to the response. Therefore Controllers need to ensure they are connected with relief and recovery agencies – including municipal councils, the Department of Health and Human Services and Emergency Management Victoria.

Victorian Emergency Management Arrangements

The Emergency Management Act 1986 (EM Act 1986) and the Emergency Management Act 2013 (EM Act 2013) provide the legislative basis for emergency management in Victoria.

The EMMV contains policy and planning documents for emergency management and provides details about the roles different organisations play in the emergency management arrangements.

The State Emergency Response Plan (SERP, Part 3 of the EMMV) identifies the organisational arrangements for managing the response to emergencies within the State of Victoria. It applies to all agencies having roles or responsibilities in response to those emergencies, regardless of the scale of the emergency.

The SERP, in conjunction with the State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan, and other parts of the EMMV sets the strategic framework for preparedness, planning and emergency operations in Victoria.

Tiers of Emergency Response Management

Victorian emergency response management operates at three tiers; incident, region and state. A Region is one of the defined Victorian Government Regions. Regional and state tier arrangements are activated where a major emergency has occurred or is anticipated to occur, such as where there is:

- a forecast of extreme weather; or
- intelligence or information of any anticipated large scale emergency affecting life or property.

Where emergencies can be reasonably expected over a period of time, the regional and state tier arrangements may be activated on a continuing basis.

Major Emergencies

The EM Act 2013 contains specific definitions for emergencies.

A Class 1 emergency is either:

- a major fire; or
- any other major emergency for which the control agency is the MFB, CFA or Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES).

A Class 2 emergency is a major emergency that is not:

- a Class 1 emergency; or
- a warlike act or act of terrorism, whether directed at Victoria or at any other state or territory of the Commonwealth; or
- a hi jack, siege or riot.

Major emergency or major fire are defined as a large or complex fire or other emergency (however caused) that:

- has the potential to cause, or is causing, loss of life and extensive damage to property, infrastructure or the environment; or
- has the potential to have, or is having, significant adverse consequences for the Victorian community or a part of the Victorian community; or
- requires the involvement of two or more agencies (fire services agencies if a major fire) to respond to the emergency; or
- will, if not suppressed, burn for more than one day (applies to major fire only).

Sections 37 and 38 of the EM Act 2013 prescribe specific arrangements for the Class 1 emergencies and fires other than major fires.

Emergency Management Commissioner

Under the EM Act 2013, the EMC has legislated management responsibilities across major emergencies, with the exception of security-related emergencies. These include response coordination, ensuring effective control arrangements are established, consequence management and recovery coordination.

Section 32 of the EM Act 2013 lists the primary functions of the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC). The EMC functions include accountability for ensuring the response to emergencies in Victoria is systematic and coordinated.

Section 33 of the EM Act 2013 gives the EMC the power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with, the performance of the functions of the EMC.

Control, Command and Coordination

Victoria bases its emergency response arrangement on the management functions of control, command and coordination, broadly described as follows:

- Control: the overall direction of response activities in an emergency, operating horizontally across agencies.
- Command: the internal direction of personnel and resources of an agency, operating vertically within the agency.
- Coordination: the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective response to and recovery from emergencies.

The control function is responsible for emergency response activities and the command and coordination functions provide support to those performing the control function.

In order to meet Victoria's emergency management objectives, those performing the control, command and coordination functions at each tier during an emergency response need to ensure:

- the safety of responders and the community is a priority
- the consequences of the emergency are managed
- there is communication to meet the information needs of communities, Government, agencies and business
- relief and recovery are integrated with emergency response activities.

State Response Controller

State Response Controller is the person appointed by the EMC to exercise control over the response to a major fire. The EMC may appoint more than one State Response Controller.

The State Response Controller, when appointed for a class 1 emergencies has the powers and authority of the Chief Officer of the control agency, provided for under the control agency relevant Act.

Control and Command Arrangements for Bushfire

Introduction

The EMC is accountable for ensuring the response to emergencies in Victoria is systematic and coordinated.

The EMC's accountabilities for a Class 1 emergency include:

- ensuring effective control arrangements are in place
- coordinating the response activities of agencies with a role or responsibility associated with Class 1 emergencies across the state, taking account of advice provided by the Senior Police Liaison Officer (SPLO), Regional Emergency Response Coordinators (RERCs), Municipal Emergency Response Coordinators (MERCs) and Incident Emergency Response Coordinators (IERCs)
- coordinating agencies to minimise the adverse consequences of the emergency
- coordinating recovery.

The EMC has issued SOP J03.14 – Control of Class 1 emergencies to ensure that the State has effective arrangements in place to control emergencies that are or may become Class 1 emergencies.

Definitions

Joint operating procedures and other doctrine use the following definitions:

Agency commander is an agency operational supervisor operating within the agency chain-of-command. During an emergency response, agency commanders supervise and task their agency personnel in accordance with the direction of the controller at their respective tier.

Chain-of-command refers to the organisational hierarchy of an agency. It is the identifiable line up and down the hierarchy from any individual to and from their supervisor and subordinates. The chain-of-command identifies people or positions at the most senior level of the organisation with accountability.

Chief Officer refers collectively to the Chief Fire Officer of DELWP, the Chief Officer of the CFA, the Chief Officer for MFB and the Chief Officer Operations for VICSES as the case requires.

Command refers to the direction of personnel and resources in an agency. Command operates vertically within an agency.

Control involves the direction of response activities across all agencies responding to an emergency. Control operates horizontally across agencies.

Coordination involves the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective response to and recovery from emergencies.

Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) is the person appointed as Emergency Management Commissioner under Part 4 of the Emergency Management Act 2013, accountable for ensuring the response to emergencies in Victoria is systematic and coordinated.

Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC) is the person responsible for ensuring there are effective arrangements for managing the response to the emergency, including managing the consequences, provision of relief and the transition to recovery, if necessary, at each tier. This position is filled by a Victoria Police member at incident and regional tier and the EMC at the state tier.

First response is the action of agency personnel who first attempt to combat a bushfire and provide rescue and immediate relief services.

In the field refers to bushfire operations conducted outside of an ICC facility.

Incident Controller is the individual appointed to be accountable for the overall direction of response activities in a bushfire incident.

Incident Control Centre (ICC) is a facility where an Incident Controller manages response activities, following the transfer of the incident control function from the field-based Incident Controller.

Line-of-control refers to the line of accountability and responsibility for controllers at the state, regional and incident tiers of emergency response management.

Major fire (Class 1 emergency) is a large or complex fire (however caused) which:

a) has the potential to cause or is causing loss of life and extensive damage to property, infrastructure or the environment; or

b) has the potential to have or is having significant adverse consequences for the Victorian community or a part of the Victorian community; or

c) requires the involvement of 2 or more fire services agencies to suppress the fire; or

d) will, if not suppressed, burn for more than one day.

Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) is a member of the Victoria Police appointed as the emergency response coordinator for a municipality.

Preparedness is the establishment of structures, development of systems and testing and evaluation by organisations and communities of their capacity to perform their allotted roles in an emergency.

Readiness refers to the arrangements the responder agencies make, during the fire season, for the active involvement of resources to respond to bushfire.

Recovery is the assisting of people and communities affected by an emergency to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning.

Region refers to one of the Victorian Government Regions:

- Barwon South West
- Grampians
- Loddon Mallee
- Hume
- Gippsland
- Southern Metropolitan
- Eastern Metropolitan
- Northern and Western Metropolitan

Regional Controller is the agency personnel appointed by and acting on behalf of the EMC and rostered in each Region to exercise control over regional readiness and response to emergencies that are or that may become Class 1 emergencies. Where a Regional Controller is required, but has not been appointed, the State Response Controller will take on the responsibilities of the Regional Controller.

Response is the combating of emergencies and the provision of rescue services.

Responder agencies are the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP), Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES).

Senior Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) is the Victoria Police member appointed by the Chief Commissioner of Police to provide advice to the EM and deal with requests to or from any member of the police force appointed as an ERC for a region or municipal district.

Tiers are the three tiers used in Victoria for emergency management – incident, region and state.

Objective for Bushfire Management in Victoria

The objective of bushfire response activities in Victoria is to reduce the impact and consequences of emergencies on people, communities, essential and community infrastructure, industry, the economy, agriculture and the environment.

Control Arrangements for Bushfire

Line-of-control

Control relates to situations and operates horizontally across agencies. Controllers are accountable for the control of the bushfires managed within their span of control and provide direction to all other agencies responding to the emergency.

The 'line-of-control' refers to the line of supervision for those appointed to perform the control function.

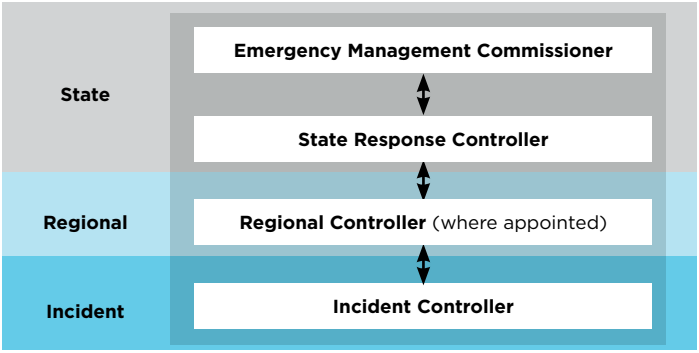


Figure 1 – *The line-of-control for bushfire*

State Response Controller and Regional Controllers

The EMC rosters State Response Controllers throughout the year to ensure their continued availability.

Regional Controllers are agency personnel appointed by the EMC who are:

- rostered for the extent of the bushfire season (1 October until 31 May each year unless otherwise determined by the EMC)
- appointed as required for the remainder of the year.

The EMC, State Response Controller and Regional Controller maintain an overview of the emergency situation through contact with agency commanders. Their level of involvement in the management of an incident relates to the likelihood of it becoming a major emergency.

Incident Controllers

In first response to an incident, the control agency appoints an Incident Controller, who is generally field-based. The name of the Incident Controller should be included in incident reports and shared with the other agencies responding to the incident.

For an incident that is or that may become a major emergency, the Regional Controller will appoint an Incident Controller from a list of Incident Controllers endorsed by the EMC, they will be appointed regardless of their agency.

Because the control function operates horizontally across agencies, Incident Controllers need to communicate with all other agency commanders responding to the bushfire, including the agency commanders of their own agency resources.

All Incident Controllers for bushfire in Victoria work within the line-of-control. This is regardless of whether they are the first responders to bushfires in the field or an Incident Controller managing a bushfire from an Incident Control Centre, following the transfer of control from a field Incident Controller.

Support for the Line-of-Control

For a major emergency, controllers establish the following support teams:

- the Incident Controller is supported by an IMT and an IEMT
- the Regional Controller is supported by the Regional Control Team (RCT) and Regional Emergency Management Team (REMT)
- the EMC and State Response Controller are supported by the State Control Team (SCT), State Coordination Team (SCoT) and State Emergency Management Team (SEMT).

The IMT, RCT and SCT support the controllers to perform their control function.

The IEMT, REMT and SEMT are forums where relevant agencies identify and discuss the risks and likely consequences of an emergency and assist the controllers to establish priorities and plan the actions of agencies to achieve a “whole of government” approach.

Controllers at each tier of control need to have a process for recording their decisions and those of their support teams, and a process for maintaining and storing these records. This responsibility for this function may be allocated to the executive officer.

Support for the EMC and State Response Controller

State Control Team (SCT)

The EMC, supported by the State Response Controller, may establish a SCT to provide advice on a strategic approach to the readiness for and response to Class 1 emergencies.

The SCT usually comprises:

- EMC
- State Response Controller
- State Agency Commanders for CFA, DELWP, MFB and VICSES
- Senior Police Liaison Officer (SPLO)
- State Consequence Manager (SCM)
- State Relief and Recovery Manager and/ or DHHS State Liaison Officer
- State Health Commander
- an Executive Officer.

The EMC or State Response Controller may request other people to attend, for example the State Health Commander or the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) representative.

The SCT provides advice to the EMC and State Response Controller in the following areas:

- readiness levels
- appointments to the line-of-control
- communication of warnings and information to the community
- operational and strategic risks and consequences, including those to life and property
- resourcing priorities
- provision of information and situation reports to other agencies and government
- the need for interstate, Commonwealth and international support
- support for the functioning of the State Control Centre
- the functioning and operation of systems and technology to support incident management.

State Coordination Team (SCoT)

The EMC may establish a State Coordination Team (SCoT) to oversee the coordination functions and responsibilities of the EMC and to set the strategic context of the readiness, response, relief and recovery to Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies.

The SCoT usually comprises:

- EMC
- Senior Police Liaison Officer (SPLO)
- State Relief and Recovery Manager
- DHHS State Liaison Officer (DHHS SLO)
- State Response Controller (SRC)
- Chief Health Officer (CHO)
- State Health Coordinator
- State Consequence Manager (SCM)

The EMC may request other people to attend, for example, representatives from Department of Economic Development, Transport, Jobs and Resources (DEDJTR) – Animal or Transport areas.

State Emergency Management Team

If an emergency, either anticipated or occurring, requires activation of a state tier response control structure, the EMC may form the SEMT, comprising senior representatives from response, recovery and other agencies.

The role of the SEMT is to:

- facilitate a discussion to enable agencies to develop a consistent situational awareness regarding the emergencies affecting the state
- identify strategic state risks and consequences and plan the actions of agencies to manage these risks and consequences
- support the EMC to develop a state strategic plan for the management of the emergency, outlining high level actions of all agencies.

Support for the Regional Controller

Regional Control Team (RCT)

The Regional Controller may establish a RCT to provide advice on a strategic approach to the readiness for and response to Class 1 emergencies.

The RCT usually comprises:

- Regional Controller
- Regional Agency Commanders CFA, DELWP, MFB and VICSES
- Regional Emergency Response Coordinator
- Regional Recovery Coordinator
- an Executive Officer.

The Regional Controller may request other people to attend, for example the Regional Health Commander.

The RCT provides advice to the Regional Controller in the following areas:

- readiness levels
- appointments to the line-of-control
- communication of warnings and information to the community
- operational and strategic risks and consequences, including those to life and property
- resourcing priorities
- provision of information and situation reports to other agencies and government
- the need for state support
- support for the functioning of the Regional Control Centre
- the functioning and operation of systems and technology to support incident management.

Regional Emergency Management Team

If an emergency, either anticipated or occurring, requires activation of a regional tier response control structure, the Regional Controller will chair the REMT. In the event of multiple Regional Controllers appointed for several disparate emergencies, the RERC (or representative) may convene and chair the REMT.

The REMT comprises regional tier representatives from response, recovery and other agencies.

The role of the REMT is to:

- facilitate a discussion to enable agencies to develop a consistent situational awareness regarding the emergencies affecting the region
- identify regional risks and consequences and plan the actions of agencies to manage these risks and consequences
- support the Regional Controller to develop a regional strategic plan for the management of the emergency, outlining the regional tier actions of all agencies.

If an area of operations or other structure is established, the same principles are used to establish an Area of Operations EMT.

Support for the Incident Controller

Incident Management Team

As the incident escalates in size or complexity, the Incident Controller will delegate some or all of the incident management functions of AIIMS - planning, intelligence, public information, operations, investigation, logistics and finance.

