

# State Emergency Response Plan

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## Part 3: Emergency Management Manual Victoria



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**Acknowledgement:**

Some of the material contained within this Part builds on information contained within the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council's (AFAC), *Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS)*, 2005, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

Note: The information in this Part should not be used as a source of information about AIIMS. The material relating to AIIMS is reproduced with the permission of AFAC.

## 3.1 Introduction

Emergencies of varying magnitude are a common occurrence in Victoria, necessitating deployment of resources to counter the effects of, or threat from, the emergency. Many emergencies have significant social, economic and environmental consequences for communities, and ultimately for the State.

### Authority

The *Emergency Management Act 1986* provides a legislative basis for integrated and comprehensive prevention, response and recovery planning, involving preparedness, operational co-ordination and community participation, in relation to all hazards.

The State Emergency Response Plan, previously referred to as DISPLAN, is prepared under section 10(1) of the Act. The word 'DISPLAN' was originally the short title for the State Disaster Plan. The 1994 amendments to the Act generally replaced the term 'disaster' with 'emergency', and therefore in this manual the term 'emergency response' is used. The 2011 amendments to the Act replaced all references to 'DISPLAN' with 'State Emergency Response Plan'.

Under the Act, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services must arrange for the preparation and review of the State Emergency Response Plan. This responsibility is delegated to the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, who is the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator.

Section 4A of the Act defines response as the combating of emergencies and the provision of rescue and immediate relief services.

The term 'agency' in this manual has the same meaning as defined in the Act, and means a government or a non-government agency.

### Purposes and Scope of the State Emergency Response Plan (SERP)

The State Emergency Response Plan identifies the organisational arrangements for managing the response to emergencies within, or with the potential to affect, 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 State Emergency Response Plan, in conjunction with the State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan, (Part 4 of this Manual) set the strategic framework for preparedness, planning and emergency operations in Victoria.

The State Emergency Response Plan is part of a broader emergency management framework and should be read in conjunction with the other parts of this Manual.

In particular, section 15 of the Act requires the State Emergency Response Plan to contain certain provisions, which have been included in other parts of this Manual. Those provisions and the Manual references are detailed in the following table.

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<b><i>Emergency Management Act 1986</i></b>	<b>Manual Ref.</b>
Identify the agency primarily responsible for responding to each form of emergency (Control Agency), s.15(a)	Part 7 (pp. 7-1 to 7-4)
Specify the roles of agencies in the event of an emergency, s.15(c)	Part 7 (pp. 7-12 to 7-80)
Define regions for the purposes of section 13 (regional and municipal district emergency response co-ordinators), s.15(e)	Part 8, Appendix 8 (pp. 8-28 to 8-30)

## Principles of Response Planning and Operational Management

The Victorian Government's approach to the management of any emergency, consistent with the philosophy adopted Australia-wide, is to ensure that:

- agencies, which are trained and equipped to provide a particular emergency response service, respond; and
- responding agencies are co-ordinated in their activities to counter the effects of the emergency and to meet the immediate needs of affected, or potentially affected, people and the impacts upon the community as a whole.

These arrangements are used in the response to an emergency, regardless of the size of the emergency, and regardless of how many agencies respond. As the impact of the emergency escalates, the response expands in accordance with:

- The State Emergency Response Plan (this document)
- The plans of participating agencies, and
- Other specific plans which apply to the situation.

Victoria's emergency management arrangements are in effect at all times and do not require specific, formal activation.

The Incident Controller (as defined in section 3.5) undertakes initial and ongoing assessments of the emergency and applies resources as necessary using the arrangements.

The Incident Controller considers the current and potential impacts and consequences of an emergency, and advises the relevant response support agencies, relief and recovery agencies as well as the Emergency Response Co-ordinator as soon as possible.

An important aspect of the response to an emergency is the provision of community information. Where the consequences of an emergency have the potential to impact communities, informing communities must be a high priority of responding agencies.

The protection of life must be the main priority when agencies are responding to an emergency: this principle cannot be overstated.

## Early Engagement of Relief and Recovery Arrangements

The protection of life must be the main priority when managing emergencies. Controllers must recognise from the onset of an emergency that individuals and communities may be affected. Controllers at all

levels must ensure early integration of relief and recovery managers and coordinators in the management of the emergency.

### 3.2 Response Preparedness

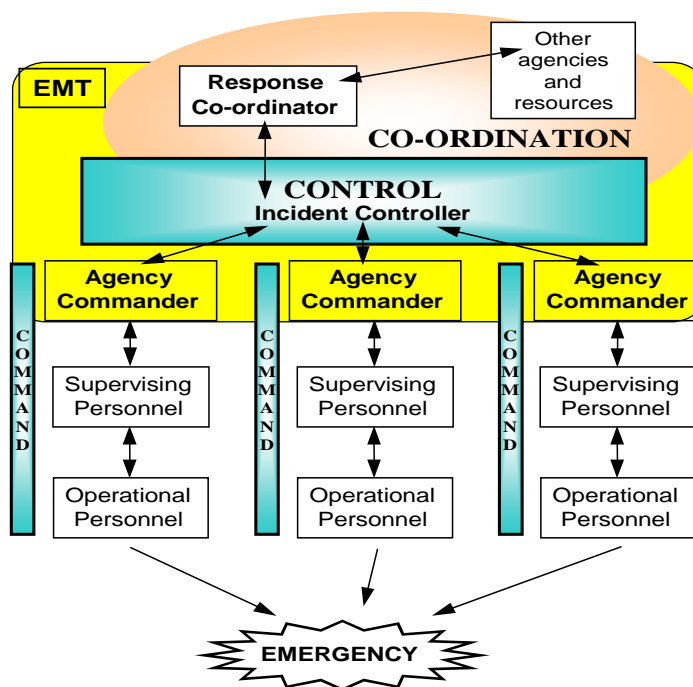
Some specific-purpose multi-agency response plans exist. These plans are listed in Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual, and should be read in conjunction with the State Emergency Response Plan.

In the event that an element of any other emergency response plan contradicts this plan, the State Emergency Response Plan (this plan) shall take precedence.

### 3.3 Response Management Arrangements – General

#### Introduction

The response 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. Response management is based on the three key management tasks of command, control and co-ordination. The command, control and co-ordination functions are discussed in greater detail in the following sections, and illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.



**Figure 3.1: Emergency Response Management Arrangements - Demonstrating Command, Control, Co-ordination and the Emergency Management Team.**

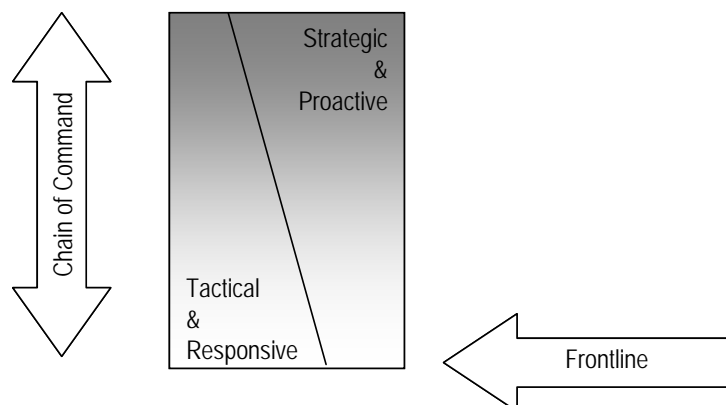
## Command and Control Overview

The purpose of this section is to provide the structure, philosophies and arrangements for command and control of emergencies. The command and control arrangements are applicable to localised emergencies, requiring only local resources, through to an emergency, or group of emergencies, of state-wide significance.

Agencies involved in emergency response operate within a framework of cooperation and support and they must also acknowledge and accept the accountability of their roles to the Victorian community and to other agencies. This requires agencies to adopt functions-based incident management systems together with a scalable chain-of-command (organisational hierarchy) management structure and key decision making points (command/control points). These matters are discussed below.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Controllers and Commanders

In accordance with the scalability of emergency response, the focus of activity changes for controllers and commanders at the three tiers of management. The higher a person is within a chain-of-command the greater is their focus upon strategic and proactive emergency management.



## 3.4 Response Management Arrangements – Command

Command involves the direction of personnel and resources of an agency in the performance of that organisation's role and tasks. Authority to command is established in legislation or by agreement within an agency. Command relates to agencies and operates vertically within an agency.

The term '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 with accountability.

Where there are agreed, pre-existing arrangements, a functional commander can direct personnel and resources of more than one agency in accordance with those arrangements.



## Principles of Command

1. The structure is scalable.
2. The span of control ranges between 1:3 to 1:7.
3. A chain-of-command for an incident response is identifiable and extends from the frontline up to the highest level of command appropriate for the emergency.
4. Operators at all levels keep the next appropriate level apprised of the agency response.
5. Whilst remaining apart from the chain of command at the lower levels, managers remain accountable for the agency response and the activities of subordinates.
6. Agencies have a pre-existing management structure in place which supports a chain of command during emergency response.
7. Agencies have protocols which provide for timely and efficient communications within their agency and to other agencies.
8. People assigned tasks, roles or functions will have the capability to perform the assignment.
9. Agencies will utilise predictive information and intelligence, such as weather reports, to implement pre-planned response arrangements for anticipated emergencies as appropriate.

## 3.5 Response Management Arrangements – Control

### Introduction

Control involves the overall direction of response activities in an emergency. Authority for control is established in legislation or in an emergency response plan, and carries with it the responsibility for tasking other agencies in accordance with the needs of the situation. Control relates to situations and operates horizontally across agencies.

Emergency response agencies are designated, in respect of particular types of emergencies, as either control or support agencies. An agency may also be both a control agency and a support agency under different circumstances. (Refer Part 7 of this Manual)

### Principles of Control

1. A single agency must be appointed as the control agency at each emergency.
2. During the course of the emergency response the control agency may change depending upon the circumstances. Handover of control must be made to the appropriate agency representative, be formal in nature and the details of the handover must be noted.
3. If it is unclear which agency will be in control at any incident the responding agencies should determine the control agency by agreement. In the absence of an agreement the Emergency Response Coordinator will determine the control agency.
4. A Controller is responsible for providing direction to all agencies deployed in an emergency response.
5. A Controller appointed to a tier of emergency response management, either incident site, regional/area-of-operations or state, exercises the control function at that tier. The extent to which they exercise control is determined by the complexity and scale of the incident or incidents.