In summary, the Incident Controller and their IMT have a number of tasks they may need to address if they are to successfully resolve the incident they are managing. These are:

- build a picture of what has happened, what is happening and what is likely to happen
- decide what needs to be done and how it will be done
- prepare a plan that captures those decisions
- gather the resources necessary
- implement the plan and monitor its progress
- keep people and agencies informed of all these actions
- maintain records of their deliberations and decisions
- manage environmental impacts and consequences of the response effort
- initiate and support the relief and recovery efforts for affected communities.

Incident Emergency Management Team

If two or more agencies respond to an incident, the Incident Controller should form and chair an IEMT.

If the Incident Controller is unable to attend or there are several disparate emergencies within the municipality, the MERC (or representative) should form and chair the IEMT.

The IEMT usually comprises:

- Incident Controller
- Agency Commanders (or their representatives)
- Health Commander (functional commander of supporting health agencies)
- Municipal Recovery Manager
- Emergency Response Coordinator
- other specialist persons as required.

The IEMT considers the efficacy of potential control strategies.

The Incident Controller will task support agency or functional commanders to implement a strategy or to provide resources in support of these strategies. Support Agency Commanders then implement the allocated strategy through their respective command structures, and report back to the Incident Controller as to the success or otherwise of the strategy.

The Incident Controller includes the strategies and the actions of all agencies in the Incident Action Plan.

The effective operation of an IEMT relies heavily upon communication between agencies. The importance of an effective IEMT to the successful management of an emergency cannot be overstated.

Part 7 of the EMMV details agency responsibilities during emergencies.

Command

The agencies retain command of their own resources and maintain their chain-of-command throughout the bushfire season.

For bushfire management, the command structure of each responder agency aligns with the state tiers of emergency management as follows:

- The Chief Officer is usually the State Agency Commander
- Operational personnel under the command of a Chief Officer include personnel employed by the agency, engaged as volunteers or engaged through networked emergency organisation arrangements
- Each Chief Officer appoints Regional Agency Commanders at the regional tier, where the agency holds jurisdiction, for the extent of the bushfire season

During the bushfire season, Agency Commanders from the responder agencies are responsible for monitoring the activities of the resources within their command, ensuring they are supporting the line-of-control.

Readiness and Response to Bushfire

Preparedness Arrangements

Prior to the bushfire season, the EMC and the responder agencies prepare an integrated suite of arrangements to help them fulfil their bushfire response responsibilities.

Local Mutual Aid Plans (LMAP) identify the preparedness arrangements undertaken by the responder agencies in each region. SOP J02.01 Local Mutual Aid Plans - Fire agencies provides the details on the content of these plans.

Readiness Arrangements

During the bushfire season the EMC, State Response Controller and Regional Controllers, in consultation with State and Regional Agency Commanders, give direction regarding the level of resources required to be ready at particular times, to provide an effective response to bushfire.

Readiness arrangements involve establishing support for the line-of-control and could include:

- preparing and staffing the State Control Centre (SCC)
- preparing and staffing the Regional Control Centres (RCC)
- positioning IMTs at designated Incident Control Centres (ICC) (in accordance with SOP J02.03 – Incident Management Teams – Readiness Arrangements)
- positioning incident resources to ensure an effective initial response

In general, the following situations relate to heightened levels of readiness:

- RCC readiness arrangements should be elevated when:
  - the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) in the Region is severe or higher
  - the Regional Controller, in consultation with the State Response Controller, issues a direction
- both SCC and RCC readiness arrangements should be elevated when:
  - there is a Code Red FDR in one or more weather forecast districts
  - there is an Extreme FDR in three or more weather forecast districts
  - the State Response Controller issues a direction

The responder agencies will jointly ensure resources (personnel, equipment, and facilities) are ready in accordance with the directions given by the State Response Controller and Regional Controllers.

Response Arrangements

The responder agencies respond to the notification of bushfires according to their agency arrangements. Each bushfire has only one Incident Controller, regardless of the number of agencies responding.

In first response, the field-based Incident Controller communicates to their agency through their agency command arrangements. In addition to normal agency communications, the information communicated should include:

- the effectiveness of the incident control arrangements
- potential risks or consequences
- the need for specialist resources, including people or equipment.

The EMC, State Response Controller and Regional Controller maintain an overview of the emergency situation, through contact with Agency Commanders. Their level of involvement in the management of an incident relates to the likelihood of it becoming a major emergency.

Where the incident is a major emergency or has the potential to become a major emergency:

- Agency Commanders notify the Regional Controller
- the field-based Incident Controller transfers incident control to an ICC-based Incident Controller supported by an IMT. SOP J03.15 – Transfer of Control and IMT relocation for Class 1 emergencies explains this process.

During the bushfire season, the EMC and Regional Controllers preposition Incident Controllers and IMTs ready to control bushfires transferred from field-based Incident Controllers. Refer SOP J02.03 – Incident Management Teams – Readiness Arrangements. Where conditions indicate that all bushfires could become major bushfires, the EMC, State Response Controller and Regional Controllers may arrange for the immediate transfer of control of all bushfires.

The EMC, State Response Controller and Regional Controller will become involved in the management of emergencies that are or are likely to become major emergencies. This may include issuing directions.

Resource Management

The Incident Controller is responsible for providing direction to the Agency Commanders of the agencies responding to the incident on where the agency resources are to work and the function they are to perform.

Agency Commanders are responsible for tasking their agency personnel and for ensuring they follow safe systems of work.

The Incident Controller should initially request additional local resources through Agency Commanders.

Where agencies are unable to provide sufficient resources from the local area, the Incident Controller should seek additional resources through the Regional Controller. The Regional Controller, in consultation with Regional Agency Commanders, will prioritise resource deployment across the Region. This may include reallocating resources within their Region.

Where the Region is unable to supply the resources required, the Regional Controller will seek resources from the State Response Controller. The State Response Controller, in consultation with State Agency Commanders, will prioritise resource deployment across the state and seek additional resources as required.

Other local support agency resources are sought through the IERC or MERC in the first instance. The MERC will escalate unfilled requests to the RERC, who will escalate unfilled requests to the EMC through the Senior Police Liaison Officer (SPLO).

The EMC is responsible for sourcing resources from other states, the Commonwealth and from overseas and for authorising the deployment of Victorian response resources interstate and overseas. This arrangement excludes resources obtained through established cross-border arrangements for first response.

Incident Management

Victorian emergency management agencies manage all incidents in accordance with the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS).

AIIMS applies to incident management, rather than to the region or state tiers of emergency response. However, AIIMS is based on principles and underpinning concepts that are universal and can be applied to these levels of emergency management.

AIIMS Principles and Concepts

AIIMS is founded on five fundamental principles. These are:

1. Flexibility
   AIIMS be adaptable to an all hazards-all agency environment. It needs to be able to respond to changes that occur with the evolution of an incident, both during escalation and resolution, and from a focus on response to a focus on community and agency recovery.
2. Management by Objectives
   A process of management where the Incident Controller, consulting as appropriate with the Incident Management Team and supporting agencies, determines the desired outcomes of the incident.
3. Functional Management
   The process of structuring an organisation into sections or units based on the type of work to be performed. AIIMS identifies a number of critical functions that are required to be undertaken to manage an emergency incident effectively.
4. Span of Control
   A principle that needs to be applied in both the structuring and staffing of an Incident Management Team. The concept relates to the number of groups or individuals that can be successfully supervised by one person.
5. Unity of Command
   There is one set of common objectives for all those involved in the response to an incident, leading to one consolidated plan for all responders. Each subordinate should report to only one superior.

There are a number of critical underpinning concepts that support the five principles of AIIMS. An understanding of these concepts is essential to the effective application of the System.

They are:

- Adaptability and Scalability – The size and structure of the Incident Management Team should reflect the size and complexity of the incident and the stage of the response and recovery.
- Uniform Terminology – If all agencies are to apply the System there needs to be agreed terminology and definitions, to enable effective communication between agencies and between members of Incident Management Teams.
- Defined Management Structure – In adopting a functional management model, there needs to be a clearly defined and agreed management structure that can be applied and understood by all.
- Common Operating Picture – A description of the shared and consistent understanding the Incident Management Team has of the incident, gathered from a variety of sources to support decision making.
- Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities – In defining the management structure, there needs to be a set of clearly defined and agreed responsibilities for all who are appointed to a role in that structure.
- Clearly Defined Information Flows – For a functional management structure to operate effectively, it needs to be clear what reporting relationships exist, and how the sections and units within the structure communicate to ensure the development and maintenance of the Common Operating Picture.

AIIMS Structure

AIIMS provides a management structure for managing all activities to resolve the incident. The Incident Controller is also the leader of the Incident Management Team (IMT), in accordance with the principle of Unity of Command.

To manage an incident, the Incident Controller will establish a management structure designed to deliver the functions of control, planning, intelligence, public information, operations, investigation, logistics and finance.

By delegating functions to others, the Incident Controller creates an IMT. Delegation is the assignment of functions and tasks to others, together with the necessary authority, freedom of action, and resources to complete the task. The person delegating retains accountability but is no longer responsible for undertaking the actual task.

When establishing an incident management structure, it is important to remember that the incident determines the size and nature of that structure! The structure should be adapted to the circumstances being dealt with, and reflect the complexity and scale of the incident.

AIIMS functional areas commonly used in bushfire response are:

Control – The Incident Controller shall have overall management of the incident and overall responsibility for the management of resources allocated to that incident. The Incident Controller is responsible for controlling the incident and ensuring that all incident management functions are undertaken.

Planning –The Planning section is responsible for preparing and delivering plans and strategies, maintaining a resource management system, and assembling, maintaining and providing incident information.

Intelligence - The Intelligence section is responsible for collecting and analysing data and information, which is recorded and disseminated as intelligence to support decision making and planning. The Incident Controller may choose to establish an Intelligence function within the Planning Section, or as a separate Intelligence Section. For this season, trained intelligence personnel will be strategically allocated to incidents to pilot the intelligence role. Regions will be involved in the process when an intelligence role is proposed for operation in an IMT.

Public Information –The Public Information section is responsible for the preparation, coordination and dissemination of non-operational incident warnings and advice to potentially affected communities, the public, media, other agencies and incident personnel.

Operations – The Operations section is responsible for managing resources allocated to the Operations Section to resolve the incident. The Operations Section now also includes a Plant Operations Unit, which aligns with current fire agency practice in Victoria.

Logistics – The Logistics section is responsible for managing activities and resources necessary to provide logistical support during an incident. In major or long-term incidents with complex financial arrangements, the Incident Controller may elevate the Finance Unit to be a Section in its own right (in line with the principle of flexibility).

An example of the AIIMS structure established for a large incident is shown in Figure 2.

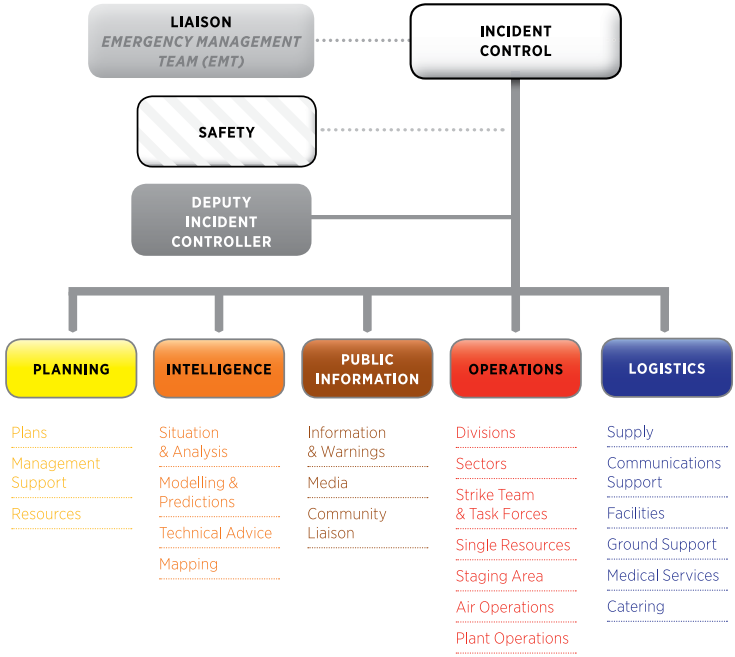


Figure 2 - *AIIMS structure example for large incident*

Incident Controller

The role of the Incident Controller is to provide leadership and management to resolve the incident at the incident site. The primary responsibilities of the Incident Controller are to:

- carry out the directions of the Regional Controller
- take charge and provide leadership for the resolution of the incident, including directing support Agency Commanders
- establish a control structure to suit the circumstances
- ensure timely issue of warnings and information to the community
- identify current and emerging risks, or threats, and implement proactive response strategies
- lead multi-agency planning and develop and implement an IAP/ ISP (including objectives and strategies to manage the incident)
- establish and manage the IMT, if required
- establish the IEMT, if required
- oversee the operational functioning of the ICC, if operating
- ensure the timely flow of information to the:
  - Regional Controller
  - control and support agencies
  - Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
  - Municipal Recovery Manager/Regional Recovery Coordinator
  - other stakeholder agencies.
- continually assess the performance of the response against the IAP/ISP
- request appropriate resources for subordinates to achieve tasks, or adapt tasks according to available resources
- initiate Initial Impact Assessment and activate relief arrangements where necessary
- apply the EMC operational standards and incident management procedures.

Deputy Incident Controller

An individual/s may be nominated by the Incident Controller as a Deputy Incident Controller/s to support the Incident Controller in the management of the incident. A Deputy Incident Controller has responsibility for management of the incident within the parameters agreed to with the Incident Controller.

The Deputy Incident Controller may not alter the incident objectives in the IAP. They may amend the incident strategies within the parameters provided by the Incident Controller. Where the Deputy Incident Controller does amend incident strategies, they are required to discuss the changes with the incoming IMT and Incident Controller at shift change over.

A Deputy Incident Controller who is appointed for a Level 3, Class 1 emergency, can be appointed to manage the hazard or to manage a function. Where appointed to manage the hazard, the person should be an agency endorsed Level 2 Incident Controller as a minimum. Where appointed to manage a function the person is required to be a person with the relevant expertise in the function i.e, recovery.

Operations Officer

An Operations Officer, if necessary, may be appointed by the Incident Controller to:

- implement the strategies to resolve the incident
- manage all activities that are undertaken directly to resolve the incident
- manage all resources (people and equipment) assigned to the Operations Section.

Division Commanders

A division may be established in the early stages of an incident at the direction of the Incident Controller. The purpose of a division is to provide operational leadership and span of control over a functional or geographical area of an incident. The Division Commander has responsibility to manage the incident within the span of the division.

Typically a division will be established when control is transferred from the fireground to an ICC and the Division Commander will then manage fireground operations from a forward location.

The process of transferring control (refer to transfer of control section on page 37) from the fireground to the ICC can, if poorly handled, cause major confusion in the critical early stages of incident response. The use of the Division Commander to provide a clear focus for fireground operations, whatever the size of the incident, will assist with transfer of control.

Accountability

The Division Commander will:

- report direct to the Operations Officer or alternatively the Incident Controller (if the Operations Officer role has not been activated)
- be accountable to manage the implementation of the IAP/ISP relating to their division, and provide input to the IAP/ISP process managed by the Incident Controller
- have Sector Commanders (if appointed) reporting to them.

The Division Commander's role includes:

- maintaining ongoing exchange of information with the Operations Officer on incident situation, progress towards the achievement of incident objectives and emerging risks and reporting when:
  - the IAP/ISP is to be modified
  - additional resources are needed
  - surplus resources are available
  - hazardous situations are present and significant events occur
- providing briefings/debriefings to Sector Commanders within the division
- reviewing, allocating and modifying specific tasks in relation to their division
- resolving identified logistics problems
- reporting to the Operations Officer
- observing safe work practices at the incident within the division
- coordinating activities with adjacent divisions
- maintaining a log of activities.

As an incident escalates the Incident Controller/Operations Officer may deploy additional staff to support the Division Commander in these functions.

Sector Commanders

Sector Commanders report to the Division Commander (or Operations Officer if a Division Commander is not appointed). Their tasks include:

- implementation of their portion of the IAP/ ISP
- the allocation of resources within their sector
- reporting on incident situation, the progress of operations, emerging risks and the status of resources within the sector.

Sector Commanders will be advised of the incident objectives and strategy for their sector by the Operations Officer or their Division Commander (if appointed). The selection of actual tactics to implement the strategy will usually be determined by the Sector Commander. Tactics applied in one sector may, however, affect other sectors: Division Commanders (or the Operations Officer if a division is not established) provide the continuity of tactical operations across Sectors. In doing this, all Division Commanders should maintain liaison with the Operations Officer.

Incident Objective

An objective is critical for the effective management of an incident. The objective should communicate clearly to all those involved what is to be achieved. A well-worded objective has meaning and provides direction for every person at an incident.

The Incident Controller has responsibility for the control of the incident and sets the objective. It will state what the Incident Controller wants done, when and why. The objectives need to also be consistent with the state strategic control priorities.

The objective may change with circumstances; there may be a different objective for each shift under escalating circumstances; or a static but relevant objective for a stable or de-escalating incident.

A good objective will include a statement of intent (what and why), a time parameter (when) and a space parameter (where).

Example of a good incident objective: To protect residential buildings by containing the fire in the grassland as it emerges from the bush to the west of Bolton by 2000hrs today.

Consistent with the above, management theory and practice suggests that an objective should be SMART:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Timeframed

At the end of each shift, it is desirable that the Incident Controller and IMT review progress against their stated objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies implemented during the shift. This information can help an incoming shift to review and implement the new IAP and agreed strategies.

Incident Action Planning

Incident Action Planning should be aligned with the state strategic control priorities.

For Level 1 incidents with low potential and low spread an appropriate IAP may be developed through a mental appreciation and then communicated verbally. It should be recorded as a situation report/wordback with comment on control strategy, or a log book entry.

For all other Level 1, 2 or 3 incidents that are not expected to be contained within four hours of receiving the fire call, an IAP Summary is to be documented within four hours of the incident being reported.

The Incident Shift Plan (ISP) is the component of the IAP relevant to fireground operations. ISP word templates are available on the IMT Tool Box, with an on-line module now available on Fireweb.

The relevant components of the IAP need to be communicated to personnel at the incident as well as up the structure to the Regional Controller/Area of Operations Controller (where appointed) and the State Response Controller.

See table 1 below for descriptors of the different components of Incident Action Planning.

Document	Content	Timeframe	Endorsement	Approval
Incident Action Plan (IAP) Summary	A concise IAP format. It summarises the incident situation, incident objective, strategies adopted, incident structure and communications plan, and is supported with a map. It may also include resources deployed and key information regarding administration, logistics, command and communication and safety.	Completed in first 4 hours (may be replaced by ISP or IAP as developed).	Planning Officer (Duty Officer if IMT not in place).	Incident Controller
Incident Action Plan (IAP)	The plan used to describe the incident objectives, strategies, structures, resources and other information relevant to the control of the incident. It includes an ISP and other relevant documentation.	Within the first shift and reviewed each shift. Key elements may not change for duration of event.	Planning Officer Intelligence Officer Logistics Officer Operations Officer Public Information Officer	Incident Controller
Incident Shift Plan (ISP)	The key components of the IAP that are essential for field operations. The documentation follows the SMEACS briefing format, and is accompanied by maps and any other supporting documentation relevant to field operations (an interactive module is available on Fireweb).	Within the first shift and reviewed each shift.	Planning Officer with input from Intelligence, Logistics, Operations & Public Information Officer	Incident Controller

Table 1 – *Incident Action Planning Descriptors*

Incident Communications Planning

Agencies need to ensure that joint default Communications Plans are prepared to cover their respective Districts before each fire season. Refer to SOP J02.02 – Incident Communications Plans and Emergency Alerting System (Paging) / Radio Use During Periods of High Activity.

Joint default communications plans are documented in all relevant Local Mutual Aid Plans in accordance with SOP J02.01 – Local Mutual Aid Plans - Fire agencies.

Joint default communications plans are required to be implemented at each multi-agency incident, until the Incident Controller replaces it with a specific Incident Communications Plan, if required.

The Incident Controller needs to ensure the development, implementation and regular review of the integrated Incident Communications Plan as required. This plan is required to include relevant radio, telephone (including mobile phones), email and facsimile links for all incident personnel.

An Incident Communications Plan needs to be incident-based, not agency-based.

The Incident Controller needs to ensure that the communications plan is conveyed to all incident personnel, and is conveyed in written form to all command personnel as soon as practicable.

Briefings

It is critical to provide regular, accurate and understandable instructions to subordinates and most importantly the firefighters on the fireground.

All briefings need to be in the SMEACS format (see table 2) and allow time for questions at the conclusion of the briefing.

The Incident Controller needs to ensure that all incident personnel are provided with appropriate briefings regarding safety-related matters, the incident situation, incident objective(s), relevant resource information and tasking and that appropriate information is efficiently communicated through the incident structure to incident personnel. This may be achieved through:

- Targeting briefings towards a specific audience, eg. Division Commanders, and then cascading the briefing down through the incident structure as appropriate
- Staggering the IMT and field changeovers to facilitate quality briefings.

As the situation changes and new information becomes available, updated briefings need to be provided throughout the incident structure as practicable and appropriate. All incident personnel have a responsibility to ensure they are briefed before they commence their task.

Situation	▪ Current situation ▪ Details of incident ▪ Life and property at risk, including the location of relevant designated neighbourhood safer place or other places of shelter. See www.cfa.vic.gov.au for an up to date listing of locations ▪ Location ▪ Weather ▪ Resource deployment
Mission	▪ What are we trying to achieve? ▪ Incident objectives
Execution	▪ How do we plan to achieve objectives? ▪ Sectorisation ▪ Strategies ▪ Tactics ▪ Tasking ▪ Resource movement details ▪ Timings
Administration	▪ Logistics of operation
Command/ Communications	▪ Incident management structure ▪ Communications plan ▪ Radio channels ▪ Strategic telephone numbers
Safety	▪ Weather ▪ Known/anticipated hazards ▪ Watchout scenarios ▪ Dress standards ▪ Tasking suited to personnel
Questions	

Table 2 – *SMEACS Briefing Format*

Local Knowledge

Local knowledge has proven to be a vital element of effective management of emergency incidents. Whether it is the detail of an urban building, access to airports or history of previous bushfire paths, local knowledge has proven invaluable. Since it is often time-critical and very specific to the incident, it is generally not something agencies or local government can adequately record in management plans.

While there is no local knowledge unit as such within an IMT, individuals with local knowledge are always a valuable source of information. While most Level 1 IMTs will involve local response crews on the incident ground, larger IMTs may have travelled to the incident and may not be familiar with the geography, local residents, history or relevant experience. Within every IMT, there needs to be a source of local knowledge, either a local person brought into the IMT specifically for that purpose or appointing a local responder to an IMT position where they can use that knowledge and answer questions from other members of the IMT. Local knowledge will assist IMTs in managing risk and consequences associated with the fire.

Ideally, those with local knowledge will be operating in the Operations Section to assist those responding to operations on the incident ground. Their familiarity with the incident ground, and perhaps the type of incident or previous incidents, will also be of benefit to the Planning Section as it considers risks, options and likely courses of action. Regardless of where the individuals are located within the IMT, the Incident Controller needs to be satisfied that there is sufficient local knowledge in the IMT.

SOP J02.04 – Local Knowledge Bushfire, outlines the need to integrate local knowledge in IMT to maximise the safety of incident response personnel and community.

Incident Status – Bushfires

CFA and DELWP use common terms to define the status of a bushfire, however DELWP subdivide the statuses Controlled and Safe (see table 3 below).

Incident Status	Definition	DELWP subdivision	Definition
Going	Fire expanding in a certain direction or directions.		
Contained	The spread of the fire is halted.		
Controlled	The complete perimeter of a fire is secured and no breakaway is expected.	Under Control 1	The complete perimeter of the fire is secured, no breakaway is expected.
		Under Control 2	The complete perimeter of the fire is secured, and no breakaway is expected. Control line quality or depth is such that only patrol is required.
Safe	No further suppression action or patrols are necessary.	Safe	No further suppression action or patrols are necessary.
		Safe – False alarm	Mistaken or hoax report.
		Safe – Not found	The fire has not been located, and it is expected that no further action or patrol will be required.
		Safe – Overun	The fire has been overrun by another fire.

Table 3 – *CFA and DELWP Incident Status*

The fire agencies also have a range of incident status terminology for use in a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) environment (see table 4). These wordbacks reflect incident status and are also linked to resource requirements.

Incident Status	Definition
Not Yet Under Control (CFA)\ Alarm level (MFB)	The fire or incident has the potential to spread or increase in difficulty. The appliances and personnel in attendance may not be sufficient.
Under Control (CFA & MFB)	The resources in attendance and en route are sufficient to contain the incident.
Stop (CFA & MFB)	The resources presently in attendance at the incident are sufficient. Resources that are en route are not required and may return to their own locations.

Table 4 – *CFA and MFB CAD Incident Status*

Bushfire Classification

Bushfires are classified in a range from Level 1 to Level 3.

Level 1

A small, simple fire (or group of fires) which is controlled with local resources (may include other agencies) with the Incident Controller probably undertaking more than one function.

Example - second shift unlikely to be required, approximately 0-5 ha with no complex problems.

Level 2

An incident that cannot be contained by the first attack of local resources and becomes more complex. A Level 2 incident is characterised by the need for:

- the deployment of resources beyond initial response
- sectorisation of the incident
- the establishment of functional sections due to the levels of complexity
- a combination of the above .

Example - expected that incident will be controlled within 24 hours. Approximately 5–20 ha (or much larger if there is little complexity or problem), or with some complexity and control problems.

Level 3

A large or complex fire where resources from a range of locations are involved. Normally, but not necessarily, will involve multiple agencies (eg. normally expected to exceed 24 hours).

Level 3 incidents are characterised by degrees of complexity that may require the establishment of Divisions for effective management of the situation. These incidents will usually involve delegation of all functions.

Transfer of Control

Establishing effective control arrangements in the early stages of the incident is critical. There are circumstances where an incident should be managed by an Incident Controller based in an ICC and supported by an IMT with specialist skills and equipment, rather than by a field-based Incident Controller.

These circumstances include where the incident is a major emergency or has the potential to become a major emergency, or where there is the need to do one or more of the following:

- issue warnings and advice to the community
- evacuate the community
- protect the community
- manage significant risks or consequences, for example to:
  - the community
  - community infrastructure
  - essential services such as electricity and water
  - the economy
  - significant environmental or conservation assets
- manage a large number of personnel and other resources such as aircraft
- produce incident predictions
- implement health and safety systems for response personnel
- provide direction to multiple response agencies
- manage multiple incidents within the area.

SOP J03.15 – Transfer of Control and IMT relocation, outlines the process for the transfer of control from the field-based Incident Controller to an Incident Controller.

An Incident Controller may recognise the potential of the incident at an early stage, for example while travelling en-route to the incident and noticing a large amount of dark coloured smoke.

To enact the transfer of control, the Incident Controller should contact their agency duty officer/ commander, who will notify the Regional Controller.

Once notified, the Regional Controller, with the support of the involved Agency Commanders, will source resources for the IMT. The IMT should be joint-agency (where possible), pre-planned and include personnel with relevant local knowledge.

For an incident that is or that may become a major emergency, the Regional Controller will appoint an Incident Controller endorsed by the EMC.

The EMC, State Response Controller and Regional Controller will become involved in the management of emergencies that are or are likely to become major emergencies. This may include issuing directions.

The following aspects are to be considered during the transfer of control:

- field-based Incident Controllers and Agency Commanders should anticipate the need for the transfer of control in advance and notify the Regional Controller as early as possible, to allow time for the ICC and IMT to be established.
- the transfer of control needs to be formal and recorded, with the field Incident Controller briefing the incoming Incident Controller.
- the new control arrangements should be communicated to the people holding the key command and coordination roles at the state, regional and incident tiers of emergency response (depending upon their level of involvement), with the expectation they communicate the arrangements to their agency personnel and to support agencies.
- incident management needs to be continuous throughout the transfer of control.
- where possible, Regional Controllers should locate the IMT in an established ICC to minimise the need for further relocation.

Following the transfer of control, the previous Incident Controller will generally take on a role in the Operations Section, such as a Division Commander. They can then focus on coordinating field operations and providing information back to the IMT.

Where a major emergency can be reasonably anticipated (such as where there is a forecast for elevated fire weather), Incident Controllers and IMTs may preposition ready to manage emergencies that are or that may become major emergencies. Refer SOP J02.03 - Incident Management Team – Readiness Arrangements for Bushfire.

SOP J03.08 – Appointment of Regional and Level 3 Incident Controllers provides for transfer of control between Incident Controllers.

Situation Reporting (SITREPS)

Everyone in leadership positions are required to provide frequent, concise situation reports.

Those on the fireground (for example Crew Leaders) need to recognise that it is an important part of their role to provide sitreps to their fireground supervisor, particularly when first attack is likely to fail, and/or fire suppression is difficult.

Sitreps should include the following information:

- incident name
- fireground/Division Command call sign
- location of incident
- potential of fire/incident to become a major emergency
- advice regarding any warnings that should be provided to the community
- private and community assets at risk
- fire status (type/size)
- damage and loss
- fire behaviour (eg flame height and estimated forward rate of spread)
- current control objective
- additional assistance required.

Critical Information Flow During an Escalating or Major Incident

An IMT generates, processes and coordinates much of the information needed for successful emergency management.

Information flows between the fireground and the IMT, and from the IMT to the regional and state levels of control.

In addition, there is also a need to integrate information with other stakeholders such as providers of medical services, critical infrastructure, other agencies and the police.

AIIMS assists with the effective and efficient control of incidents by providing structures for communication and information flow. There are a variety of tools embedded within AIIMS that provide a common communications framework to enhance integration, including an IAP used to generate and communicate intent.

The importance of rapid, accurate information flow from the fireground upwards is critical. In addition to providing the critical data for strategic decisions regarding resources and fire management, information coming from the fireground (especially from the first arriving appliances) is required to determine the advice or warnings that need to be communicated to the community.

Firefighters need to recognise that while Air and Ground Observers provide valuable intelligence, particularly during large fires, the majority of information used for public messaging comes from sitreps provided by firefighters on the ground.