## Control Agency

A control agency is defined as the agency nominated to control the response activities for a specified type of emergency. During the course of response to an emergency the control agency may change, depending on the circumstances.

Part 7 of this Manual contains a table of control agencies for specific emergencies, in accordance with section 15(a) of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*.

Sections 16-16C of the Act contains specific legislative provisions regarding the determination of the control agency and controllers for major fires, fires and other emergencies.

### Appointment of Controller

Depending on the scale of the emergency, a controller may be appointed for each tier of control, i.e. State, Regional or Incident, (refer to Tiers of Control, p. 3-8 below).

A controller is usually a member of a control agency appointed by that agency to have overall responsibility for emergency response operations. The control agency may also appoint any number of assistant controllers.

A controller may also be appointed by statute (refer to Control of Major Fires below).

Sections 16B or 16C of the Act provides authority for the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator, or delegate, to advise or direct the control agency regarding the appointment of the controller and/or assistant controllers.

### Control of Fires other than Major Fires

The control agency for a fire, other than a major fire, is initially determined by the area of the State in which the fire commences.

Section 16BA of the Act provides authority for the chief officers, or delegates, to agree to appoint an officer of any of the fire services to take overall control of response to the fire in any area of the State. In practice, this applies at the Incident tier.

In the absence of agreement between the fire services agencies, the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator, or delegate, may direct a chief officer to appoint a chief officer or another officer to have the overall control of the response activities for the fire.

A controller for a fire may appoint one or more assistant controllers, or transfer the control of any response activity to one or more other persons.

This section enables mutual aid arrangements between the fire services.

### Control of Major Fires

The response arrangements for a major fire differ from those for other fires. Pursuant to s. 16 of the Act, the Fire Services Commissioner has overall control of response activities in relation to a major fire anywhere in the State, whether it is burning, may occur or has occurred.

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The term 'major fire' is defined by reference to the *Fire Services Commissioner Act 2010*. A major fire is a large or complex fire (however caused) which:

- 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 fire services agencies to suppress the fire; or
- Will, if not suppressed, burn for more than one day.

A major fire need only be one of these things to meet the description of a 'major fire' under the Act.

The Fire Services Commissioner, or delegate, is the State Controller for response to a major fire. This is an enduring statutory appointment recognising that a major fire will always activate the State tier of control.

While the Fire Services Commissioner is the State Controller for response to a major fire, s. 16 envisages that there will be a high level of co-ordination between the Fire Services Commissioner, the chief officers (and other officers) of the fire services and the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator.

Section 16 of the Act empowers the chief officers of the fire services to transfer overall control of response activities to the Fire Services Commissioner if the chief officer considers that the fire has or has the potential to become a major fire.

Section 16 of the Act also provides authority for the Fire Services Commissioner to appoint an officer of one of the fire services to be the State Controller for a major fire. Any number of assistant controllers may also be appointed. The Fire Services Commissioner may also transfer control of any response activity to other persons without a specific appointment being made.

The State Emergency Response Co-ordinator, or delegate, may advise or direct a chief officer of a fire services agency to transfer overall control of response activities to the Fire Services Commissioner if the fire has become, or has the potential to become, a major fire. (s. 16B)

The chief officers of the fire services, or the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator may nominate an alternative State Controller for a major fire if the Fire Services Commissioner, or delegate, is unavailable.

### **Control of Emergencies other than Fires**

The officer in charge or the senior officer of the control agency may determine the priority of the response roles, either during or in anticipation of an emergency.

Section 16C of the Act provides authority for the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator, or delegate, to appoint the control agency if there is uncertainty.

The officer in charge of the control agency may transfer the control of any response activity to another agency, with the consent of that agency.

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Any number of controllers or assistant controllers may also be appointed.

### **Essential Service Disruption**

Control agencies for essential (or other) service disruptions are all State Government departments or agencies, noting that most resources for response to a disruption are located within each industry sector itself. The industry participants are identified as support agencies. If a disruption is not being resolved effectively by support/other agencies (e.g. the essential service providers) under plans and procedures for dealing with such situations, the specified control agency will take ultimate responsibility, within the powers available to it, to resolve the situation.

### **Support Agency**

A support agency is defined as an agency which provides services, personnel or material to support or assist:

- a control agency; or
- another support agency; or
- persons affected by an emergency.

Part 7 of this Manual contains a table of support agencies for various support services.

For the purposes of the State Emergency Response Plan, and where not specified, relief and recovery agencies are support agencies during the response to an emergency. A recovery commander may be appointed, at the discretion of the Regional Recovery Coordinator (Department of Human Services), to represent all relief and/or recovery agencies in the Emergency Management Team. (Refer Emergency Management Team, p. 3-20 below)

### **Tiers of Control**

There are three tiers of incident control applicable for emergency response in Victoria. They are:

- State
- Regional
- Incident

The principal responsibilities of all controllers are detailed separately and additional responsibilities for each tier of control are listed under those respective headings. (Refer Controller's Principal Accountabilities, p. 3-10 below)

### **Establishing a State, Regional and/or Area-of-Operations Control Structure**

The three tiers of incident control are established to guide agencies to provide commonality to emergency response and to multi-agency understanding. The incident control tiers also contribute to determining the establishment of the next tier control points where appropriate.

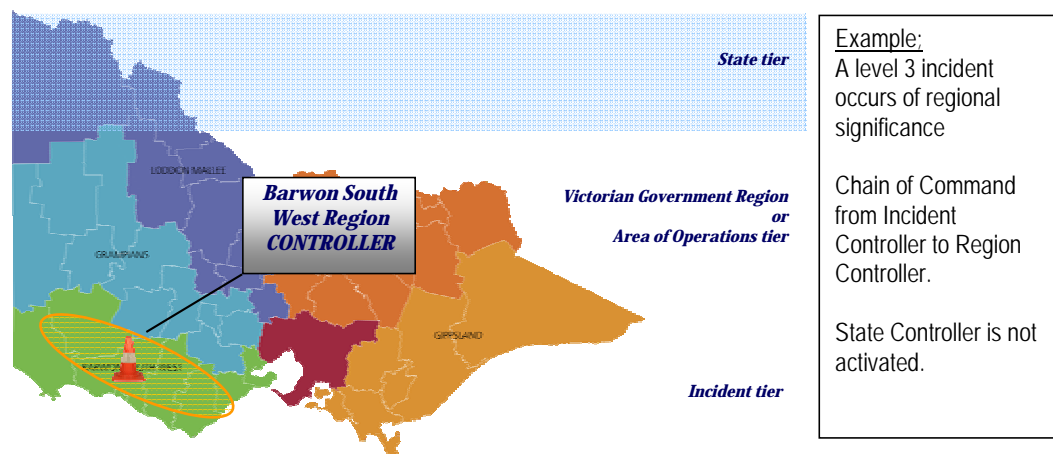
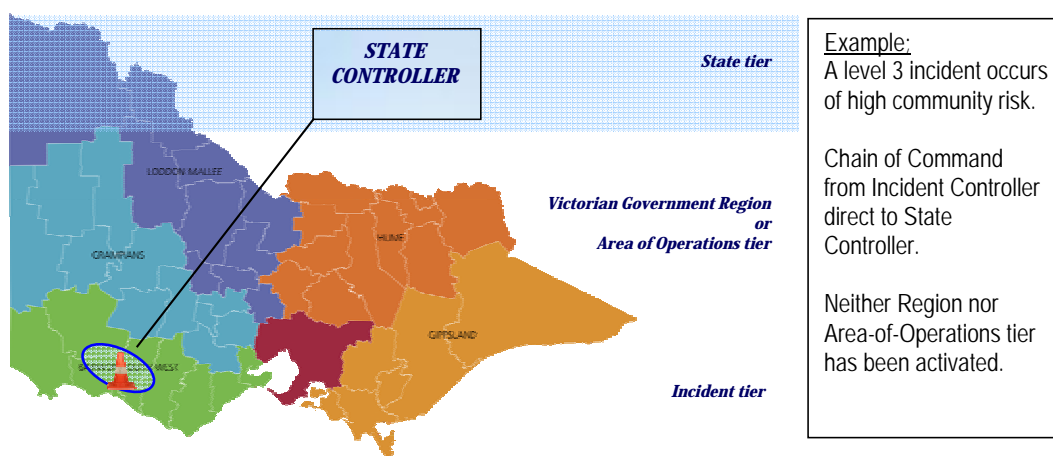
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The three tiers of agency command and/or control are shown in the table below.

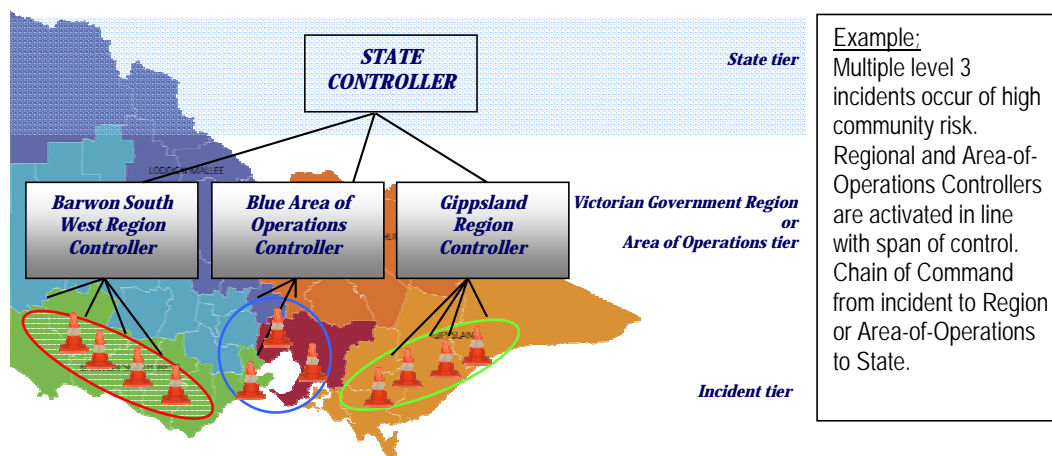
Preparation	Response and Recovery
State	State
Regional	Regional or Area of Operations
Municipal	Incident

A Region is one of the defined Victorian Government Regions (for details, refer to Appendix 8, Part 8 of this Manual). An Area of Operations is a geographic area defined to contain an incident or group of incidents which may correlate in effect or in the deployment and allocation of resources. If an Area of Operations is defined it should be given an identification name.