Staging Areas

A staging area is a location designated and used during an emergency for the assembly of control and support agency resources prior to deployment.

All Incident Controllers should identify the location where incoming resources meet and are briefed prior to deployment to the incident.

Where more than ten resources are en-route to a fire or incident and/or the size or duration of the incident is likely to make effective control of incoming resources difficult, the Incident Controller should establish a more formal staging area, managed by a Staging Area Manager. A staging area should also be established whenever a division command point is in place.

When determining the location of a staging area, the Incident Controller should consider the influence of changing fire or incident conditions (e.g. predicted wind change) to ensure the safety of incoming resources.

Catering

Red Cross will no longer provide catering services to agencies responding to emergencies from 1 January 2016. Red Cross will continue to provide food and water emergency relief to affected communities, including at relief centres.

In the lead up to the end of 2015, response agencies are working together at the local level to set up arrangements with other caterers, organisations, groups, or businesses. The Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) and any other relevant plans will be updated with the new arrangements before the end of the year or, ideally, before the onset of the Fire Danger Period.

From 1 January 2016, those agencies who had previously used Red Cross for local incident responder catering will be required to use the updated local arrangements.

Base Camps

There is state-owned infrastructure to set up three base camps each with a capacity to support 200-500 personnel. Base camp usually provides services such as catering facilities, hygiene facilities, first aid, laundry and other services (e.g. telephone access, information boards), accommodation facilities, a car park, maintenance and service facilities, and water supply.

Base camp components can be deployed individually or as a "set":

- kitchen and kitchen support
- laundry
- supply cache
- base camp support
- camping set for 75
- camping set for 100
- showers
- toilets

For example, kitchen and kitchen support containers can be set up at a staging area to provide catering for longer incidents.

Requests for base camps are approved through the line of control. Further information is available on the IMT toolbox (DELWP staff can also access this information though the Altona Warehouse Management System (AWMS)).

When considering the establishment of a base camp, ensure:

- appropriately trained logistics personnel are available to plan and implement
- planning is undertaken incorporating the size, scalability, costs, duration, location and adequate resourcing for set up, maintenance and demobilisation
- consider whether a base camp is the best option; a base camp is a resource intensive and expensive service
- mobilisation for a small camp (under 200 pax) can occur within approximately 24-72 hours of a request, with meals available after 24 hours (depending on the incident location proximity to Melbourne).

Demobilisation for a small camp (under 200 pax) takes 3-5 days contingent upon dry weather. The Logistics section in the IMT must continue to function under the direction of the Incident Controller until demobilisation is complete.

Aircraft and Aviation

On behalf of the state, the DELWP Aviation Services Unit (ASU) procures the fire and emergency aviation fleet, used for all Class 1 emergency response and assists with the procurement of aircraft for Class 2 emergencies and land management activities. The ASU also facilitates the provision of specialist aviation advice and the training of all specialist aviation roles.

The SAUP (State Aircraft Unit Procedures) will transition to the Interagency Aviation Operating Procedures (IAOPs) during 2015 and are the procedures that govern the operation of aircraft for emergencies and land management activities. These procedures are produced to ensure the safety and effectiveness of agency aircraft operations by providing one source of agreed procedures which are available and relevant for all Agency aircraft operations.

The State Airdesk (SAD) operates as a function of the SCC and coordinates the operational emergency aviation activity within the state for response activities under the control of the EMC/State Response Controller. The SAD is supervised on a daily basis by the rostered State Aircraft Coordinator to coordinate and, where appropriate, dispatch state aviation resources to assist with emergency and land management activities.

Regional Controllers manage the requirements of SOP J02.06 Readiness Arrangements - Aviation Resources (Bushfire). To support this, the FireWeb Aviation readiness tab is required to be populated and updated with current information.

The SAD will only action requests for aircraft that are made by an agency person performing an approved role as stated in the relevant IAOP. AM 1.05 – Management of Aircraft at Incidents and IAOP AM 1.06 – Obtaining aircraft. These procedures have been developed to provide specific requirements for obtaining aircraft for fire and non-fire emergency operations or other agency-related operations.

Aircraft deployments will be most efficient when approved personnel requesting aircraft provide the following initial information:

- location of the incident (i.e. distance and direction from closest town)
- aircraft type and quantity required
- tasking of aircraft and equipment required
- dispatch, incident or fireground channel and/or trunk radio numbers to be used
- AIIMS roles (Air Operations Unit) that are in place i.e. Air Attack Supervisor, Aircraft Officer.

Once dispatched, the aircraft are assigned to the incident and come under the control of the respective Incident Controller.

Predetermined dispatch

Predetermined Dispatch (PDD) is a system which authorises the dispatch of specific aircraft by pager based on FDI triggers , often concurrently with ground resources. Aircraft dispatched via the PDD system operate from various regional locations. This will sometimes result in aircraft operating at fires prior to, or very soon after, the arrival of ground resources.

All aircraft can still be dispatched by the SAD and a reminder that all aircraft (including those dispatched by PDD) NEED TO be re-tasked through the SAD. It is important that communications are established and maintained between the aircraft and ground resources at all times to ensure both the safety of aircraft and ground resources, together with the effective tasking of aircraft.

In some instances, aircraft may undertake initial attack without an Air Attack Supervisor (AAS). The relevant IAOP SO 4.07 – Firebombing Operations outlines when this can occur and the Incident Controller's responsibilities.

The combined effort of ground resources and aircraft improves the effectiveness of response operations. It is vital that strategies and tactics are consistent and understood by aircraft and ground commanders.

Traffic Management Points

Traffic Management Points (TMP) are set up at the direction of the Incident Controller to regulate the flow of traffic into an area where fire has occurred, is occurring or has the potential to occur.

The purpose is to maintain the safety of emergency personnel and the public, as a result of a fire. Travelling on roads during or immediately after the passage of fire can be particularly hazardous as visibility is often severely restricted by smoke and embers; there is also a significant risk of fallen and falling debris, such as trees across roadways and fallen powerlines.

Emergencies are not static and therefore the conditions of TMP may change over the course of and incident, and at any time.

SOP J03.10 – Traffic Management outlines the process for the activation and ongoing monitoring and deactivation of traffic management points, including the appointment of a Traffic Management Manager, development of an Incident Traffic Management Plan (ITMP) and associated forms.

Traffic Management Guidelines describe the agreed procedures for the operation of a TMP as part of an overall ITMP, to assist in the control and management of pedestrian and vehicular road travel in the vicinity of an incident.

To facilitate entry into an area, a TMP will be assigned a particular access level (see figure 3). The circumstances and groups of people who may be permitted access at each access level will be determined by the Incident Controller.

Responsibility and authority	Access level	Fire status and risk assessment	Access (Incident Controller may authorise access for specific persons or groups and impose restrictions)	Identification or authorisation
Fire Agency CFA Act s 31	 Emergency Services Only Access	• Going • Designated area likely to be impacted by fire • Access route blocked and/or danger of hazardous trees	• Fire services or fire contractors • Other emergency or essential services authorised by Incident Controller or delegate • Any person authorised by Incident Controller or delegate (this may include residents, accredited media, etc.)	• Fire unit • Fire agency ID • Fire contractor ID • Escort by fire unit (eg wet escort) • Authority of Incident Controller or delegate (eg private/temporary vehicle pass) • CFA/DEPI Media Accreditation
	Restricted Access B Essential Services Assessment	• Contained • Access route cleared and danger of hazardous trees removed	• Access Safety Assessment Vehicle/s (to consist of Council, VicRoads, essential services, to conduct road and infrastructure assessment as required) • Emergency services, as authorised by the Incident Controller or delegate	• Designated Access Safety Assessment Team Vehicle – details to be advised by ICC • Agency identification
	Authorised Access C Residents, Media, Recovery Services, B Access	• Controlled • Infrastructure, road integrity, essential services do not present hazard	• Residents returning to their homes • People providing recovery and relief services • Council or VicRoads employees or sub-contractors • Accredited Media • Business owners in immediate area • DEDJTR staff or vets facilitating the treatment and humane destruction of injured animals • Individuals or groups delivering relief and aid to residents and animals	• Resident – driver licence, authorising wristband • Organisation ID • CFA/DEPI Media Accreditation • Business owner – suitable identification
Road Authority Road Management Act s 78	Authorised Access D C Access Others authorised, eg employees	• Fire agency no longer requires TMP • Road owner requires TMP to address road-related issues	• Employees working in specified area • People bringing food and supplies for people and animals	• Organisation ID • Authorising wristband
	Open	• Road owner satisfied that road-related issues no longer impact on road users	• Open to all • TMP removed and signed off by road owner	• Not applicable
Coroners Act 2008 Section 38 Restriction of access to fire area 1) A coroner or the Chief Commissioner of Police may take reasonable steps to restrict access to – (a) the place where a fire occurred: or (b) a place reasonably connected to the place where a fire occurred. 2) The coroner or Chief Commissioner of Police may cause a notice in the prescribed form stating that access is restricted to a place to be put up at that place or as near as possible to that place.				

Figure 3 – *Traffic Management Point access levels*

Emergency Response Personnel TMP access

All DELWP/network emergency organisations vehicles with government (red) plates need staff suitably attired in PPE (i.e. green overalls and helmets) and displaying either the "Fire and Emergency Management' adhesive label on the windscreen or DELWP external vehicle markings. DELWP/NEO vehicles without red plates (eg. vehicles or prime movers hired over the summer, and Melbourne Water/VicForests vehicles) will need 'Private Firefighting Equipment' stickers (see figure 4).

Figure 4 - *Traffic Management Point vehicle sticker*

Media TMP access

Media representative are permitted access at a TMP designated as Authorised Access – C. Such access will be subject to authorisation by, and in accordance with conditions set, by the Incident Controller.

The Incident Controller, may authorise access for media personnel through a TMP at access level Emergency Service Only access or Restricted Access – B, under escort by fire agency personnel and any other conditions, where they deem it safe and appropriate. Such arrangement and the conditions of such access will be communicated to the TMP prior to the arrival of the media.

In all cases where media representative are permitted access, they are required to be in possession of a CFA/DEPI accreditation and authorised PPE.

Media passes expire after three years (see figure 5) after which individuals are required to undertake further training. The expiry date on the pass will need to be checked by TMP personnel before granting entry.

Figure 5 - *Media pass*

Public TMP access

To provide ease of access through Authorised Access – C and Authorised Access – D TMPs, people who are to be permitted access may be issued with an identifying wristband. Wristbands will be available to people at the TMP upon proof of identity relevant to the access level. Where identity cannot be proved at a TMP, wristbands may be obtained from a designated community location upon confirmation of identity (e.g. electoral roll).

Vulnerable People

During a bushfire, special consideration needs to be given to the safety of vulnerable people in the community. In a bushfire, many people will have increased vulnerability for a range of reasons such as geographic isolation, caring for young children, physical impairment and limited capacity to understand warnings and make decisions.

Vulnerable people and those who care for them are likely to need more time, resources, support and assistance to evacuate safely. It is particularly important for them, to prepare bushfire survival plans with a focus on leaving early. Resources are available to support this planning, such as the Red Cross Bushfires: Preparing to Leave Early Guide, available from the CFA website (www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or by calling the Vic Emergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

Vulnerable Persons Registers

Vulnerable Persons Registers contain lists of consenting people living in the community who have been assessed as vulnerable because they:

- are frail and/or physically or cognitively impaired and unable to comprehend warnings and directions and/or respond in an emergency situation
- cannot identify personal or community support networks to help them in an emergency.

In their role as Evacuation Managers, Victoria Police can access these lists of identified vulnerable people so that the safety of these individuals can be considered in planning and responding to emergencies.

Being placed on a Vulnerable Persons Register does not guarantee safety or assisted evacuation in an emergency.

Evacuation

Definition of Evacuation

Evacuation is the planned relocation of people from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas to safer areas and eventual return. The purpose of an evacuation is to use distance to separate the people from the danger created by the emergency.

Evacuation is a risk management strategy that may be used as a means of mitigating the impact of an incident on public safety. However, to be effective, it needs to be correctly planned and executed. The process of evacuation includes the return of the affected community.

The Evacuation Process

There are five stages in the evacuation process, focused on pre-warned evacuation and immediate evacuation.

1. Decision to evacuate
2. Warning or recommendation to persons likely to be affected by an emergency
3. Withdrawal of an affected community
4. Sheltering of persons evacuated
5. Return of affected persons

A formal evacuation process does not prevent people in the community from making the decision to self evacuate in the appropriate circumstances.

Recommendation to Evacuate

The Incident Controller is responsible for authorising and issuing evacuation messages to the community (either a warning to affected people that they need to prepare to evacuate or a recommendation to evacuate immediately). This decision, if time permits, should be made in consultation with Victoria Police, IEMT and other expert advice where available.

A recommendation to evacuate should only be made when this is expected to offer a higher level of protection for members of the public than other options, and can be achieved without endangering response agency personnel.

In some urgent life threatening circumstances, and in an effort to preserve life, the decision to recommend evacuation may be made by any agency representative. In this circumstance the Incident Controller is required to be notified of the decision as soon as possible.

Where the Incident Controller decides to recommend that people should evacuate, the Incident Controller is required to immediately communicate this decision to the Victoria Police Commander (for implementation), through the line of control and agency chain of command, the IMT and to the fire ground.

To ensure the standard process in undertaking when planning for and undertaking an evacuation SOP J03.12 - Evacuation, outline the responsibilities, activities and forms that are required to be undertaken by Incident Controller and Evacuation Managers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Table 5 sets out the roles and responsibilities of the evacuation process.

Organisation/Role	Task
Control Agency (Incident Controller)	Consider and recommend as appropriate evacuation in consultation with Victoria Police Evacuation Manager, Health Commander and other experts. Issue warnings, recommendations to evacuate and provide situation updates and ongoing advice that may impact an evacuation (including the dissemination of public information). Activate emergency relief services. Maintain ongoing liaison with Victoria Police once the evacuation process has commenced.
Victoria Police (Evacuation Manager)	Assist Incident Controller with the decision and warning stages if required. Manage the withdrawal, shelter and return stages of the evacuation in consultation with the Incident Controller and Health Commander. Liaise with TMM (if appointed) to develop ITMP and coordinate establishment and maintenance of traffic management points. Source and manage resources to facilitate evacuation in consultation with control and support agencies. Maintain ongoing liaison with Incident Controller for the duration of the evacuation. Authorise and action communication with the community regarding withdrawal, shelter and return in consultation with the Incident Controller. Registration of evacuees (with Red Cross). Provision of security at ERCs
Ambulance Victoria (Health Commander)	Provide health and medical strategy advice to the Incident Controller and Evacuation Manager. Manage the withdrawal and return of identified vulnerable people from health and aged care facilities. Support the withdrawal and return of identified vulnerable people who have health related needs.
Country Fire Authority (CFA)	Develop and maintain Community Information Guides for bushfires.