Agencies will assess the triggers for escalation as explained below. The following diagrams show examples of multi-tier control structures and their triggers.



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### Triggers for the Appointment of Controllers

The following situations would trigger the appointment of a State Controller<sup>1</sup>, Regional and/or Areas-of-Operations Controllers for relevant control agencies:

- Forecast of extreme weather within the forecast period
- Intelligence or information of any anticipated large scale emergency affecting life or property
- Situations that involve or are likely to involve one or more of:
  - Multiple incident management teams (complexes of incidents)
  - Depletion of agency resources
  - A significant impact to life, property or the environment
  - Interstate deployment of resources
  - An emergency of significant complexity or consequence.

Each agency must assess the factors that will determine their level of deployment and the related emergency management structure. In some circumstances it will be appropriate to activate pre-planned response arrangements in preparation or anticipation of certain events, such as extreme weather.

### Controller's Principal Accountabilities

The Controller's principal accountabilities include:

- overall responsibility for the management of all response activities (including health response) undertaken to respond to an emergency
- notification of support agencies

<sup>1</sup> This does not apply to major fires (refer to Control of Major Fires, p. 3-7 above)

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- notifying relief and recovery agencies through the Recovery Commander (if appointed) or the recovery coordinator
- management of the interaction with support agencies responding to an emergency, including those organisations who are not part of the emergency service framework
- management of the interaction with agencies, communities and people affected by, or likely to be affected by an emergency
- forming and leading an Incident Management Team and an Emergency Management Team
- implementation of the control agency's incident management system
- the collection, analysis and dissemination of information regarding the emergency (including use of the Rapid Impact Assessment process)
- undertaking a dynamic risk assessment to identify operational risks and implementing risk treatments. Systematic risk assessment may be part of the planning process
- development of a plan (Incident Action Plan) of incident management objectives and strategies
- lead multi agency response planning
- ensuring effective communication between the control structures
- undertaking initial and ongoing assessments of the emergency and applies resources as necessary using the arrangements
- considers the current and potential impacts and consequences of an emergency on the community and advises the Recovery Commander or recovery coordinator and Emergency Response Co-ordinator as soon as possible
- developing strategies to provide community information and community warnings if required
- issuing timely information and warnings to the community and support agencies
- ensuring consideration is given to evacuation of affected community and agencies
- facilitating media management
- ensuring the Recovery Commander or the Recovery Co-ordinator (or representative) is engaged in the Emergency Management Team and that a decision is made as to when relief services (including establishment of relief centres) should be established
- ensuring the Recovery Commander or the Recovery Co-ordinator (or representative) is engaged in the Emergency Management Team to raise recovery considerations and that transition planning is commenced.

## State Controller

The role of the State Controller is to provide strategic leadership for the resolution of emergencies at the highest level, and where there may be significant political or economic impact. This role is generally performed by a senior operational person from the control agency, or by the Fire Services Commissioner. Where there is more than one State Controller appointed at any one time, for example when there are multiple disparate emergencies occurring concurrently, the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator will take action to ensure effective control and coordination across all the emergencies (refer to page 3-25 for more detail on the role and powers of the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator).

The State Controller's specific responsibilities are to:

- take charge and provide strategic leadership for the response to emergencies across Victoria within the control agency's responsibility
- give directions to Controllers at Regional, Area of Operations or incident levels (as relevant and activated)
- ensure there is a control structure to suit the circumstances, including defining areas of operations if necessary
- establish the State Emergency Management Team
- ensure that current and emerging risks, or threats, are identified and that proactive response strategies are implemented
- ensure the timely flow of information to the:
  - Community
  - Victorian Government (see page 3-27)
  - State Emergency Management Team
  - State Emergency Response Co-ordinator
  - State Emergency Response Officer
  - State Recovery Coordinator, and
  - Other support and stakeholder agencies
- issue warnings to the community if the Regional, Area of Operations or Incident level controllers are unable to do so in a timely manner
- ensure that relief arrangements have been considered and implemented where required.

## Strategic Control Priorities

The State Controllers have identified strategic control priorities to provide clear direction from the State Controller to Regional Controllers and Incident Controllers on the key strategic priorities that must be considered and actioned during the management of any significant or complex emergency. The intent is to minimise the impacts of emergencies and enable affected communities to focus on their recovery as early as practicable.



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The priorities focus on the primacy of life and issuing of community warnings and information to assist people make informed decisions about their safety, and to communicate other priorities including the protection of property, economies and the environment.

The strategic control priorities underpin the planning and operational decisions made by Regional Controllers and Incident Controllers when managing the response to emergencies. In addition to being best practice, they are supported by the statutory obligations for each agency.

The priorities are, but not limited to:

- 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 support 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

Response agencies may formulate a strategic statement of intent based on the control priorities and local factors.

### **Regional and/or Area-of-Operations Controller**

The role of the Regional Controller is to provide leadership and management across a series of emergency sites within a Victorian government region. The Regional Controller may be appointed by the State Controller or self-initiated prior to State level Control being established.

Where there is more than one Regional Controller appointed at any one time, for example when there are multiple disparate emergencies occurring concurrently within a Region, the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator will take action to ensure effective control and coordination across all the emergencies.

An Area of Operations Controller provides leadership and management across a series of incident sites within a defined area of operations. The Area-of-Operations Controller will be appointed by the State Controller, in consultation with Regional Controller(s) if in place. The Area of Operations Controller reports directly to the State Controller.

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The Regional and/or Area-of-Operations Controller's responsibilities include:

- carry out the directions of the State Controller (if operating)
- take charge and provide leadership for the resolution of emergencies across a designated area of operations at regional level
- give directions to Incident Controllers as necessary
- establish the Regional or Area-of-Operations Emergency Management Team
- support and ensure relief arrangements have been considered for each emergency and implemented where required
- ensure the timely flow of information to the:
  - Community
  - Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator
  - State Emergency Response Officer
  - Regional Recovery Co-ordinator, and
  - Other stakeholder agencies
- issue warnings to the community if the Incident Controller is unable to do so in a timely manner
- monitor and continually assess the control agency Regional or Area of Operations structure throughout the emergency
- continually assess the performance and structure of the emergency response and resolve identified issues
- ensure Incident Controllers have appropriate resources to achieve their task
- identify current and emerging risks, threats and opportunities
- intervene when appropriate.

## Incident Controller

The role of the Incident Controller is to provide leadership and management to resolve the emergency at the incident site. This is the agency forward controller and operates in close proximity to the incident.

The responsibilities of the Incident Controller include:

- carry out the directions of the Regional or Area of Operations Controller within the line of control (if operating)
- take charge and provide leadership for the resolution of the emergency at the incident site – including directing support agency commanders or EMLOs
- establish a control structure to suit the circumstances
- establish the Incident Management Team
- establish the Emergency Management Team

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- initiate relief arrangements ( if required)
- ensure the timely flow of information to the:
  - Community
  - Agency chain of command
  - Emergency Response Co-ordinator
  - Municipal Recovery Manager/Regional Recovery Coordinator
  - Other stakeholder agencies
- issue warnings to the community
- monitor and continually assess the control agency incident structure
- continually assess the performance of the emergency response at the incident site
- ensure subordinates have appropriate resources to achieve their task
- identify risks and mitigation opportunities.

### **Support Agency Commanders' Roles and Responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities for support agency commanders at all tiers of control are substantially similar to those of the control agency and include:

- supporting the directions of the Controller within the line of control
- taking charge and providing leadership of agency resources ensuring they are focused on supporting the control agency to resolve the incident
- establishing a command structure to suit the circumstances
- participating in the Incident Emergency Management Team
- ensuring the timely flow of information to the:
  - Controller
  - Emergency Response Coordinator
  - Recovery coordinator/Manager
- supporting the control agency's incident management structure
- ensuring subordinates have appropriate resources to achieve their task
- identifying risks and opportunities.

### **Health Commander's Role**

The Health Commander is a senior ambulance manager (unless otherwise appointed by the State Health Incident Coordinator) who oversees and, where appropriate, directs the operational health response to a major incident within Victoria. This person has the authority and

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experience to make decisions on delivering the health incident management objectives.

The Health Commander has two key roles:

- establish and coordinate a Health Incident Management Team (HIMT) to direct the emergency health response
- represent the HIMT on the Emergency Management Team (EMT).

## **Incident Management System (IMS)**

This is a system used by agencies undertaking their management responsibilities in response to an emergency. An Incident Management System is not a fixed set of rules, but rather a flexible and dynamic methodology which can cater for an escalation or change in the severity of any emergency.

The system is established by a response agency and will involve use of personnel for the various functions which may need to be individually managed in dealing with the emergency. Incident management functions might include, but are not limited to:

- Control
- Planning
- Operations
- Logistics
- Intelligence
- Public Information
- Investigation
- Finance
- Administration
- Safety Officer/Adviser.

All agencies must be in a position to implement an effective incident management system in response to an emergency, which may involve multiple agencies pooling their resources within a single incident management system.

All Incident Management Systems used must be based upon three key principles:

- management by objectives
- functional management
- effective span of control.

The management functions are considered at each tier of decision making within the emergency response structure, i.e. Incident, Regional/Area of Operations and State. Where possible, agencies should seek to integrate their incident management systems with those of the other agencies at all activated tiers of management.

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To assist in identifying functional officers, tabards are worn and colour coded as follows:

Function	Tabard Colour
State ERC	Grey
Control	White
Planning	Yellow
Public Information	Brown
Investigation	Purple
Logistics	Blue
Operations	Red
Intelligence	Orange
Safety	Yellow and black

For significant emergencies, the public information function will be one of the earliest functions to be established with that function reporting directly to the Incident Controller/Commander.

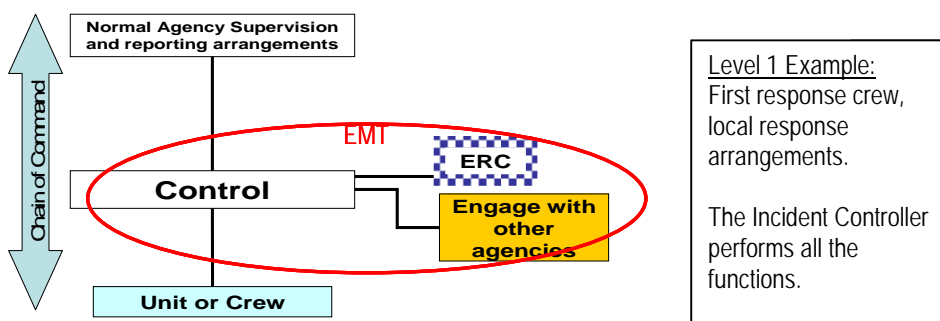
### Incident Management Levels

There are three classifications of emergency response relevant to an Incident Management System (IMS), as follows:

**Level 1** - characterised by being able to be resolved through the use of local or initial response resources only. In a Level 1 emergency response, the major function is operations to resolve the emergency. Control is limited to the immediate area, and therefore, the operations function can usually be carried out by the Incident Controller.

The Incident Controller considers which other functions need to be undertaken, e.g. Planning, Operations, Logistics, information etc.

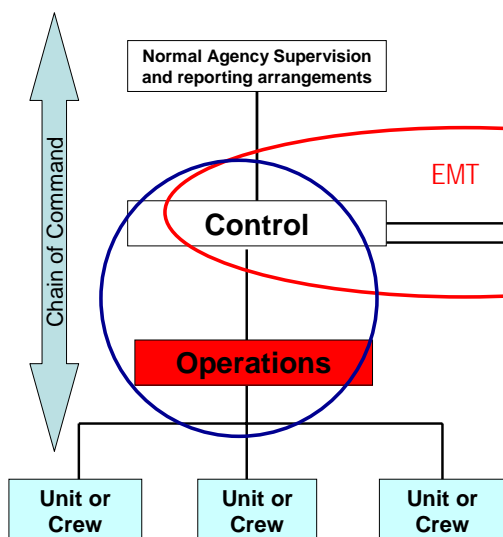
As the scale and complexity is relatively minor, the other IMS functions will generally be undertaken concurrently by the Incident Controller.



**Level 2** - More complex emergency response, either in size, resources or risk. Level 2 response is characterised by the need for:

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

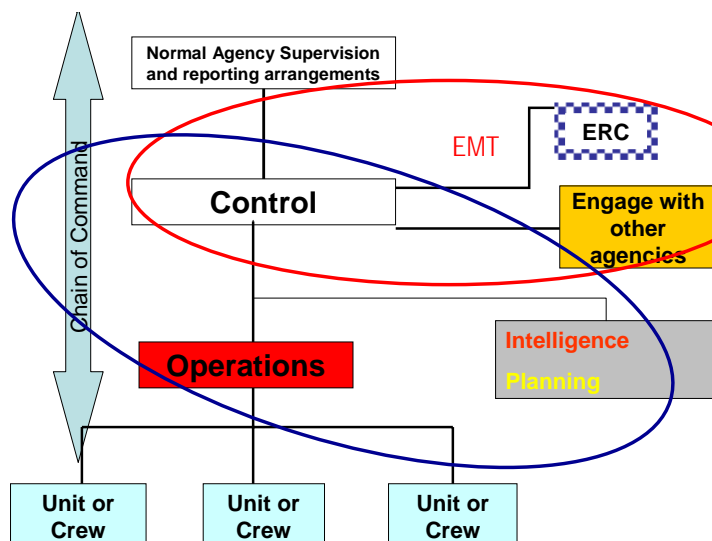
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Level 2 Example:

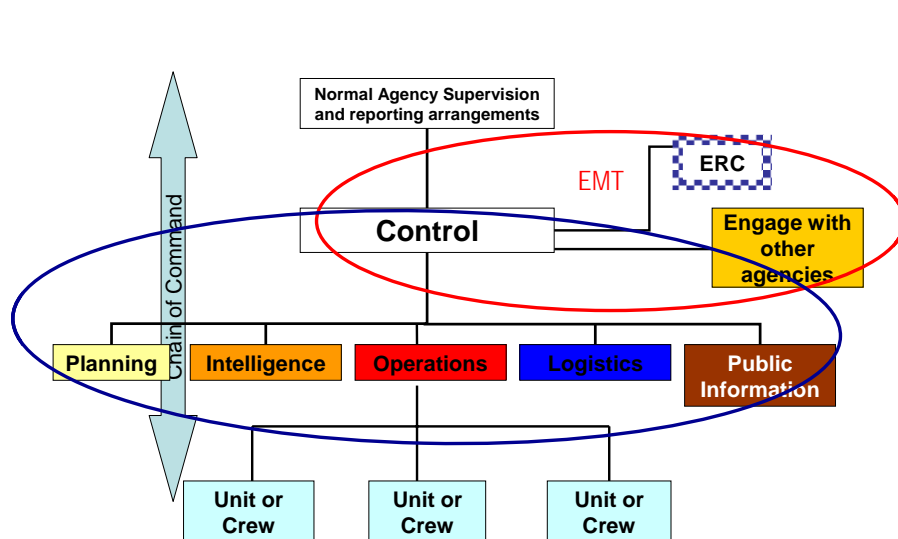
Operations function has been delegated resulting in an IMT of two.

The Controller performs all the remaining functions.



Level 2 Example:

The Incident Controller has retained the functions of Investigations, Logistics & Public Information and delegated Operations to one Officer and Planning/ Intelligence to another.

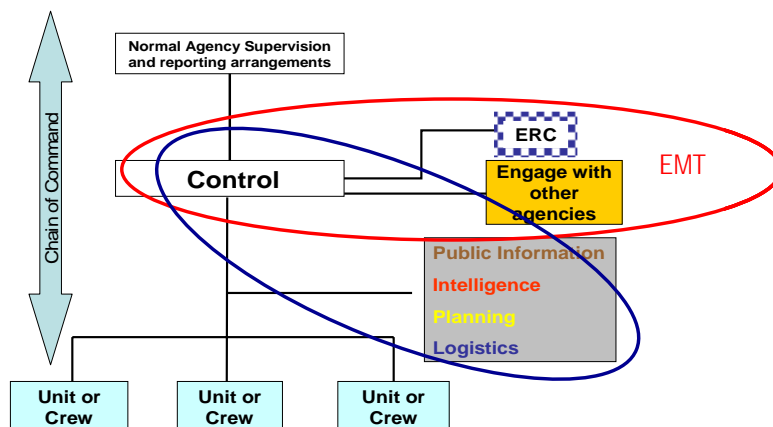


Level 2 Example:

The Incident Controller has determined that investigation is not a function of this incident response.

All functions other than Control are delegated.

Part 3 - State Emergency Response Plan

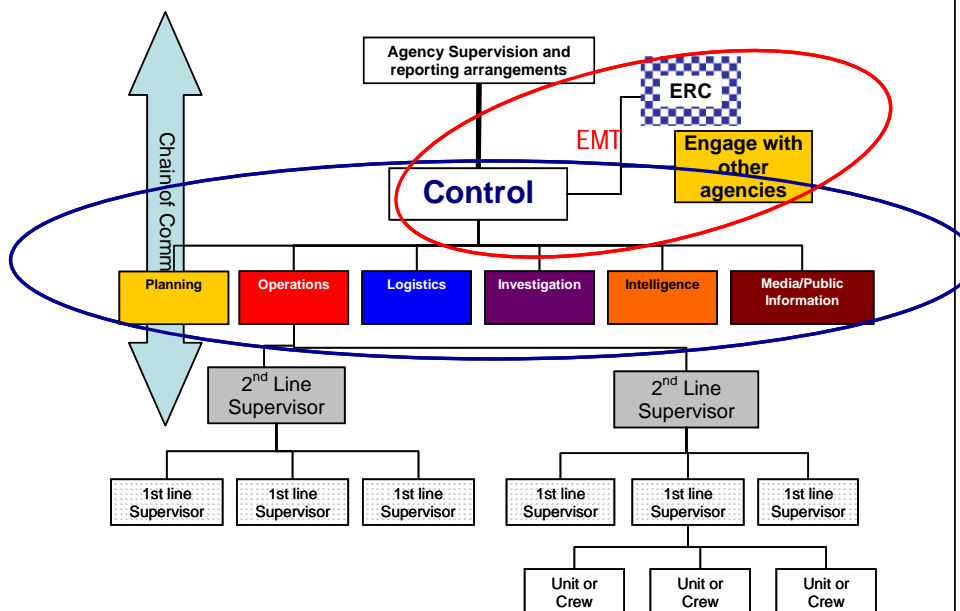


Level 2 Example:

The Incident Controller has decided to retain Operations and has delegated the remaining functions

The Incident Controller appoints another officer to perform Public Information, Intelligence, Planning, Logistics & Investigation resulting in an IMT of two.

**Level 3** - Characterised by degrees of complexity that may require a more substantial establishment for management of the situation. These emergencies will usually involve delegation of all incident management functions.



Level 3 Example:

The Incident Controller has delegated all of the functions other than Control resulting in an IMT of seven.

Lower level structures are established in accordance with span of control and agency terminology.

**Incident Management Team (IMT)**

An Incident Management Team comprises the people carrying out the IMS functions to support the Incident Controller, or agency commander, in discharging his responsibilities in response to an emergency. The Incident Management Team operates whether or not agencies other than the control agency are involved in response to an emergency.

## Emergency Management Team (EMT)

The Emergency Management Team comprises:

- Incident Controller
- Support Agency commanders (or their representatives)
- Health Commander (functional commander of supporting health agencies)
- Recovery Commander (if appointed) or the recovery coordinator (or representative)
- Emergency Response Co-ordinator (or representative), and
- Other specialist persons as required.

The function of an Emergency Management Team is to support the Incident Controller in determining and implementing appropriate incident management strategies for the emergency.

The following information should be read in conjunction with the Practice Note *Emergency Management Team*, referenced in Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual, which explains in detail the functions and responsibilities of an Emergency Management Team.

If an emergency requires a response by more than one agency, the Incident, Region, Area of Operations or State Controller is responsible for forming an Emergency Management Teams at their respective tiers.

Although the Emergency Management Team facilitates a collaborative decision making process, strategic management/allocation of response agency resources, with the primary intent of unity and purpose of effort, the Incident Controller leads the team and retains control of the emergency.

The Emergency Management Team will identify one or more control strategies and agency or functional commanders may be tasked by the Controller with a strategy or strategies to implement, or requested by the Controller to provide resources in support of those strategies. Support agency commanders shall then implement the strategy, or strategies through their respective command structures, and report back to the Controller as to the success or otherwise of the strategy or strategies.

The effective operation of an Emergency Management Team relies heavily upon communication between agencies.