Organisation/Role	Task
Support agencies	Assist with the provision of resources to facilitate evacuation. Provide support during the evacuation process, under the direction of Victoria Police.
Municipal councils	Establish a Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC) as required. Establish and manage relief centres as required. Assist Victoria Police with management of traffic flow including provision of information regarding road availability, capacity and safety. Assist VicRoads to maintain list of road closures (public information). With Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees: Develop and maintain Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPlan) Assist CFA with the development of Community Information Guides for bushfires. Identify and document within MEMPlan facilities where vulnerable people are likely to be located. Maintain within MEMPlan a list of those services/agencies with awareness of vulnerable people within the community.
VicRoads	Assist Incident Controller, Victoria Police (TMM) with management of traffic flow including provision of information regarding road availability, capacity and safety. Maintain list of road closures (public information).
Australian Red Cross (Victoria)	Registration of evacuees (with Victoria Police).
Department of Health and Human Services	Support municipal councils in provision of emergency relief.
Department of Education and Training, Association of Independent Schools of Victoria, Catholic Education Office	Development and maintenance of plans to manage evacuation of educational facilities including schools, universities, child care centres, etc.

Table 5 – *Evacuation Roles and Responsibilities*

Impact Assessment

Initial Impact Assessment

The incident controller is responsible for initiating and managing an initial impact assessment (IIA) and authorising the release of collected information.

Triggers to determine the requirement for IIA should be considered in accordance with the state strategic control priorities. Some practical examples include:

- injured/deceased persons (only Victoria Police are authorised to comment upon or release data relating to deceased persons)
- residential damage indicating displaced people
- damage to essential infrastructure (road, rail, power supply etc)
- damage to facilities of community significance e.g. schools and hospitals
- identification of primary production impact and animal welfare requirements

IIA arrangements are designed to allow for flexibility in their application as it often occur in a dynamic environment and the circumstance of a particular assessment may require adaption. Information collected in the IIA stage will be progressively made available to the IEMT and nominated recovery role.

Dependent on the scale and complexity of the event the Incident Controller may:

- choose to use existing IMT and field based resources
- establish a specific functional unit within the IMT/IEMT to support the IIA process. This may include appointment of a specific role to manage the task
- request additional resource/s to assist in conducting and managing IIA
- request the establishment of a regional team, where required.

Secondary impact assessment (SIA)

Good decisions about relief and recovery programs require timely, accurate and progressively more comprehensive information about the impact of an emergency on affected communities. Such information is vital to plan and provide an appropriate, adaptive and evidence-based relief and recovery program.

For SIA to commence, the Incident Controller needs to be satisfied the impacted area is safe for non-responder personnel to operate in. The Incident Controller is required to facilitate the tranisiton from IIA to SIA. Coordination of SIA is the resposnibility of the nominated recovery role.

See EM Knowledge for the Impact Assessment Guidelines, re-issued for 2015.

MFB Response Capability

The MFB's core responsibility is the protection of people, assets and the environment within the Metropolitan Fire District. MFB resources should be requested through the SCC.

MFB can assist with the following emergency responses:

- Strike teams, consisting of firefighters with level 2 wildfire qualifications
- specialist task forces
- step up to CFA stations
- asset protection
- protection of Neighbourhood Safer Places, refuges and critical infrastructure
- consolidation of control lines on roadsides
- fill points
- blacking-out along hard standing surfaces
- Initial Impact Assessment

MFB can also be requested to provide the following incident management support:

- IMT positions
- administration support (i.e. Geospatial Information Services)
- scientific services.

The MFB are unable to assist in the following activities:

- driving off road or on dozer tracks
- cross-crewing
- separating strike teams
- back-burning
- tree-felling
- Class 'A' foam application.

VICSES Capability

The VICSES provides essential support to the fire agencies during fire operations. Whilst VICSES members are not trained in fire fighting roles the agency is able to provide support with the following activities:

- management and/or logistical support at staging areas
- provision of lighting and power
- staffing and support to fire service IMTs
- chainsaw crews to clear fallen trees from access roads
- Traffic Management Points
- shoring or tarping of structures damaged by fire incidents
- Initial Impact Assessment
- refilling of water bombing aircraft
- operation of quickfill pumpsets
- transport of personnel, vehicles, food and equipment.

Requests for VICSES resources to assist with fire support activities are via the normal arrangements for requesting additional incident resources (ESTA) at a level 1 incident.

If operations are under the command of a level 2 or level 3 Incident Controller, requests for VICSES support should be made to the Regional Agency Commander. If there is no Regional Agency Commander, requests for VICSES support can be made via the Regional Duty Officer.

VICSES members may also be able to assist with:

- the delivery of authorised community safety information and fire situation updates to fire affected communities
- safe early departure of residents and other persons requiring assistance such as, persons from hospitals, non-ambulant (that is, people who cannot walk without assistance) or elderly people, in fire threatened areas, where they choose to leave.

Deployment of personal needs to be in line with the VICSES Standard Operating Procedure 017 – Fire Support Operations.

Information Systems

Emergency Management - Common Operating Picture (EM-COP)

The Emergency Management - Common Operating Pitcure (EM-COP) is a web based entry point for personnel across the emergency management sector to access information and systems using a standard web browser on any internet connected device.

The emergency management portal has been superseded by EM-COP. to access http://cop.em.vic.gov.au

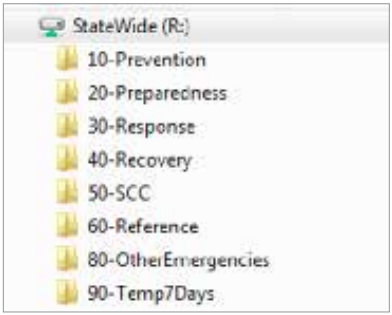
All the previous information found on the EM Portal is now located within the desktop and library tabs within EM-COP.

Emergency Management Drive Business Rules

The "Emergency Management Drive (R:)" is a state-wide shared network drive available to a number of emergency service agencies including CFA, DELWP, MFB and VICSES. The purpose of this drive is to enable personnel to create, share, manage and store non-application bound operational information.

Documents that should have a copy maintained on the 'R' drive include (but not limited to) completed incident documentation such as:

- IAP
- communication plans
- options analysis
- media releases
- photos
- completed/published maps.



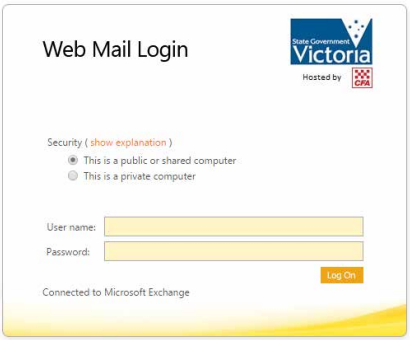
The R Drive is to be used for incident management purposes only. It should not be used to store personal documents or shared project related documents. Agencies maintain separate drives for agency specific purposes.

For specific guidance on usage and business rules, particularly in relation to the 30-Response folder, refer to the Library in EM-COP:

Emergency Management Web-Mail

Role-based email accounts are available for state, regional and incident tiers.

EMwebmail utilises Microsoft Outlook Web App (OWA), a web-based emailing system accessible to all agencies on all networks provided they have the appropriate log-in and password details. This allows agency personnel to access incident specific emails using the internet.



When using EMwebmail it is critical that the appropriate mailboxes are monitored, and important emails followed up with a phone call to ensure information is not missed. Use the 'Subject' heading to identify the intended recipient(s) and the subject. Personal/agency email accounts are not to be used for emails relating to an incident.

A link to EMwebmail is available on EM Portal. There are also links to a User Guide and a reference document containing descriptions and email addresses for all the role based positions

Resource Requesting

The multi-agency State Resource Request System (SRRS) is designed to make it easy for Resources Unit members at incident, regional and state tier, to submit and action requests for additional resources during fires and planned burning. The SRRS is a requesting system only and is not designed for resource tracking.

All Resources Unit personnel, as well as those involved in the dispatch of appliances, should ensure that they are familiar with the system, which can be accessed through the Resources tab on Fireweb, or by going to http://resourcerequest (Operational version) or http://resourcerequesttraining (Training version) on any networked CFA, DELWP, MFB or VICSES computer. On most networked computers, you should just be able to type 'resourcerequesttraining' into the browser address bar.

Public Information

Fire Danger Ratings

Fire Danger Ratings are communicated to the public to inform them about the fire risk on any given day and the associated suggested actions (see figure 6).

FIRE DANGER RATING	GRASSLAND FIRE DANGER INDEX	FOREST FIRE DANGER INDEX
CODE RED	150+	100+
EXTREME	100 – 149	75 – 99
SEVERE	50 – 99	50 – 74
VERY HIGH	25 – 49	25 – 49
HIGH	12 – 24	12 – 24
LOW-MODERATE	0 – 11	0 – 11

Figure 6 – *Fire Danger Indices*

Fire Dangers Ratings for the Wimmera, Mallee and Northern Country weather districts (see figure 7) are forecast using the grassland Fire Danger Index triggers. Fire Danger Ratings for the remaining weather districts are forecast using the forest Fire Danger Index triggers. The community is presented with one Fire Danger Rating for each district.

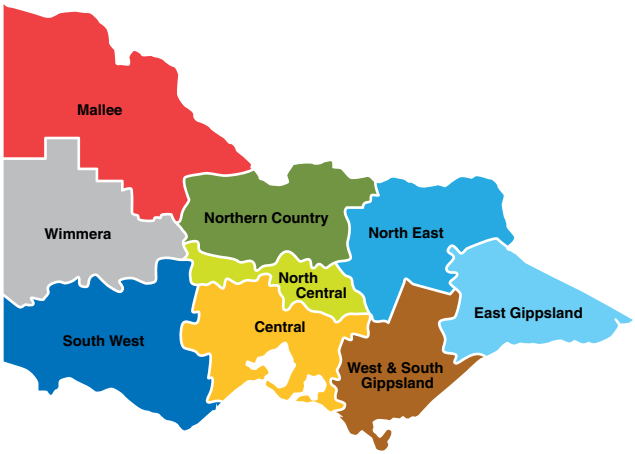


Figure 7 - *Weather Forecast and Total Fire Ban Districts*

The Fire Danger Rating descriptors are used as part of a risk matrix, providing information on potential consequence, to guide the Incident Controller to issue an appropriate warning.

STAY AWARE OF THE FIRE DANGER RATING AND KNOW WHAT TO DO.

The Fire Danger Rating predicts how a fire would behave if started, including how difficult it would be to put out.

The higher the rating, the more dangerous the conditions. The rating is your trigger to act, so to stay safe you need to stay aware of the Fire Danger Rating in your district.

During the fire season, the Fire Danger Rating will feature in weather forecasts, be broadcast on radio and TV, and appear in some newspapers.

It can also be found on the websites of CFA, Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning and Bureau of Meteorology, by calling the Vic Emergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 or via National Relay Service on 1800 555 677.

	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
CODE RED	❯ These are the worst conditions for a bush or grassfire. ❯ Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions. ❯ The safest place to be is away from high- risk bushfire areas.	❯ Leaving high-risk bushfire areas the night before or early in the day is your safest option – do not wait and see. ❯ Avoid forested areas, thick bush or long, dry grass. ❯ Know your trigger – make a decision about: – when you will leave – where you will go – how you will get there – when you will return – what you will do if you cannot leave.

	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
EXTREME	› Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions. › If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Spot fires will start, move quickly and come from many directions. › Homes that are situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, that are well prepared and actively defended, may provide safety. › You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.	› Consider staying with your property only if you are prepared to the highest level. This means your home needs to be situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, you are well prepared and you can actively defend your home if a fire starts. › If you are not prepared to the highest level, leaving high- risk bushfire areas early in the day is your safest option. › Be aware of local conditions. Seek information by listening to ABC local radio, commercial and designated community radio stations, or watch Sky News TV, visit cfa.vic.gov.au, call the Vic Emergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 or via National Relay Service on 1800 555 677.
SEVERE	› Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions. › If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable. › Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety. › You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.	› If Well-prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety - check your Bushfire Survivla Plan. › If you are not prepared, leaving bushfire-prone areas early in the day is your safest option. › Be aware of local conditions. Seek information by listening to ABC local radio, commercial and designated community radio stations, or watch Sky News TV, visit cfa.vic.gov.au, call the Vic Emergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 or via National Relay Service on 1800 555 677.
VERY HIGH HIGH LOW-MODERATE	› If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions. › Be aware of how fires can start and minimise the risk. › Controlled burning off may occur in these conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits apply.	› Check your Bushfire Survival Plan. › Monitor conditions. › Action may be needed. › Leave if necessary.

Figure 8 - Fire Danger Rating Description

Provision of Warnings to the Community

For the purpose of protecting life and property, timely, relevant and tailored warnings and advice must be issued to potentially affected communities.

The Incident Controller is responsible for authorising all warning and advice messages prior to being communicated to the public. To assist the rapid communication of warnings and advice, the Incident Controller may authorise a Deputy Incident Controller or Public Information Officer (PIO) to authorise the release of warnings and advice to the community. No additional authorisation is required once the Incident Controller or delegate has authorised the information or warning.

Where an extreme and imminent threat to life exists and it is not practicable to obtain authorisation from the Incident Controller in the circumstances, warnings may be initiated by any response agency personnel. The Incident Controller is required to be advised as soon as possible.

Warnings Contingency Process

In rapidly developing incidents, or in the event that a Warnings and Advice Officer cannot submit a message, the Incident Controller , or delegate, should request assistance from the Warnings and Advice Duty Officer at State level (24/7 backup to field based Warnings & Advice Officers) on 03 9262 8779.

Warnings Levels and Templates

Community messaging templates provide the Incident Controller and Public Information Section personnel the opportunity to include targeted information and specific actions for the communities affected.

Levels of Community Warnings and Advice

The following levels of warnings and advice are used for multiple hazards. Examples are shown in table 6 below:

Advice	General information to keep you up-to-date with developments
Watch and Act	A fire is approaching you. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect your life and your family.
Emergency Warning	You are in imminent danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted by fire.

Table 6 – *Levels of Warnings and Advice*

Additional warnings that may be issued are shown in table 7 below:

All Clear	Emergency activity in the area has subsided and is no longer a danger to you.
Prepare to Evacuate / Evacuate Now	If time and conditions allow, a recommendation to evacuate an area may be issued. This will depend on a number of factors including: ▪ Safety considerations ▪ The location and type of emergency ▪ Access routes and the local environment.

Table 7 – *Additional warnings*

All Clear Messages

An All Clear message is to be issued when incident activity in an area has subsided. An 'all clear' message needs to be issued whenever a Watch and Act, Emergency Warning or Recommendation to Evacuate has been issued.

Message Templates Matrix – Reference Guide Only

The message templates matrix should be used as a guide only to assist Incident Controllers and the Public Information Section personnel in selecting the appropriate template when issuing warnings and advice for bush/grassfire incidents (see figure 9).

It is important to understand that the matrix is a reference guide only and should be used with consideration of all other factors that may influence the incident impact on the community.

Community Updates

Where appropriate and authorised, a Community Update can be issued to the community via the warnings platform. The Update can be used alongside warnings – or in place of Advice messages during long running incidents, to keep the community up-to-date with developments in cases where warnings are not required.

Community Updates may perform the function of a community newsletter as developed by the Community Liaison unit.

Publishing Warning and Advice Areas (polygon)

Warnings and advice issued to the community will have the warning area (polygon) shown on the map published to agency websites. Incident Controllers should ensure that the polygon associated with the warning or advice is the representation of the area and communities they wish to warn.

Guide to selecting a Bushfire/Grassfire warning template

Based on the grass or forest FDI use the table below to select an appropriate warning template.