The importance of an effective Emergency Management Team to the successful management of an emergency cannot be overstated.

The terminology used for Emergency Management Teams for each control tier is:

- State EMT
- Regional EMT and/or Area-of-Operations EMT
- Incident EMT.

An EMT will be established by every controller in a multi-agency response or by the Control Agency or Emergency Response Co-ordinator (ERC) in preparation for an anticipated emergency (e.g. code red days). In the event that there are multiple disparate emergencies, the EMT should be chaired by the ERC.



*Part 3 - State Emergency Response Plan***Area of Operations Emergency Management Team**

In the event that an Area of Operations has been defined, the Control Agency at Area-of-Operations level, or the Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator (or representative) may convene the Area of Operations Emergency Management Team, comprising regional level representatives from response, recovery and other agencies.

The Area of Operations Emergency Management Team should be chaired by a representative of the control agency and provide the following functions:

- facilitate a discussion to enable agencies to develop a consistent situational awareness regarding the emergency(s) affecting the defined area of operations
- identify risks and consequences
- facilitate the State Controller's Plan (if State Control activated)
- develop an Area of Operations Plan outlining regional level actions of all agencies
- Maintain a log and keep an audit trail.

**State Emergency Management Team (SEMT)**

In the event of a significant emergency anticipated, or occurring, involving a multi-agency response, the State Controller (or representative) or the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator (or delegate/representative) may form the State Emergency Management Team, comprising senior representatives from response, recovery and other agencies.

The State Emergency Management Team should be chaired by the State Controller (or delegate/representative) and provide the following function:

- facilitate a discussion to enable agencies to develop a consistent situational awareness regarding the emergency(s)
- identify and manage strategic risks and consequences
- develop a plan outlining high level actions of all agencies.

**Facilities Utilised to Enable / Support Emergency Response (Command and Control)**

To aid effective emergency preparedness and response, agencies should determine the need to establish facilities from which site, Region/Area of Operations, and State-level functions can be carried out.

Accordingly, response agencies should provide appropriate physical and technical infrastructure to support those personnel appointed as Incident Controllers, Agency Commanders, and representatives of the organisations that support them.

Any centre established for this purpose shall be named based on the function it supports, e.g. control centre, command centre, operation centres.

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In addition to the above, if intelligence (e.g. weather forecasts) suggests a serious emergency is imminent, consideration should be given to activation of these facilities to monitor impacts in the potentially affected area.

The level of activation of a facility ranges from a single workstation to a full centre facility and is escalated according to the nature and level of the emergency.

At a State level of control, specific facilities are established, such as the State Control Centre (SCC), State Police Operations Centre (SPOC) or the State Emergency Support Centre (SESC).

### 3.6 Response Management Arrangements – Co-ordination

#### Introduction

Co-ordination involves the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective response to and recovery from emergencies. The main functions of co-ordination are:

- to ensure effective control has been established and maintained in response to an emergency
- ensuring effective information sharing, and
- the systematic acquisition and allocation of resources in accordance with the requirements imposed by emergencies.

Co-ordination operates throughout the management of response, including immediate relief, and recovery activities. The Department of Human Services is the co-ordination agency for relief and recovery.

#### Co-ordination Role of Victoria Police

In addition to its role as control or support agency in certain emergencies, Victoria Police has the responsibility under the *Emergency Management Act 1986* for emergency response co-ordination at municipal, regional and state level for most emergencies. Emergency Response Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring the co-ordination of the activities of agencies having roles or responsibilities in response to emergencies, with the exception of emergencies involving defence force ships or aircraft.

Where Victoria Police also has a command or control function at an emergency, the co-ordination role, wherever possible, should be performed by a person separate from the command or control function.

Section 13(2) of the Act provides, in some extreme circumstances, for control of all resources during an emergency to be under the direction of the relevant emergency response co-ordinator (municipal, regional or State). This would include the situation where the control agency has failed or is incapable of properly managing the emergency response. (See also ss. 16B and 16C).

*Part 3 - State Emergency Response Plan***Principal Roles of Emergency Response Co-ordinators**

Emergency Response Co-ordinators at all levels are accountable to:

- ensure that the appropriate control and support agencies are in attendance - or have been notified by the incident controller and are responding to an emergency
- ensure that effective control has been established by the control agency in responding to an emergency
- in consultation with the Incident Controller, ensure an Emergency Management Team has been formed or in absence of incident controller form an Emergency Management Team
- ensure the effective co-ordination of resources and services having regard to the provisions of section 13(2) of the Act, which empowers co-ordinators to give directions to all relevant agencies concerning the allocation of resources in responding to an emergency
- arrange for the provision of resources requested by control and support agencies
- ensure allocation of resources on a priority basis
- in the event of uncertainty, determine which agency is to perform its statutory response role within a region or other specified area, where more than one agency is empowered to perform that role
- ensure the recovery coordinator has been notified by the incident controller of the emergency
- ensure timely information and warnings are provided to the community and support agencies by the control agency
- consider registration of persons evacuated or otherwise affected
- consider provision of relief needs to evacuees and agency personnel where necessary and advise the recovery coordinator of requirements
- in consultation with the control agency, consider the need for declaration of an emergency area
- co-operate with all participating agencies and authorities.

**Levels of Co-ordination****Field Emergency Response Co-ordinator (FERC)**

The Field Emergency Response Co-ordinator is usually the senior member of Victoria Police at the initial scene of an emergency. This role usually relates to the first response to an emergency, and the person fulfilling the role may change in seniority as the emergency escalates or de-escalates.

The Field Emergency Response Co-ordinator is responsible for performing the principal role of the Emergency Response Co-ordinator.

## **Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator (MERC)**

The State Emergency Response Co-ordinator appoints, for each municipal district (Local Government Area), a member of the Victoria Police as Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator. The Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator must sit on the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee. Appendix 8, Part 8 of this Manual has a list of all municipal districts.

In the response to an emergency, the roles, responsibilities and duties of a Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator are, in addition to the principal roles of an Emergency Response Co-ordinator, to:

- ensure the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer is advised of the emergency, and available to provide access to municipal resources if required
- ensure the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer is receiving information as appropriate
- attend at the Municipal Emergency Co-ordination Centre, if activated, and
- advise the Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator regarding emergencies which have the potential to require supplementary resources from outside the municipal district.

## **Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator (RERC)**

The State Emergency Response Co-ordinator appoints, for each Victorian Government region, a commissioned officer of police as Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator may from time to time appoint deputies. Appendix 8, Part 8 of this Manual identifies the municipal districts within each response region. The Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator or his/her representative chairs the Regional Emergency Response Planning Committee. Terms of reference and membership are set out in Part 5 of this Manual.

In addition to the primary roles of co-ordinator, the response roles, responsibilities and duties of the Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator are:

- responsible to the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator for the effective co-ordination of resources or services within the emergency response region, having regard to the provisions of section 13(2) of the Act
- in an emergency, arrange to provide regional resources requested by a Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator, to response or recovery agencies
- in circumstances where requested resources are not available within the region, to request the resources through the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator
- monitor the provision of emergency relief.

*Part 3 - State Emergency Response Plan***State Emergency Response Co-ordinator**

The State Emergency Response Co-ordinator is the Chief Commissioner of Police (CCP), per section 11 of the Act.

The State Emergency Response Co-ordinator may delegate his or her responsibilities to other members of Victoria Police.

The State Emergency Response Co-ordinator (or delegate /representative) may be assisted in that role by the State Emergency Response Officer.

The State Emergency Response Co-ordinator (or delegate) chairs the State Emergency Response Planning Committee – refer Part 5 of this Manual for its terms of reference and membership.

Under section 6 of the Act it is the responsibility of the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator to provide timely and up-to-date information to the Minister regarding emergencies. (Refer to Reporting to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, p. 3-27 below)

**Facilities Utilised to Conduct Emergency Response Co-ordination**

To aid the effective management of emergency response co-ordination, the Emergency Response Co-ordinator should determine the need to establish facilities from which local, regional and state functions can be carried out. Any facility established for this purpose shall be named a co-ordination centre.

A co-ordination centre is a facility which may be utilised during a complex or protracted emergency, primarily to co-ordinate the provision of resources.

In the event of an emergency, an emergency response co-ordinator will respond and determine the extent of resources and support required for the emergency response, including the need to activate a co-ordination centre.

Consideration should be given to the activation of a co-ordination centre when one or more of the following circumstances are present:

- the emergency continues for an extended duration
- members of the community are displaced by the emergency
- there is a perceived threat to the community
- the volume of requests for resource support cannot be easily managed
- there is a need to coordinate the provision of emergency relief to either responders or the affected community
- there is significant need for community support and/or recovery services.

In addition to the above, if intelligence (e.g. weather forecasts) suggests a serious emergency is imminent, consideration should be given to activation of an emergency response co-ordination centre to monitor the potentially affected area.

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The level of activation of the co-ordination centre ranges from a single workstation to a full emergency response co-ordination centre facility and is escalated according to the nature and level of the emergency.

An Emergency Response Co-ordination Centre at municipal level is called a Municipal Emergency Co-ordination Centre (MECC). The practice note *Operation of a Municipal Emergency Co-ordination Centre* should be read in conjunction with this section - listed in Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual.

An Emergency Response Co-ordination Centre at regional level is called a Regional Emergency Response Co-ordination Centre (RERCC).

The former State Emergency Response Co-ordination Centre is now called the State Emergency Support Centre (SESC).

Information and intelligence collected at a co-ordination centre should be forwarded to the relevant agency(s) for analysis and dissemination.

### Emergency Management Liaison Officer (EMLO)

An Emergency Management Liaison Officer (EMLO) is a person appointed by an agency, who:

- represents his/her agency:
  - in another agency's facility utilised to manage an emergency response and/or
  - at a co-ordination centre and/or
  - as part of an Emergency Management Team
- is empowered to commit, or to arrange the commitment, of resources of the agency to the response to an emergency
- represents the interests of the agency
- provides advice in relation to impacts and consequence management.
- assist the community to respond to, and recover from the emergency.
- should have previous experience in this role or have attended an EMLO training course.

Every response and recovery agency should maintain preparedness to deploy a liaison officer, with a link to the agency's communications system, to any location an emergency response co-ordinator or incident controller may request.

In some instances where adequate communications exist, the liaison officer may perform the role from a remote location.

A liaison officer may be requested from, or be placed in the operations/control centre of, a private-sector utility provider or similar organisation. This would typically occur during a disruption to an essential service.

## Whole of Government Arrangements

### State Crisis Centre

The Premier of Victoria may, on receipt of advice from Department of Premier and Cabinet, instruct that the Victorian State Crisis Centre be activated. This may occur in the event of an extreme emergency that requires co-ordination of whole-of-government activities during the emergency outside the co-ordination function of Victoria Police.

If activated, it will be the focal point for the Ministerial and strategic oversight of an emergency from a State perspective, and will include liaison with the Commonwealth.

The State Crisis Centre does not have an operational role and does not replace or duplicate the functions of other centres, i.e. it does not assume the command, control or co-ordination functions undertaken in other centres.

The key functions of the State Crisis centre are to:

- facilitate the provision of strategic support and policy advice to the Security and Emergencies Committee of Cabinet (SECC) and the Central Government Response Committee (CGRC)
- co-ordinate communication within the Victorian Government and between the State Crisis Centre and other State/Territory Crisis centres and the Australian Government.

### Reporting to the Minister for Police & Emergency Services

Under section 6 of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is provided with timely and up-to-date information in relation to:

- the actual or imminent occurrence of events which may lead to emergencies, and
- the response to emergencies.

### Whole of Victorian Government Incident Reporting

The functions of the State Controller include ensuring that the Victorian Government is provided with regular timely updates on the progress of the incident. The State Controller will liaise with the State Emergency Response Coordinator in undertaking this task.

The State Controller may appoint a Whole of Victorian Government Reporting Officer, who may be located at the State Control Centre.

The State Crisis Centre will fulfil the requirement for whole of Victorian Government incident reporting when it is activated in response to a terrorist incident.

### Resource Supplementation

The meaning of resource under these arrangements includes, but is not limited to:

- equipment (e.g. plant, vehicles)

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- personnel (e.g. agency support and industry technicians)
- services (e.g. phone lines, expert technical advice).

A resource is essentially any function or item which a responding agency requires to perform its response role.

A four-tiered step-up framework exists for agencies to obtain additional response resources. The four levels are:

- Municipal
- Region, including Area-of-Operations
- State, and
- Commonwealth and interstate/international.

These arrangements, as detailed in Figure 3.2, are designed to assist an agency by providing for the graduated marshalling and utilisation of the resources required to respond to an emergency.

An agency may have arrangements in place to access a wide range of resources through:

- its own agency arrangements
- support agencies (many are listed in Part 7 of this Manual)
- mutual aid agreements (including memoranda of understanding)
- contract or supply arrangements with private industry.

Some agencies also have agreements with interstate agencies. Where a control agency has such an agreement, it should access those resources as needed. However, if a support agency has such an interstate agreement, it should have the resource allocation approved by the Incident Controller prior to accessing it.

The financial responsibilities for expenditure on response activities are detailed in Appendix 1, Part 8 of this Manual.

Agencies should exhaust all resources owned or directly within their control, prior to requesting assistance from elsewhere. 'Directly within their control', means the resource is available to the agency through a pre-existing arrangement such as a contract or memorandum of understanding.

In situations where an agency accesses a resource, other than a resource it owns, it must notify the Incident Controller and the Emergency Response Co-ordinator. This is to allow for effective and efficient resource tracking by the Emergency Response Co-ordinator, and to avoid duplication of requests for the same resources.

Similarly, agencies must notify the Emergency Response Co-ordinator of the depletion or deployment of sizable or specialist resources so they are aware of the availability of the resource.

At a state level this includes advising the State Emergency Response Officer (or delegate) of deployment of an agency's resources to support another state, through established agreements.

Private providers of resources must be considered as possible sources of supply at each level prior to escalation of the request.



## Procedure for obtaining supplementary resources

This section should be read in conjunction with the practice note *Sourcing Supplementary Emergency Response Resources from Municipal Councils* - listed in Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual.

At the municipal level, resources owned or directly controlled by the municipal council are used to supplement those of the control and support agencies. As the needs and effects of the emergency escalate, or the resource requirements outstrip what is available locally, regional, State, Commonwealth, interstate or international resources may be requested.

An agency responding to an emergency, and requiring supplementary resources, can request the resources via the Emergency Response Co-ordinator.

At regional level, the inter-agency response management structure involves the co-ordination of resources to support operations which cannot be resourced locally, or which extend over more than one municipal district.

The highest level of operational co-ordination and support takes place at State level. It is at this level that resource support from other states and/or the Commonwealth is assessed and requested (as per Appendix 4, Part 8 of this Manual).

Under certain circumstances, Commonwealth resources are available for allocation at regional level, through a category 1 request for Defence Assistance to the Civil Community. A request for resources in this instance shall be made by the Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator. The Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator must notify the State Emergency Response Officer of such requests.

A request for Category 1 Defence Assistance to the Civil Community can be made where immediate action is necessary to save human life or alleviate suffering, to prevent extensive loss of animal life or widespread loss of, or damage to, property, and where local civilian resources are inadequate. Such requests can be approved by a local Defence commander where resources are available for a short term (not normally to exceed 24 hours).

If a request cannot be satisfied from resources within Victoria it will be referred to the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator (or representative), who will seek assistance via interstate or Commonwealth resources. Appendix 4, Part 8 of this Manual explains in detail the procedure for requesting emergency support from the Commonwealth Government and other states.

In all instances, the requesting agency should make appropriate arrangements for delivery of supplementary resources.

Requests for resources should be provided in a format as decided by the relevant Emergency Response Co-ordinator, and include the name and position of the person requesting the resources and comprehensive details of the task to be undertaken.

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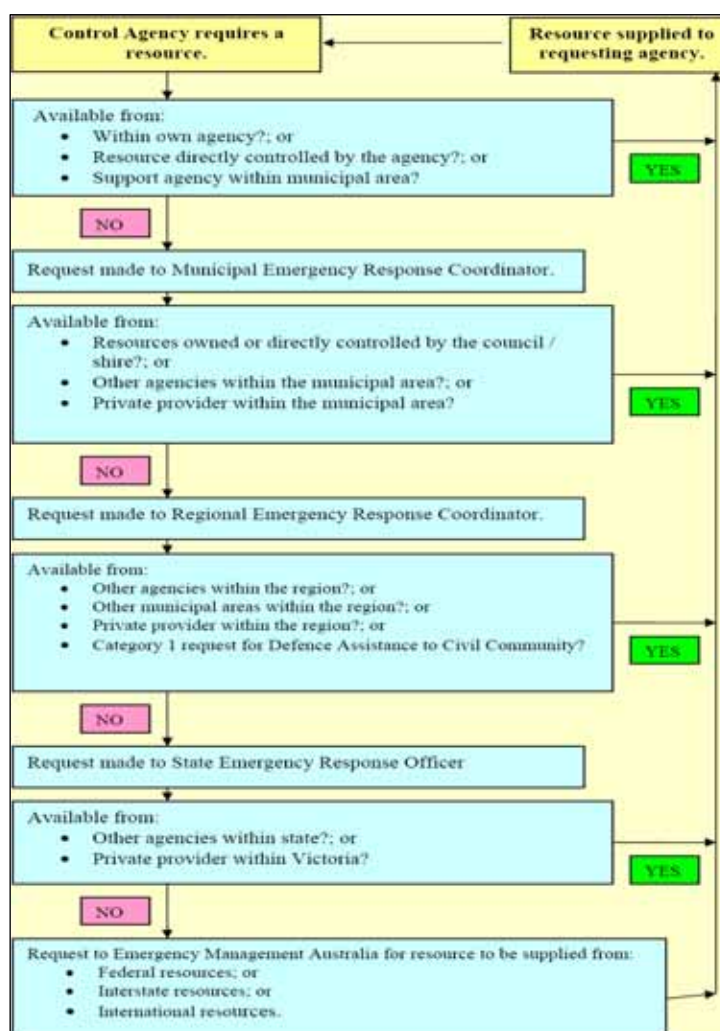


Figure 3.2: Flow Chart for Resource Supplementation

## 3.7 Warnings and Information

### Warning Arrangements

Warnings should be used under specific circumstances where community action is necessary primarily to protect lives, and also for the protection of property or the environment. The warning arrangements are set out in the Victorian Warning Protocol – referenced in Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual.

The Control Agency has the responsibility to issue warnings to the potentially affected community, and to other agencies.

Warnings and the release of other public information should be authorised by the Incident Controller prior to dissemination. Where an extreme and imminent threat to life exists and authorisation from the Incident Controller is not practicable in the circumstances, warnings may be issued by any response agency personnel.

Although the Incident Controller holds the primary responsibility for the issue of warnings, the Regional/Area-of-Operations Controller and/or

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State Controller may issue warnings on behalf of the control agency. This may occur in the event that the Incident Controller is unable to do so in a timely manner.

## Content and Format of Warnings

The content and format of a warning must:

- be simple, arresting and brief
- consist of clear language and avoid euphemisms
- contain explicit information
- be suited to the needs of the community.

The information contained within the warning should include:

- the type of emergency
- the location(s) of the area affected by the emergency
- the predicted time of impact of the emergency
- the predicted severity of the emergency
- how people should respond to the warning
- identify the agency providing the warning.

Warning systems vary and might include, but are not limited to:

- agency websites
- radio and television
- phone messages (including SMS)
- the use of Emergency Alert (EA)
- emails
- verbal messages
- sirens
- social media and/or social networking web sites.

Agencies should, as far as possible, inform the community regarding warning systems and procedures likely to be used during an emergency. Warnings will be most effective, and reach the most people, when a combination of warning systems is used. This is critical as people often rely on one information medium.

In the event that the control agency is unable to issue warnings, or requires assistance with the issuing of warnings, they should seek assistance from their Regional or State Controller, who may have the ability to issue community warnings from a regional or state control centre on behalf of the Incident Controller.

In some circumstances, this arrangement may not be possible, in which case the Incident Controller must advise the Emergency Response Co-ordinator, who in turn will facilitate the issuing of warnings.

In this instance the Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee (EMJPIC) is able to assist. This function of the Committee is to, when required, facilitate the provision of co-ordinated accurate,

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timely, factual authoritative and where appropriate, multi-lingual information and warnings to the public during major emergencies.

The function of the Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee is detailed in Appendix 12, Part 8 of this Manual.

In the initial stages of some emergencies there may be little or no opportunity to provide warning to agencies or the community.