GRASS FDI	FOREST FDI	TIME TO IMPACT				
		<1 HR	<2 HRS	2-6 HRS	6-12 HRS	12 HRS+
150+	100+	1	1	2	2	4
100-149	75-99	1	1	2	4	4
50-99	50-74	1	2	4	4	7
25-49	25-49	2	4	4	7	7
12-24	12-24	4	4	7	7	7
0-11	0-11	7	7	7	7	7

Recommendation to Evacuate
Emergency Warning
Watch & Act
Advice

NO.	KEY MESSAGING
Recommendation to Evacuate	
00	Recommendation to Evacuate
Emergency Warning	
1	Take shelter
2	Leave Now
3	Upgrade/Update
Watch & Act	
4	Standard
5	Upgrade/Update
6	Downgrade
Advice	
7	Standard
8	Downgrade
9	All Clear
10	Campaign

Figure 9 - *Guide to selecting a Bushfire/Grassfire warning template*

Community Meetings

Some key findings from previous fires have outlined the importance of using appropriately run Community Meetings as a key opportunity for two-way interaction to help foster community connection.

Make sure that any community meetings you plan:

- are lead by people with good local knowledge, preferably people who are trusted by the community
- are structured for two way conversations
- use the tools available to properly record issues raised by community members, so you can respond.

Warning Methods

There are numerous methods for providing information and warnings to the community, which include:

- Emergency Broadcasters (designated community radio stations, ABC radio, local radio, Sky News)
- social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Rich Site Summary (RSS) Feeds
- warning and advice area polygons
- Vic Emergency and agency warnings and incidents webpages
- Vic Emergency App
- email distribution lists (local communities and EMTs)
- community sirens
- Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)
- telephone warnings – Emergency Alert (EA)
  - billing address (both landline and mobile)
  - location based (mobile only)
- Vic Emergncy Hotline (1800 226 226)
- community meetings and door knocks.

Community Sirens

Community alerting sirens are now activated in 39 communities across the state. A siren is triggered through the emergency warnings platform with the issue of any Watch & Act, Emergency Warning or Prepare to Evacuate or Evacuate Now, unless otherwise requested by the Incident Controller.

The siren will sound for 5 minutes to indicate that a significant emergency has been identified and the community should 'seek further information'.

Community Fire Refuges

A community fire refuge is a designated public building that can provide short-term shelter from the immediate life-threatening effects of a bushfire.

Victoria has three official community fire refuges:

- East Warburton
- Ferny Creek
- Millgrove
- Blackwood

Media Attendance at Incidents/Protocols

Working with the media

It is intended that the fire agencies work in partnership with media agencies and media representatives during fire events, for the purpose of communicating critical community safety messages and newsworthy information, stories, interviews and images.

The control agency, through the Incident Controller, is at all times responsible for ensuring they provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a work environment that is safe and without risks to the health of all incident personnel, including firefighters and media representatives.

Accreditation and identification of media

In order to work with fire agencies at bushfires, all media representatives are required to have:

- A current media accreditation card (obtained on completing CFA safety training)
- Fire agency approved PPE, including CFA approved 'MEDIA' patches on the upper back, front left pocket and right sleeve of the equipment, all to be worn as directed during the time the media are on the fireground.

Access

Media representatives wishing to attend an incident are required to contact the control agency and attain permission to enter the fireground. It is unacceptable for any person, including media representatives to access the fire ground without the approval of the Incident Controller.

The Incident Controller will grant permission to attend the incident, particularly the fire ground, only if it has been deemed safe and practicable to do so, and if the media representatives have achieved all the minimum requirements for working with fire agencies at bushfires.

Upon deeming it safe and appropriate for media representatives to attend the incident, the control agency will articulate the specific conditions for that attendance on each occasion and refer the media representative to the Public Information Officer or Media Officer.

The Media Officer will ensure that media representatives receive a safety briefing prior to entering the fire ground and that appropriate communication arrangements are in place.

Victoria Police Officers may remove media representatives from the fire ground who are endangering their own lives or the lives of others.

While on the fire ground, media representatives are required to comply with any instruction provided to them by the Media Officer, PIO, Incident Controller or Victoria Police. This includes immediate departure from the fire ground, should this be deemed a necessary safety measure.

Non-compliance

Media accreditation may be withdrawn and media representatives may be escorted from the fire ground and not permitted to return in instances where a media representative:

- has endangered their own safety, or the safety of others
- fails to comply with instructions of the Media Officer, PIO, Incident Controller or any representative of the fire agencies or Victoria Police while on the fire ground
- fails to depart immediately from the fire ground after instruction by the Media Officer, or any representative of the responder agencies, or Victoria Police
- accesses any area beyond TMP without the permission of the Incident Controller or an escort by CFA or DELWP staff.

The agencies may formally advise WorkSafe of the incident if appropriate.

Safety

Firefighting and other emergency activities are inherently dangerous and regardless of what systems or controls are put in place, firefighters will still face hazards. In order to maintain your safety and contribute to the safety of those around you, fireground hazards need to be identified, risks need to be assessed and decisions made according to what is occurring.

Personnel will make judgments based on their knowledge, skills, training and experience. At incidents the Incident Controller assisted by a Safety Officer or Field Safety Advisor, if appointed, also has responsibility to manage safety.

Individual emergency services personnel who are working on the fireground may be confronted by changing situations and should continually monitor the environment to identify the hazards and assess the risks as they apply to the tasks they are undertaking.

The control agency, through the Incident Controller, is at all times responsible for ensuring they provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a work environment that is safe and without risks to the health of all incident personnel, including firefighters, support agency personnel and contractors.

Remember: *Safety is the top priority.*

There are two components to managing safety during an emergency. The first component is the Safe Person Approach. The second component deals with assessing risk using a Dynamic Risk Assessment .

Safe Person Approach

Everyone has a responsibility for safety. Under Safe Person Approach (SPA) the agencies have a responsibility to make sure systems of work are in place which allows work to be undertaken safely and, equally, personnel have a responsibility to ensure they work in accordance with agreed protocols. Each person has a responsibility for ensuring that their work practices do not result in an unacceptable level of risk to themselves or to others around them.

Responsibility for safety is empowered to every individual. You should report all incidents and near misses and raise safety issues with your supervisor at the earliest opportunity. Doing so may prevent someone from suffering serious injury or even death at some time in the future.

Remember: *ALWAYS follow safe work practices and challenge those who do not.*

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA) (see figure 10) is a simple risk assessment process that formalises existing practices whereby operational personnel rapidly and effectively assess risk in order to decide on appropriate actions and controls.

When assessing risk, responder safety is paramount.

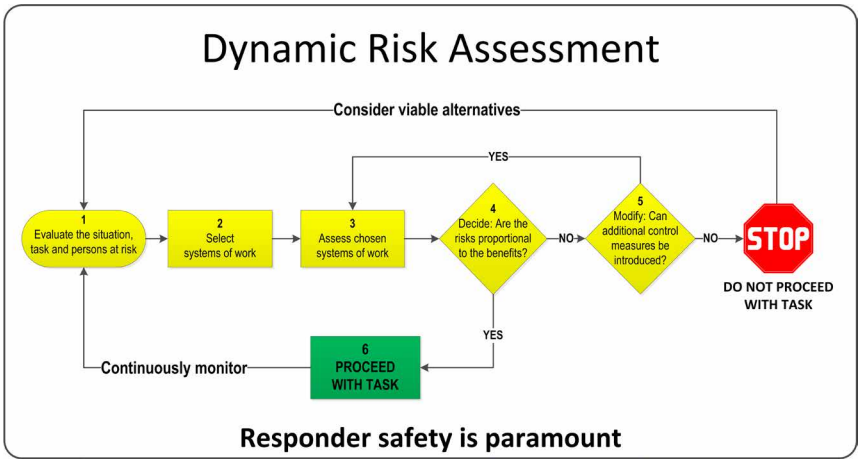


Figure 10 - *DRA Process*

DRA applies to all hazards associated with emergency response and operational activities and is carried out by all personnel from all agencies. DRA is the continuous assessment and control of risk in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident. DRA is an intuitive thought process and is typically not recorded.

SOP J08.02 - Dynamic Risk Assessment outlines the practice of continuous DRA as a component of all operational activities, including emergency response and training, to ensure responder safety is maintained.

The DRA process is summarised below:

Evaluate The Situation, Tasks and Persons at Risk

What is my task, what is going on and what are the hazards?

Determine the tasks and identify the associated hazards to determine the risk for the situation. Utilise information and available tools, such as call information, SMEACS briefing, WATCHOUT and LACES, pre-plans or familiarity with the conditions.

Select systems of work

What do I plan to do and how do I plan to do it?

Consider the possible systems of work and choose the most appropriate for the situation.

Assess the chosen systems of work

What are the risks of what I plan to do?

Assess the chosen systems of work and the level of risk by considering risks to responders and community, whether lives can be saved, value of the assets involved, cost of incident and the level of risk of proposed tasks.

Decide: Are the risk proportional to the benefits?

Is my plan safe? Do the benefits outweigh the consequences?

Determine whether the risks of the tasks are proportional to the benefits by assessing whether the benefit of carrying out the tasks outweigh the consequences if the risk was to occur. When assessing risk, responder safety is paramount. If risks outweigh the benefits then the task cannot proceed without further controls.

Modify: Can additional control measures be introduced?

Can I make the task safer?

When the risk of the system of work is not proportional to the benefits introduce risk controls using the risk control hierarchy of elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, personal protective equipment (PPE).

Proceed with task?

As I proceed, what has changed and what do I need to re-evaluate

If any risk remains, determine whether the benefit gained from carrying out the task outweigh the possible consequences if the risk was to occur. When assessing risk, responder safety is paramount. If the benefits outweigh the risks the task can proceed. If the risks outweigh the benefits, DO NOT proceed with the tasks but consider alternative system of work.

Safety First Approach

In line with the state strategic control priorities the safety of firefighters and other emergency personnel is required to be given priority over all other fire suppression considerations and activities. When working within an incident, you need to avoid putting yourself at risk. By adopting the SPA and using the DRA process you can minimise the risk of injury to self and others.

OHS Incident Reporting

The OHS Incident Report Card (salmon coloured) is used to record incidents, injuries, near misses and hazards at bushfires. The completed card is to be provided to the Logistics Officer, (or medical services unit leader if in place).

This does not replace the need to immediately communicate these incidents via the chain of command. Personnel will be required to report OHS incidents via their own agency's reporting system. SOP J08.01 - OH&S Incident Response - Class 1 Emergencies provide further information.

LACES

In some emergencies, as conditions change, on ground responders rely on the use of safety zones and escape routes for safety. In these situations the LACES (see table 8) provides a system to maintain safety. During bushfires LACES is particularly useful where there is a risk of burnover, entrapment, or a weather change increasing tree hazard. Alternate systems of work may be available to manage particular risks encountered during emergency work. If an alternative system is not available, or is unsuitable, LACES should be considered as part of the Dynamic Risk Assessment process. The process for implementing LACES is:

Lookouts	A fixed, aerial or mobile lookout shall be deployed to maintain a clear appreciation of risks and to provide timely advice of the need to use of escape routes and safety zones.
Awareness	Firefighters shall be aware of the impact of changes in fire behaviour including those resulting from variations to fuel, weather and topography and of other fireground hazards.
Communications	All fire crews shall follow the Communications Plan, communicate with your crew and surrounding crews to discuss and address safety issues.
Escape Routes	At least two escape routes should be agreed and made known to all relevant personnel. The suitability of an escape route should be continually reviewed to ensure it remains effective.
Safety Zones	Safety zones should be identified and made known to all relevant firefighters. Firefighters need to consider escape time and safety zone size requirements that will change as fire behaviour changes.

Table 8 – *LACES*

WATCHOUT

WATCHOUT is an acronym used to remind firefighters of potential dangers to their safety and to give advice on safe work practices. Understanding the meaning of the acronym will help you perform a more comprehensive risk assessment.

Weather – dominates fire behaviour, so keep informed

Actions – need to be based on current and expected fire behaviour

Try out – at least two safe escape routes

Communicate – with your supervisor, your crew and adjoining crews

Hazards – beware of variations in fuels and steep slopes

Observe – changes in wind speed, direction, temperature, humidity and cloud

Understand – your instructions, make sure that you are understood

Think – clearly, be alert and act decisively before your situation becomes critical

You should familiarise yourself with your agency's current WATCHOUTs. Firefighters watchout when:

- building a control line downhill towards a fire
- on a slope – rolling material can ignite fuel below you
- the wind changes speed or direction
- the weather gets hotter or drier
- there are unburnt fuels between you and the fire
- terrain or vegetation impedes travel or visibility
- in country you have not seen in daylight
- you are unfamiliar with the weather and local fire behaviour
- frequent spot fires occur over your control line
- you cannot see the main fire or communicate with anyone who can
- unclear instructions or tasks are given
- you feel exhausted or want to take a nap near the fire
- attacking a fire or constructing a fire control line without a safe anchor point
- working alone with no communications link to crew members or supervisor
- you are not fully informed about strategy, tactics and hazards
- safety zones and escape routes have not been identified
- fire not scouted or the potential of the fire has not been assessed
- water levels are getting low.

Red Flag Warnings

A process for passing critical safety information to fire/incident suppression resources on which they can base decisions regarding strategy tactics and deployment. Further information can be found in SOP J03.11 – Red Flag Warnings

A Red Flag Warning should be issued when there is, or is predicted to be, a significant risk to safety due to changed circumstances, including:

- weather conditions
- fuel conditions
- fire behaviour
- equipment availability
- communications arrangements
- access.

A Red Flag Warning for a specific incident may only be issued by the following personnel, in their area of responsibility:

- Sector Commander
- Division Commander
- Operations Officer
- Incident Controller

The State Response Controller, Regional Controller, State and Regional Agency Commanders, State Duty Officer, Operations Manager, and the rostered Area or District Duty Officer may advise an Incident Controller to issue a Red Flag Warning

Red Flag Warnings can be conveyed by any means. Red Flag Warnings, regardless of how they are conveyed, need to be preceded by the words, “Red Flag Warning”. The message should be specific to the key audience (eg. the Eastern Division) to minimise radio congestion.

Personnel receiving a Red Flag Warning are required to:

- immediately acknowledge that they have received the warning
- repeat back the relevant details of the message to demonstrate that they have understood the message
- notify personnel under their command and supervision
- obtain an acknowledgement from personnel under their command and supervision.

An example of the process outlined in Figure 11:

Figure 11 – *Red Flag Warning dissemination and acknowledgement process*

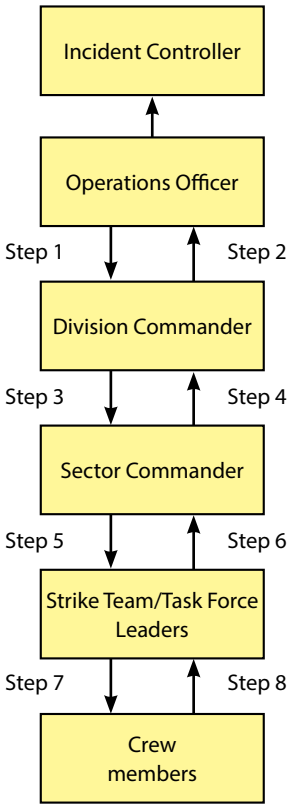
Step 1: For example, if the Operations Officer initiates a Red Flag Warning, they issue it to Division Commanders. The Operations Officer then advises the Incident Controller.