### Community Warning Principles

The following is a list of 12 nationally recognised principles to be followed in providing warnings to the community. Warnings and warning systems should be:

**Co-ordinated:** A warning system should avoid duplication of effort where possible and support a shared understanding of the situation among all agencies involved in managing the emergency.

**Authoritative and accountable:** Warnings should be disseminated on the decision of an authorised person, unless of course imminent and extreme danger exists.

**Consistent/Standards based:** Information content should be co-ordinated and consistent across all warning mechanisms used to ensure credibility.

**Complete:** The message should include relevant details, include any direction on the need to consult other sources, and be presented in an easily understood way. Messages should target the entire community, including culturally and linguistically diverse communities and those who are vision or hearing impaired.

**Multi-modal:** The use of a variety of delivery mechanisms and multiple formats should complement each other and allow maximum reach to the affected community.

**All hazards-based:** Any emergency warning system should be capable of providing warnings, where practicable, for any type of emergency.

**Targeted:** Messages should be targeted to those at risk in order to reduce complacency from 'over warning'.

**Interoperable:** Co-ordinated delivery methods should be capable of operation across jurisdictional borders.

**Accessible and responsive:** Warning systems should be developed with the capability to respond to and deliver warnings in an environment of demographic, social and technological change.

**Verifiable:** The warning is able to be verified by the community, to reduce accidental activations and prevent malicious attempts to issue false alerts.

**Underpinned by education and awareness raising activities:** Agencies should be active in the community to raise awareness and educate people regarding emergency warning systems/mechanisms and the language used in warnings for particular emergencies.

**Compatible:** The warning system should be compatible with existing telecommunications networks and infrastructure to avoid adverse impacts on their functional integrity.

## Emergency broadcasters

The State of Victoria has entered into formal memorandums of understanding (MOUs) for the broadcast of emergency warnings and information. Broadcasters that have signed these agreements, and become official emergency broadcasters, include ABC Local Radio, all commercial radio stations in Victoria, SKY NEWS Television and UGFM – Radio Murrindindi.

The arrangements established by the MOUs can greatly increase the reach of emergency warnings in Victoria, and assist the community by enhancing the State's ability to alert people to dangers in their local areas.

The MOUs operate for all hazards, and set out a range of obligations for control agencies and broadcasters. Control agencies have agreed to provide emergency warnings and information to emergency broadcasters in a timely and accurate manner.

The broadcasters, in turn, have agreed to broadcast emergency warnings and information in the form provided by the control agencies, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year, and to break into programming as required.

A practice note has also been developed which outlines how the MOUs operate in practice. A copy of the practice note may be obtained from the Fire Services Commissioner.

The MOUs currently in effect are available from the Fire Services Commissioner's website, [www.firecommissioner.vic.gov.au>policy>emergency broadcasters>](http://www.firecommissioner.vic.gov.au>policy>emergency%20broadcasters>), as is a list of all emergency broadcasters.

## Emergency Alert System (EA)

The Emergency Alert system allows response agencies to send warning messages via mobile and landline telephones to targeted communities.

The Emergency Alert voice messages are easily identifiable by the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) at the start of the message together with the words 'Emergency Emergency'. The SMS (text) messages also commence with 'Emergency Emergency' and display the telephone number 0444 444 444. All messages refer the recipient to where they are able to obtain further information.

Although this system aims to improve the ability to warn communities about emergencies, individuals and communities still need to prepare themselves in case of an emergency.

Emergency Alert is simply another tool used to warn communities of impending danger. It will not always be used for every emergency.

The principles for use of Emergency Alert are based on the *Victorian Warning Protocol* – referenced in Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual.

As stated above, the primary responsibility for issuing information and warnings to the community lies with the incident controller, and in the event that he/she is unable to do so, the subsequent tiers of the control agency and then Emergency Response Co-ordinator.

## Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)

The Standard Emergency Warning Signal is an electronic warning signal, to be used in assisting the delivery of public warnings and messages for major emergencies, which is designed to:

- alert listeners/viewers of radio/television that an official emergency announcement is about to be made concerning an actual or potential emergency which has the potential to affect them
- alert the community at large, via a public address system, that an important official emergency announcement is about to be broadcast.

The use of SEWS must be authorised by an Incident Controller.

The guidelines for the use of the Standard Emergency Warning Signal are in Appendix 14, Part 8 of this Manual.

## Community Alert Sirens

Community alert sirens are fixed sirens, including community sirens and CFA sirens, used to alert a community of an emergency that may directly affect that community.

All fixed CFA sirens have two purposes, each indicated by the duration of the siren sounding:

- alerting fire brigade members to attend emergency calls (duration no longer than 90 seconds); and
- alerting communities to seek information about a threat (duration at least five minutes).

The activation of a community alert siren must be authorised by an incident controller. The community alert siren 'message' is for community members to seek information from other sources about the threat.

The guidelines for the use of community alert sirens are detailed in *Policy and guidelines, Use of Sirens for Brigade and Community Alerting* – referenced in Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual.

## Information Management

During emergency response activities information is needed by all participating agencies, persons affected and the wider community. The following list summarises the principles which should be kept in mind by those responsible for managing the flow of information:

- Get information to the people who need it
- Get the right information to the right people
- Ensure it is accurate, consistent, timely, user-friendly, compatible, relevant and authorised.

All agencies involved in the response to an emergency have a responsibility to collect, analyse, and disseminate relevant information received regarding the emergency, as appropriate.

## **Rapid Impact Assessment (RIA)**

The intent of RIA is to capture, during the initial 48 hours of an emergency, the nature and scale of the impact on people, community infrastructure, economic, natural and built environments.

RIA uses a flexible, scalable and adaptable series of assessments to provide situational awareness, guide response and recovery strategies and inform emergency service organisations and the government at local, regional, state and national levels, of actual and potential consequences of the emergency.

The control agency has the overall responsibility for the instigation and management of the RIA process as detailed within the Victorian RIA Framework.

To ensure that the RIA process is undertaken in a timely manner, resources from all agencies and organisations involved in the emergency may be tasked to collect, confirm and exchange relevant information.

Refer to Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual for information about obtaining a copy of the Practice Note on Rapid Impact Assessment.

## **Media Management at the scene of an emergency**

Media management at any emergency, including access and safety for media representatives, is the responsibility of the control agency. The Incident Controller should ensure that current and accurate information is available.

A clearly defined area, as close as practicable to the emergency, should be established as a media staging area. The Incident Controller should appoint an appropriate person to attend the media staging area to manage and brief the media on the established strategy to provide ongoing access to information about the emergency. Media representatives should be directed to this area.

Some agencies may undertake to escort media representatives to suitable vantage points in near proximity to the area affected by the emergency. Incident Controllers should liaise with the Victoria Police commander to arrange access through traffic management points and crowd-control points.

If the control agency is not equipped, or is otherwise unable to deal directly with the media, the assistance of the Victoria Police Media Liaison Unit may be requested.

Public information about the emergency response should be authorised by the Incident Controller, or their nominated representative, prior to dissemination.

## 3.8 Community Safety

The safety of the community during an emergency is the main priority of the control and support agencies. Extensive emergency planning with the involvement of the local communities should identify the best options for the community, prior to, and during an emergency. Planning needs to include the various types of evacuation, sheltering in place, neighbourhood safer places and township protection plans.

### Evacuation

#### Evacuation guidelines

Evacuations are to be conducted in accordance with the Evacuation Guidelines, included as Appendix 9 in Part 8 of this Manual.

#### Overview

Evacuation is a risk management strategy which may be used as a means of mitigating the effects of an emergency or disaster on a community. It involves the movement of people to a safer location. However, to be effective it must be correctly planned and executed.

As with all emergency response activities, the main priority when deciding to undertake an evacuation is protection of life.

There are five stages in the evacuation process: decision; warning; withdrawal, shelter and return which are detailed in the Evacuation Guidelines.

Evacuation is a scalable activity in that it may be applied to individuals, a house, a street, a large facility (i.e. school or hospital), a suburb, a town or a large area of the State.

Primary responsibilities for evacuation are held by the control agency and Victoria Police and a list of roles and responsibilities can be found in the Evacuation Guidelines, including the police management role.

In Victoria, evacuation is largely voluntary. The Incident Controller makes a recommendation to evacuate and it is the choice of individuals as to how they respond to this recommendation. However in particular circumstances legislation provides some emergency service personnel with authority to remove people from areas or prohibit their entry.

Pecuniary interest principles apply as detailed at page 3-41.

### Vulnerable people

During an emergency or imminent threat of an emergency, special consideration must be given to evacuation of vulnerable people in the community.

It is likely that more time, resources, support and assistance will be required by vulnerable people in the community and facilities, such as hospitals, aged care facilities, educational facilities and prisons, to evacuate safely.



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These facilities should have existing evacuation plans in place to appropriately plan for and undertake an evacuation when this is recommended. However, such plans cannot rely on the availability of emergency service personnel to undertake the evacuation.

Further information on considerations for vulnerable people can be found in the Evacuation Guidelines, Appendix 9, Part 8.

## Sheltering In Place

An alternative to evacuation in some circumstances may be to shelter in a suitable home, building, structure, or other safe area. Sheltering in place should be considered as an alternative when the associated risks with evacuation are considered to be greater than the risks of sheltering in place. Sheltering in place, however, will often not be without risk. Agencies should consider the risks posed to people when sheltering in place and provide advice to them about how to best minimise these. Agencies, in conjunction with their local planning committees, should work closely with their local community to provide advice and alternatives in regards to the suitability of sheltering in place during an emergency.

Some considerations for agencies and people considering taking shelter in place are:

- the nature of the emergency
- quality of the shelter or safer area
- the likely duration of the emergency
- the need for emergency supplies such as water, food and medical supplies
- the need for designated shelter managers, if applicable
- the contents of pre-arranged plans
- the age and health of the affected persons
- timely and relevant communication strategies.

## Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort (Bushfire only)

Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort are not part of shelter in place or evacuation strategies; they are places of last resort; (where people's other plans have failed or cannot be followed) where a person's prospects of survival may be better than other places, but cannot be guaranteed.

They are places, or buildings, designated and signposted by the municipal council that meets guidelines issued by the Country Fire Authority and the criteria in the Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan.

Where they exist, they must be identified in Municipal Fire Prevention Plans and Municipal Emergency Management Plans.

## Community Fire Refuges (Bushfire only)

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

The requirements for establishing and operating a community fire refuge are detailed in *Practices and procedures, Community Fire Refuges* – referenced in Appendix 10, Part 8 of this Manual.

## Emergency Relief

Incident Controllers are primarily responsible for determining the need to activate emergency relief services. The following people have the authority to activate the provision of emergency relief services by affected municipal councils based on an Incident Controller's determination (which may include the activation of emergency relief centres detailed in part 4 of this Manual):

- The appointed Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) (Victoria Police officer).
- The relevant Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO) (municipal council staff member).
- A Municipal Recovery Manager (municipal council staff member).

Municipal councils are responsible for establishing and managing relief centres. The Department of Human Services as the Relief Coordination Agency will support municipal councils as required to ensure people affected by an emergency are receiving appropriate relief support services. Refer to Part 4 of this Manual for more detail on the provision of emergency relief.

## 3.9 Special Legislative Provisions for Response

### State of Disaster

Part 5 of the *Emergency Management Act 1986* provides that in situations which present a 'significant and widespread danger to life or property' in part or all of Victoria the Premier may, on the advice of the Minister and the State Emergency Response Co-ordinator, declare a State of Disaster. This creates a legal condition applying to a specified area. The declaration of a State of Disaster should be considered in the most extreme circumstances.

Upon the Premier's declaration of a State of Disaster, the Minister has powers to:

- direct government agencies
- suspend Acts or regulations
- \*commandeer any property
- \*control movement into and within, and departure from the disaster area

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- \*compel evacuations from the disaster area (except where a person claims pecuniary interest in the land, buildings, goods or valuables therein).

\*The latter three powers are delegated to the Chief Commissioner of Police.

## Emergency of State Significance

The Chief Commissioner of Police, on the advice of the control agency, other experts, or upon his own volition may declare, in writing, an Emergency of State Significance to exist in Victoria.

Considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Threat to the personal safety of the broader community
- The likelihood for significant loss of, or endangerment to, life
- Potential for considerable damage or destruction of property
- Possibility of short and/or long term hardship to the broader community
- An extensive commitment of State resources to contend with the emergency situation.

The purpose of declaring an Emergency of State Significance is an acknowledgement that a major emergency is occurring and to reiterate the gravity of the emergency situation. Such a declaration should raise community awareness of the ongoing emergency and to reinforce the need for planning by the community, emergency services and other government and non government agencies reflecting the seriousness of such a declaration.

The Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police is responsible for informing the Minister and the State Premier of such a declaration. The declaration of an Emergency of State Significance remains in force for a defined period nominated on the declaration document.

## Declaration of Emergency Area

### Purpose

Section 36A of the *Emergency Management Act 1986* makes provision for the declaration by Victoria Police of an emergency area, if normal community activities and freedom of movement must be restricted because of the size, nature or location of an emergency, and when the extreme powers available under a declared state of disaster are not needed or would take too long to activate.

The provisions give police the ability to restrain people from participating in their normal activities in some emergency situations where the proximity of the public is not desirable and may be dangerous, in particular where the hazard, such as a chemical spill or a gas leak, may not be evident to the untrained person.

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If the most senior officer of the police in attendance at an emergency, being an officer of or above the rank of senior sergeant, is of the opinion that because of the size, nature or location of an emergency it is necessary to exclude persons from the area of the emergency so as to ensure:

- public safety; or
- security of evacuated premises; or
- the safety of, or prevention of obstruction, hindrance or interference to, persons engaging in emergency activity

That officer of police may declare the area to be an emergency area. (s. 36A(1))

The declaration of an emergency area must be in writing and may be varied or revoked in writing. (s. 36A(2))

A copy of the declaration or a sign in a form authorised by the State Emergency Response Coordinator and containing the words "Declared Emergency Area" must be posted at the emergency area or as near as possible to that area while the declaration is in force. (s. 36A(3))

The declaration of an emergency area must be revoked immediately upon the circumstances leading to the declaration ceasing to apply. (s. 36A(4))

If the declaration of an emergency area has not been revoked within the period of 48 hours after it is declared, the declaration is revoked at the end of the period unless it is extended (see below). (s. 36A(5))

The State Emergency Response Coordinator may if he or she is satisfied that the circumstances leading to the declaration still apply, extend the declaration of an emergency area for a further period not exceeding 48 hours. (s. 36A(6))

The State Emergency Response Coordinator must publish a notice of the declaration and revocation of an emergency area in the Government Gazette. (s. 36A(7))

**Declaration of Emergency Area associated with Bushfire**

Any declaration, pursuant to section 36A of the Act, of an emergency area, associated with bushfire, should only be done at the request of, or with the approval of, the Incident Controller. The declaration of an emergency area will require all police involved to be well briefed on the conditions to apply for the area during the existence of the declaration. This briefing will substantially help prevent *ad hoc* actions by individual police who may consider advising or directing people inappropriately to leave their homes in the path of a bushfire.

**Powers**

The declaration authorises any police officer on duty in or near the emergency area to:

- close, or cause to close, any road, footpath or open space that provides access to the emergency area

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- prohibit any person or vehicle from entering into or passing through the emergency area
- direct any person who is on any road, footpath or in any open space within the emergency area (including any person in a vehicle) to leave immediately by the safest and shortest route
- authorise a person to enter or remain in the emergency area subject to such conditions as the police officer considers appropriate. (s. 36B(1))

The conditions may require a person to undertake or refrain from certain acts. For example, the person may be authorised to enter to remove personal property or to enter provided they remain in a specified location and do not interfere with the response to the emergency.

Prohibitions or directions can be communicated in person, or via radio, television or other means.

### Pecuniary Interest

Any prohibition or direction given in respect of the declared emergency area applies equally to a person claiming a pecuniary interest in property in the emergency area or goods or valuables in the property if the person is not in that property. (s. 36B(2))

If a person claims a pecuniary interest in property in the emergency area or goods or valuables in the property and is in that property, the person cannot be directed to leave. However, the person's right to remain in the declared emergency area may be subject of appropriate conditions. (s. 36B(3))

### ***Coroners Act 2008* – Powers to restrict access to areas**

The *Coroners Act 2008* provides specific powers to the Coroner and Chief Commissioner of Police to take reasonable steps to restrict access to places:

- where a death has occurred
- reasonably connected to the place where a death occurred
- where an incident has occurred if it is reasonably expected that a person will die as a result of the incident
- reasonably connected to the place where an incident occurred if it is reasonably expected that a person will die as a result of the incident
- where a fire has occurred
- reasonably connected to the place where a fire has occurred.

To ensure the public are aware of a restricted area, the Coroner or Chief Commissioner of Police may cause a notice in the prescribed form to be placed at or as near as possible to the restricted area stating that access to the area is restricted and penalties apply for non compliance. See ss. 37 and 38 of the *Coroners Act 2008*.

## Police Powers to Detain for Decontamination

The *Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003* provides specific powers to police for the purpose of protecting people from chemical, biological or radiological contamination. Part 3 of the Act provides that a senior member of Victoria Police (of or above the rank of inspector), may, if suspecting that an area has, or people in that area may have, been exposed to such contamination by a terrorist act, may authorise a member of the force to:

- direct a person or group of people to enter, not to enter, or to leave, any particular premises or area
- detain a person whether alone or with others
- direct a person to submit to decontamination procedures by either the CFA, MFB, equivalent Commonwealth or interstate agency, or other prescribed agency.

These powers may be exercised for the purpose of preventing or limiting the spread of contamination caused by the terrorist act or suspected terrorist act, and authorised police may give any direction necessary in connection with the exercise of any such power. The police may use reasonable and necessary force to ensure compliance with any authorised direction.

The authorisation lapses:

- when the senior officer of police who made the initial authorisation notifies the Chief Commissioner of Police that it is no longer believed to be needed
- when the control agency for the suspected contamination notifies the Chief Commissioner of Police that it should lapse
- after the expiry of 8 hours, or up to 16 hours total duration, if extended by a Commissioner of Police, with the agreement of the control agency, to protect public health.

The *Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003* also states that it is the intention of Parliament that no unnecessary restrictions on personal liberty or privacy should be imposed in giving authorisations or exercise of powers under this Part.

## 3.10 Transition of Co-ordination from Response to Recovery

Recovery operational planning should commence as soon as possible after the impact of an emergency. Recovery planning and operations are implemented as per the state, regional and municipal recovery arrangements. In large or prolonged emergencies, it may be necessary to continue providing relief services to individuals and families under recovery management arrangements after other response activities have finished. This transition should be seamless, as the municipal council will remain responsible for managing emergency relief centres during recovery.

The incident controller, Emergency Response Co-ordinator and recovery manager should commence transition planning as soon as possible following the start of the emergency. The Emergency Management Team should be involved in transition planning discussions to ensure a shared

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and consistent understanding of the planning, timing and expectations for transition.

The decision relating to the timing of the transition of overall co-ordination from response to recovery 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 loss and damage associated with the emergency
- the considerations for the extent of emergency relief required by affected communities
- the considerations for the resources required to be activated for effective recovery arrangements.

The Emergency Response Co-ordinator is responsible for advising all agencies involved in the emergency of the time at which response terminates. Following the conclusion of response activities, the effects of the emergency may continue, and recovery activities will often go on for some time.

The Department of Human Services is the agency responsible for state and regional co-ordination of relief and recovery. Municipal councils are responsible for relief and recovery management at the municipal level. While termination of response implies the cessation of the responsibilities of Victoria Police as response co-ordinators they, and other response agencies, may have a previously agreed role to play in recovery activities.

## **Post-operational Debriefing**

The Municipal or Regional Emergency Response Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring the control agency for the emergency organises an operational debrief with participating agencies as soon as practicable after cessation of response activities. All agencies, including recovery agencies, who participated in those activities, should be represented with a view to assessing the adequacy of the response and to recommend any changes to the relevant agencies plan(s) and future operational response activities.

The purpose of a debriefing is to:

- ensure participating agencies understand what happened during an operation or emergency, and
- identify problems and highlight areas that were handled well, in order to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and safety of future operations or emergencies.

## **Handover of Facilities and Goods**

In some situations, the Incident Controller may physically hand over to the recovery co-ordinator or agency response facilities and/or goods to be utilised in recovery activities. This will occur only after agreement has

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been reached, and after any necessary documentation has been completed to the mutual satisfaction of the response and recovery co-ordinators.

Resources acquired for the response, which are not required for recovery, remain under the control of the requesting response agency. That agency is responsible for their return or disposal.

The State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan comprises Part 4 of this Manual.