Step 2: Division Commanders acknowledge receipt and repeat back the key points of the Warning to demonstrate understanding.

Step 3: Division Commanders issue the Red Flag Warning to Sector Commanders.

Step 4: Sector Commanders acknowledge receipt and repeat back the key points of the Warning to demonstrate understanding.

Step 5: Sector Commanders issue Warning to Strike Team/Task Force Leaders and any others they are supervising, who acknowledge receipt (Step 6), and issue the Warning to their crew members (Step 7), who acknowledge the Warning (Step 8).



Note: *Red Flag Warnings are not a directive to leave the fireground. Firefighters should consider local knowledge and situation when determining what action to take in response to the warning.*

Field Information Update

The Field Information Update (FIU) is a method for the distribution of changes to strategy, tactics, new intelligence, safety information to the field during a shift. It is typically new information that was not included or not available at the time of the briefing.

It may be delivered via radio broadcast or printed copy, and may include:

- Weather
- Fire Behaviour
- Organisation (sectorisation, control)
- Communications
- Strategy
- Local Hazards
- Other issues

Some Incident Controllers use it to precisely frame messages to the field to update weather or advising that transfer of control has been completed and new reporting lines.

It complements the Red Flag Warning as a mechanism to broadcast more general information than the targeted critical information that is the subject matter of a Red Flag Warning.

A FIU does not require acknowledgement. FIU pro forma is in the IMT toolbox

Hydration

It is important to remain hydrated, especially during periods of prolonged or intensive physical activity. Dehydration will occur if fluids and electrolytes lost through perspiration are not replaced. The use of an agency approved electrolyte drink/ powder is important to maintaining good hydration levels. The recommended ratio of water to electrolytes is 2:1. Depending on workload you should be drinking up to 1200 ml of water and 600 ml of an agency approved electrolyte replacement drink/ powder per hour. It is important that all personnel remain hydrated by maintaining their fluid intake during the shift.

Fatigue

Fatigue, in both its acute and cumulative forms, can present a real risk to safety and performance at bushfire incidents if not recognised and appropriately managed. The highest risks are to personal safety when associated with activities involving machinery and other equipment, and especially when driving motor vehicles after long shifts.

In addition to managing the fatigue of others within their sphere of influence, firefighters and incident management personnel need to actively manage their own fatigue, particularly in relation to driving vehicles and equipment and machinery use.

Agency personnel should adhere to existing agency protocols related to fatigue management and report any observation of OHS incidents (including near-misses).

Smoke

Significant smoke or emissions from fires or hazardous materials incidents need consideration in terms of protecting both workforce and community from harmful effects. Smoke is harmful and early in any incident the composition will be unknown, so basic protective actions i.e. avoid exposure, minimise exposure, personal protective respiratory protection, should be considered.

If the density of smoke or emissions is predicted to last a considerable time and potentially impact workers or the community, consideration must be given to:

- provision of advice to protect both workers and the community
- deployment of monitoring equipment to the incident site to monitor composition and exposure of workforce
- if significant, potentially deploy monitoring within the community that is impacted by smoke or emissions.

Early consideration for the need for monitoring to significant events, along with early activation will help inform decision making by Incident Controllers. Fire agencies and the Environment Protection Authority, have a range of monitoring tools available for agencies to deploy, as required.

See the following documents for more information on smoke; Standard for Managing significant CO; Bushfire Smoke Air quality and health; and State Smoke Framework.

Tree Hazard

Tree hazard is a major risk to firefighters and responders at all stages of operations, from active suppression, mopping up and patrol through to recovery. The key steps to protect responders from tree hazard are:

- Step 1: Identify the potential existence of tree hazard during bushfire response
- Step 2: Mitigate the risk arising from tree hazard during access to bushfire incidents
- Step 3: Mitigate the risk arising from tree hazard on the fire ground
- Step 4: Mitigate the risk of unidentified hazard trees on the fire ground
- Step 5: Complete operations.

For further information on Tree Hazards see SOP J08.03 Tree Hazard – Bushfire Response

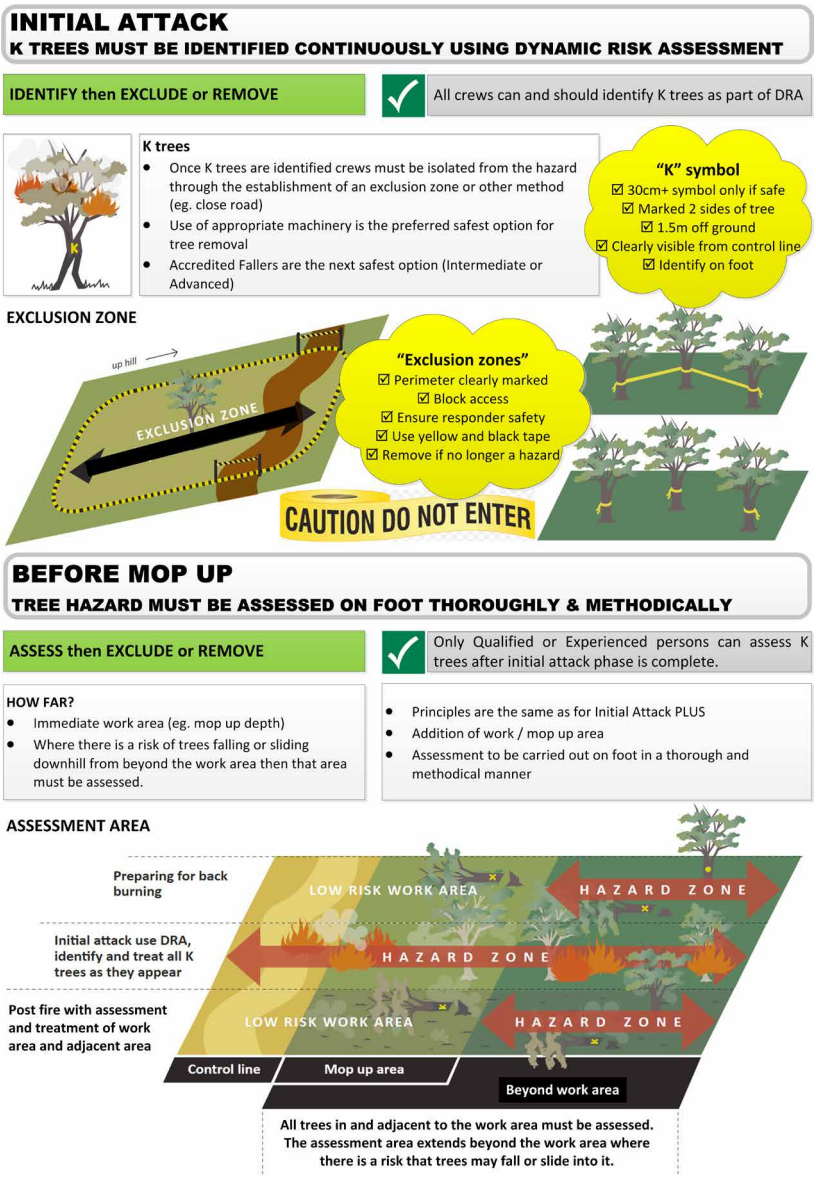


Figure 12 - *Tree Hazard identification*

Initial Attack and tree hazard

Awareness and identification of trees which present a hazard need to form part of the ongoing dynamic risk assessment performed by all personnel on the fire ground at all times. During attack on a going fire, personnel need to be particularly vigilant in identifying hazard trees and treating any unacceptable risks.

Following the passage of fire

Hazard trees within striking distance of access/control lines are assessed, marked and treated as soon as possible after the passage of fire, and before the commencement of any mop-up/blacking out/patrol. Prescribed qualified OR experienced personnel can carry out tree hazard assessments.

Marking system:

Yellow cross "X" is sprayed on hazardous trees (not yet Clear and Present Danger), or potential Clear and Present Danger trees which cannot be reliably protected. These trees will normally be pushed over or felled as part of access/control line construction.

Yellow dot "•" is sprayed on non-hazard trees to be protected (ie. hand raked or machine cleared around and/or fire suppressant applied) prior to the fire or back burn.

Yellow "K" is sprayed on trees that present a "Clear and Present Danger" which are likely to fall on personnel while working in the area.

All responders can identify Clear and Present Danger (CPD) Trees ("K") through dynamic risk assessment. As a minimum, an exclusion zone should be established and the location of an identified Clear and Present Danger Tree ("K") reported. "K" should only be spray painted when they are assessed as being safe enough to approach.

Exclusion zones:

An exclusion zone is marked with yellow and black tape tied around a tree or trees at the perimeter of the exclusion zone on the approach to a "K" tree. No one should enter the exclusion zone unless they are tasked to assess or treat the risk. Personnel wanting to access the area are required to either wait until the hazard has been safely treated or find other means of access outside the exclusion zone. In exceptional circumstances (eg. where life is under threat) DRA should be applied.

The exclusion zone is generally two tree lengths, however it may be larger, or in some cases smaller depending on the specific risk of a "K" tree.

If it is unsafe or not possible to fall or push over a "K" tree then other options include moving, re-aligning or abandoning the control line where the risk poses cannot be treated.

Post Incident and Learning Actions

The responder agencies support a culture of continuous improvement by:

- encouraging the sector to share lessons, both positive actions and areas for improvement
- encouraging learning from both assurance activities and contemporary good practice
- focusing on systems of work, rather than the performance of individuals
- recognising that identifying and implementing sustainable solutions takes time, resources and opportunity.

Lessons are identified through collecting and analysing data from various levels, most often through monitoring, debrief and review activity. Lessons need to then be assessed for possible treatments, determining appropriate actions, allocating responsibilities and monitoring progress. Lessons are only learned once change or improvement is evident as a result of action.

Local teams and governance groups (e.g. crews, EMT, RCT) are responsible for analysing the data they collect to identify locally relevant insights and actions required to contribute to continuous improvement. These actions are to be locally coordinated, implemented, monitored and reported.

In addition to local action, the State Review Team (SRT) collates the information from all tiers of emergency management and analyses it for insights and trends.

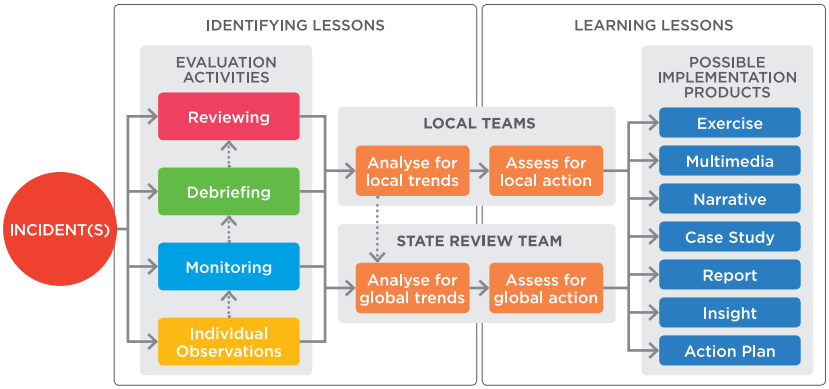


Figure 13 - *Identification and Learning Lessons*

Individual Observations

All personnel are encouraged to share their observations and initiatives to ensure the sector can learn from best practice and drive continuous improvement.

The Observation Sharing Centre is an online resource developed to complement debriefing, learning and learning processes. It allows you to share observations, lessons and initiatives during a deployment, incident or season, at a time convenient to you. This is particularly important where personnel have not had the opportunity or ability to attend any debriefing activities.

Observations can be made on behalf of an individual, crew, team, brigade, region or agency. They can be based on operational or non-operational activities.

Access

The Observation Sharing Centre is available to all personnel (volunteers and staff) from all emergency management agencies.

You can access the Observation Sharing Centre two ways: Observation Centre button on the EM Portal; or using the link

http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1449131/observation-sharing-centre

The system will ask a series of questions about you, your agency and your observation. You can enter multiple observations about specific incidents or situations.

This does not replace any other OHS reporting, involvement in local or deployment debriefs, or participation in reviews with your crew, shift, team, or agency. Any safety issues must be reported to the relevant Safety Officer or OHS representative using the appropriate systems.

Your observations will be managed confidentiality by EMV and your agency. Any exchange of information between agencies will not include personal information.

Trends will be used to inform continuous improvement of emergency management arrangements and practices. In most cases, single individual observations will not be actioned. Local issues should be reported to the responsible body and dealt with locally if possible.

Monitoring

Monitoring provides the ability to observe and check the application of processes, systems and functioning during all phases of emergency management to provide assurance to the EMC.

Monitoring activities aim to:

- proactively identify any issues, trends and risks in systems, process and functioning that affect the ability to effectively and efficiently manage the emergency, in line with the state strategic control priorities
- provide rapid constructive feedback about issues to the personnel involved to support the identification and implementation of corrective action where appropriate
- provide an indication of community or sector sentiment
- identify any critical issues that need to be escalated through the line of control.

Debriefing

Debriefs typically occur shortly after the conclusion of a specific incident, shift, campaign or event to allow participants to share aspects that worked well and identify areas for improvement.

Debriefs work best when there is a culture to support active sharing of lessons and an established and consistent process to ensure the observations are captured, analysed and subsequently used to inform future decision-making.

The purpose of a debrief is to:

- ensure participating individuals and agencies understand all aspects of what happened during an operation or emergency
- identify what went well and areas for improvement in order to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and safety of future planning and future operational response activities.

After Action Reviews

Local debriefing using the After Action Review (AAR) process is a way to debrief crews back at the station, work centre or staging area at the end of a shift, tour of duty, fire or incident. By identifying and addressing the issues as soon as possible during or after an event, personnel are able to deal with them immediately while the details are still fresh in their minds.

The AAR is the primary tool for incorporating the actions or day's events into the learning cycle, helping to improve performance. An AAR:

- provides practice for crew communication and for conflict resolution between team members
- provides a place to establish, emphasise and reinforce group norms
- provides a forum for determining the reasons for crew successes and failures
- assists in establishing a common crew perception of the events of the day
- is not a critique, the emphasis is on the issues NOT personalities

An AAR can be completed in four simple steps:

1. What was planned?
   What were the goals and objectives?
   - Incident action plan
   - Crew incident roles
   - Other crew goals
   - Individual goals
   - Additional unstated goals.
2. What really happened?
3. Why did it happen?
4. What can we do better for next time?

Local leaders shall ensure that identified lessons are actioned, shared and monitored to ensure they lead to the behaviour and organisational change required for learning.

Formal Debriefs

Formal debriefs are more structured and focus on broader areas of potential learning. For non-major emergencies, the control agency is responsible for capturing lessons from emergencies, suggesting treatment options to the relevant accountable agencies and monitoring remedial actions.

For major emergencies, the MERC or RERC is responsible for ensuring the control agency for the emergency has undertaken this process, including organising an operational debrief with participating agencies as soon as practicable after cessation of response activities.

Representatives of all agencies who participated in the emergency response should participate in debriefs where practicable. These agencies include response agencies, recovery agencies, partner organisations and local government. Debriefs can also include community, business, or industry groups, where relevant.

Where the debrief process identifies lessons, the control agency is responsible for identifying possible local treatments, determining appropriate actions, allocating responsibilities and monitoring progress.

The control agency should communicate lessons to the EMC through the State Review Team (sccvic.srt@scc.vic.gov.au). The State Review Team collates and analyses lessons from all assurance activities to ensure continuous and consistent identification of state trends and themes.

Reviews

Reviews are typically undertaken to:

- analyse a specific incident or period of emergency
- investigate causation or other circumstances related to an incident
- evaluate performance
- explore a specific theme.

Reviews identify key lessons and are used to inform decisions and treatment options. Reviews can be led, coordinated or requested by agencies, departments, EMV or Inspector-General for Emergency Management.

Where an agency-led review identifies learning opportunities, the agency is responsible for identifying possible local treatments, determining appropriate actions, allocating responsibilities and monitoring progress.

Where an EMV-led review identifies learning opportunities, EMV will work with the State Review Team and subject matter experts to identify possible treatments, determine appropriate actions, allocate responsibilities and monitor progress. These arrangements will be reported to the EMC and Agency Chiefs.

All lessons identified through multi-agency review process are to be reported to the EMC through the State Review Team (sccvic.srt@scc.vic.gov.au). The State Review Team collates and analyses lessons from all assurance activities to ensure continuous and consistent identification of state trends and themes.

Fire Investigation

In the event of a fire being suspicious, the Incident Controller is to ensure the scene is preserved and request Victoria Police and a Fire Investigator to attend the scene. The Incident Controller should provide Victoria Police the details of why the fire is deemed suspicious.

SOP J11.01 - Bushfire investigation, describes the procedures for bushfire investigation.

Relief and Recovery

Transition from response to recovery

Planning for recovery coordination will commence simultaneously with response. The decision relating to the timing of the formal transition of response to recovery coordination will be impacted by a number of key considerations, including:

- the nature of the hazard/threat and whether there is a risk of a recurring threat
- the extent of impact on communities, as this may determine if a prolonged transition period needs to be implemented
- the extent of and known level of impact and needs associated with the incident
- the considerations for the extent of emergency relief required by affected communities
- the considerations for the resources required for effective recovery arrangements.

The transition structure and handover requirements to establish formal recovery coordination arrangements will be determined by the Incident Controller, the Incident Emergency Response Coordinator and Municipal Recovery Manager, in consultation with the Regional and/or State Recovery Coordinators when appropriate. In a prolonged campaign incident, a transition period will be established to allow sufficient time for briefing, resource planning and implementation of immediate recovery services.

A schedule of transition actions required is available in the document An Agreement For Transition Of Coordination Arrangements From Response To Recovery, which can be obtained from Regional or State Recovery Coordinators.

Relief and Recovery Coordination

The responsibility for state relief and recovery coordination will transfer from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to EMV on 1 September 2015, with EMV's Director of Relief and Recovery to assume the role of State Recovery Coordinator.

DHHS will maintain responsibility for regional relief and recovery coordination, and local government for incident level.

Emergency Relief and Recovery public information sources

The Emergency Relief and Recovery Victoria website www.recovery.vic.gov.au is a single source of online information for public and local government areas on all relief and recovery matters, across all hazards. It can provide independent information on three concurrent major emergencies, plus archival information on previous emergencies. Replacing the Recovering from Floods website, the Emergency Relief and Recovery Victoria website is designed for mobile platforms as well as desktop computers.

The Vic Emergency Hotline (1800 226 226) is a dedicated 24/7 hotline with surge capacity, to handle all relief and recovery queries (via scripts) and if established, queries can be transferred through to dedicated area centres.

Further Information

Document	Location
After Action Review Form	EM-COP Library > Reviews > Debriefing
AIIMS Manual – 4th Edition	AFAC website: www.afac.com.au
CFA/DSE Bushfire Reference Manual	CFA Online
CFA Fire and Emergency Management Field Guide and Checklists	
CFA/MFB Joint Operational Activities Memorandum or Understanding	Agency Intranets
Pictorial Guide – Hazardous Trees Management	EMV website: www.emv.vic.gov.au/treehazard
Video – Hazardous Trees Management	Fireweb and CFA Online
Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV)	EMV website: www.emv.vic.gov.au
Emergency Management Team Arrangements	
Fundamentals of Emergency Management (Class 1 emergencies)	
Joint SOPs	EM-COP Library > Doctrine > JSOPs
SCC Standard Operating Procedures	EM-COP Library > State Control Centre (SCC) > Procedures
Case Studies	EM-COP Library> Reviews-Lessons > Learning Products > Case Studies:

Joint SOPs

The following is a list of the JSOPs available.

SOP-J02.01 - Local Mutual Aid Plans - Fire Agencies
SOP-J02.02 - Incident Communications Planning
SOP-J02.03 - Incident Management Team Readiness Arrangements for Bushfire
SOP-J02.04 - Local Knowledge - Bushfire
SOP-J02.06 - Aviation Resources Readiness (Bushfire)
SOP-J03.01 - *repealed*
SOP-J03.02 - Incident Naming - Major Emergencies
SOP-J03.03 - Incident Action Planning
SOP-J03.04 - Incident Safety Management Functions
SOP-J03.06 - Incident Briefings
SOP-J03.08 - Appointment of Regional and Level 3 Incident Controllers
SOP-J03.09 - Resource Request Process
SOP-J03.10 - Traffic Management
SOP-J03.11 - Red Flag Warnings
SOP-J03.12 - Evacuation for major emergencies
SOP-J03.13 - *transitioned to business rule*
SOP-J03.14 - Control of Class 1 Emergencies
SOP-J03.15 - Transfer of Control and IMT Relocation for Class 1 Emergencies
SOP-J03.16 - Significant event notification
SOP-J03.17 - Regional Strategic Plan
SOP-J03.18 - Incident air monitoring for community health
SOP-J03.19 - Managing significant community exposures to fine particles from smoke
SOP-J03.20 - Managing significant community exposures to carbon monoxide from smoke
SOP-J04.01 - Incident Public Information and warnings
SOP-J08.01 - OH&S Incident Response – Class 1 Emergencies
SOP-J08.02 - Dynamic Risk Assessment
SOP-J08.03 - Tree Hazard - Bushfire Response
SOP-J11.01 - Bushfire Investigation
SOP-J12.01 - Real Time Performance Monitoring – Class 1 Emergencies

Emergency Management Locations

Emergency response facilities are named based on the function they support e.g. control centre, command centre, coordination centre etc.

The level of activation of a facility could range from a single workstation to a full centre facility, with escalation according to the nature and scale of the emergency.

Class 1 emergencies are managed from the SCC, RCC and either an ICC, mobile command vehicle, site office or other location determined by the EMC.

Agencies may maintain their own command centres.

State Control Centre

The SCC is the State's primary control centre for management of emergencies; it is the hub of a network of RCCs, which support the ICCs.

SCC staff support the EMC and State Response Controller to execute state control through:

- compiling information to assist the EMC, State Response Controller and State Control Team maintain situational awareness to support strategic decision making
- engaging with and providing information to key stakeholders and SEMT
- checking that readiness arrangements are in place
- checking that control strategies and arrangements are appropriate
- predicting incident progression
- assisting the issue of information and community warnings
- assisting the allocation of state and specialist resources
- providing support to state, regional, incident control and agency personnel.

Regional Control Centres

RCCs are the location where the Regional Controller and various members of the Regional Control Team operate from for a particular Region.

Incident Control Centres

An ICC is the location where the Incident Controller and the IMT manages response activities.

A Level 3 ICC is a facility used to accommodate an IMT during preparation for, or response to, a major fire.

Division Command Points

A Division Command Point (DCP) is a location where the person in the role of Division Commander operates.

A DCP could be a mobile point close to the fireground in a field command vehicle (FCV), or a building such as a Local Command Facility (LCF). A LCF has resources and facilities maintained to a level so it can be used as a DCP when required.

(Note: Municipal Emergency Coordination Centres (MECCs) has been deleted.)

SCC/RCC/ICC Contact List

State Control Centre	Level 4, 8 Nicholson St, East Melbourne 3002	Ph (03) 9032 3600 Fax 1300 134 488
Barwon South West		
Regional Control Centre		
Geelong	61–63 Separation St, North Geelong 3215	Ph (03) 5221 6667 Fax (03) 5240 2726
Incident Control Centres		
Casterton	147 Bahgallah Rd, Casterton 3311	Ph (03) 5554 2301 Fax (03) 5581 2151
Colac	83–85 Gellibrand St, Colac 3250	Ph (03) 5233 5565 Fax (03) 5233 5574
Geelong	90 Furner Ave, Bell Park 3215	Ph (03) 9256 7399 Fax (03) 9256 7367
Hamilton	915 Mt Napier Rd, Hamilton 3300	Ph (03) 5551 4700 Fax (03) 5571 1636
Heywood	12 Murray St, Heywood 3304	Ph (03) 5527 0444 Fax (03) 5527 1809
Warrnambool	113 Raglan Pde, Warrnambool 3280	Ph (03) 5559 2500 Fax (03) 5560 5296
Eastern Metropolitan		
Regional Control Centre		
Lilydale	18–22 Lakeview Dr, Lilydale 3140	Ph (03) 8739 1391 Fax (03) 8739 1382
Incident Control Centres		
Burnley	450 Burnley Street Richmond 3121	Ph (03) 9665 4545 Fax (03) 9429 1868
Ferntree Gully	27/69 Acacia Rd, Ferntree Gully 3156	Ph (03) 9751 5700 Fax (03) 9751 5705
Mulgrave	Unit 6, 3–5 Gilda Ct, Mulgrave 3170	Ph (03) 9256 7199
Woori Yallock	7–9 Symes Rd, Woori Yallock 3139	Ph (03) 5961 5917 Fax (03) 5964 7410

Gippsland		
Regional Control Centre		
Gippsland	Level 1, 181 Franklin St, Traralgon 3844	Ph (03) 5177 3240 Fax (03) 5177 3284
Incident Control Centres		
Bairnsdale	574 Main St, Bairnsdale 3875	Ph (03) 5150 1320 Fax (03) 5152 0444
Bendoc	2 Nichol St, Bendoc 3888	Ph (02) 6459 0508 Fax (02) 6459 0522
Cann River	Princes Highway, Cann River 3890	Ph (03) 5158 2154 Fax (03) 5154 6347
Ellinbank	1301 Hazeldean Rd, Ellinbank 3821	Ph (03) 5624 2222 Fax (03) 5624 2200
Erica	Thomson Valley Highway, Parkers Corner 3825	Ph (03) 5165 2200 Fax (03) 5165 2233
Heyfield	1 Firebrace Rd, Heyfield 3858	Ph (03) 5139 7756 Fax (03) 5139 7733
Leongatha	14A McCartin St, Leongatha 3953	Ph (03) 5667 1100 Fax (03) 5662 2408
Noojee	McCarthys Spur Rd, Noojee 3833	Ph (03) 5624 8100 Fax (03) 5228 9563
Orbost	171 - 173 Nicholson St, Orbost 3888	Ph (03) 5161 1333 Fax (03) 5161 1300
Sale	64–66 Foster St, Sale 3850	Ph (03) 5149 1201 Fax (03) 5144 5493
Swifts Creek	McMillan Ave, Swifts Creek 3896	Ph (03) 5159 5150 Fax (03) 5159 5155
Traralgon	Level 2, 181 Franklin St, Traralgon 3844	Ph (03) 5177 3200 Fax (03) 5176 3295
Yarram	310 Commercial Rd, Yarram 3971	Ph (03) 5183 9118 Fax (03) 5183 9122

Grampians		
Regional Control Centre		
Wendouree	19 Learmonth Rd, Wendouree 3355	Ph (03) 5330 9130 Fax (03) 5339 1462
Incident Control Centres		
Ararat	Laby St, Ararat 3377	Ph (03) 5352 0800 Fax (03) 5352 3049
Ballarat	25 Vickers St, Sebastopol 3356	Ph (03) 5335 0700 Fax (03) 5335 0731
Horsham	110 Natimuk Rd, Horsham 3400	Ph (03) 5362 0720 Fax (03) 5381 0268
Hume		
Regional Control Centre		
Hume	89 Sydney Rd, Benalla 3672	Ph (03) 5761 0724 Fax (03) 9562 7852
Incident Control Centres		
Alexandra	5 Binns MacRae Rd, Alexandra 3714	Ph (03) 5772 0200 Fax (03) 5772 2892
Benalla	64 Sydney Rd, Benalla 3672	Ph (03) 9256 7799 Fax (03) 9256 7767
Corryong	2 Jardine St Corryong 3707	Ph (02) 6076 3100 Fax (02) 6076 1348
Mansfield	128 Highett St, Mansfield 3722	Ph (03) 5733 1200 Fax (03) 5775 1063
Ovens	5338 Great Alpine Rd, Myrtleford 3736	Ph (03) 5731 1222 Fax (03) 5731 1223
Seymour	39 McIntyre St, Seymour 3660	Ph (03) 5735 3300 Fax (03) 5735 3381
Shepparton	195–205 Numurkah Rd, Shepparton 3630	Ph (03) 5822 9900 Fax (03) 5833 2483
Tallangatta	34 Towong St, Tallangatta 3700	Ph (02) 6071 5300 Fax (02) 6071 2889

Wangaratta	1 Ely St, Wangaratta 3677	Ph (03) 5720 2300 Fax (03) 5722 3021
Wodonga	55 Moorefield Park Drive, Wodonga 3690	Ph (02) 6043 4600 Fax (02) 6059 8210
Loddon Mallee		
Regional Control Centre		
Bendigo	Shop 3 Valentines Walk, 58 Queen St, Bendigo 3550	Ph (03) 5438 1100 Fax (03) 5836 2882
Incident Control Centres		
Bendigo	7 Taylor St (cnr Midland Hwy) Epsom 3551	Ph (03) 5430 4600 Fax (03) 5430 4677
Gisborne	Nexus Centre, L2, 12–14 Prince St Gisborne 3437	Ph (03) 5420 9200 Fax (03) 5420 9205
Mildura	308 - 390 Koorlong Ave, Irymple 3498	Ph (03) 5051 4336 Fax (03) 5051 4338
Swan Hill	120 Curlewis St, Swan Hill 3585	Ph (03) 5036 2800 Fax (03) 5036 2822
Northern and Western Metropolitan		
Regional Control Centre		
Melton	239 High St, Melton 3337	Ph (03) 8746 1400 Fax (03) 8746 1480
Incident Control Centres		
Kangaroo Ground	35 Kangaroo Ground-St, Andrews Rd, Kangaroo Ground 3097	Ph (03) 9712 0317 Fax (03) 9712 0145
Sunshine	239 Proximity Dr, Sunshine West 3020	Ph (03) 9256 7299 Fax (03) 9256 7267

Southern Metropolitan		
Regional Control Centre		
Dandenong	Level 3, Building G, 45 Assembly Dr, Dandenong South 3175	Ph (03) 9767 3840 Fax (03) 9767 7012
Incident Control Centres		
Dandenong	Level 3, Building G, 45 Assembly Dr, Dandenong South 3175	Ph (03) 9767 3800 Fax (03) 9767 7447