

Guidelines for Municipal Fire Management Planning

Part 6A: Emergency Management Manual Victoria

Preface

These guidelines are issued to municipal emergency management planning committees by the Minister for Emergency Services.

They are published to facilitate the introduction of integrated fire management planning at municipal level, using the provisions of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, which provides that a municipal emergency planning committee must give effect to any direction or guideline issued by the Minister. (S 21(5))

The integrated fire management planning framework is designed to support the integration, consistency and coordination of the fire management planning activities of government, the fire management sector and communities to achieve effective fire management for the State of Victoria. The State Fire Management Planning Committee has published a detailed Planning Guide about the planning process and products.

In relation to municipal councils wholly or partly in the Country Area of Victoria, a municipal fire management plan prepared and endorsed in compliance with these guidelines will be deemed to fulfil section 55A of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* which requires them to have a municipal fire prevention plan with certain defined contents. (Note that while the Country Fire Authority Act requires each council in its area to have a municipal fire prevention plan, the appointment of a municipal fire prevention committee (s. 54) is at the discretion of the Authority, and is not mandatory.)

The municipal fire management plan prepared under these Guidelines will be a sub-plan of the municipal emergency management plan. It may be prepared by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee or a sub-committee (the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee) appointed for the purpose.

In due course, the Country Fire Authority Act and the *Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958* may be amended to provide a specific statutory requirement for municipal fire management planning across the State.

These guidelines are published to enable Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees to implement the municipal level of integrated fire management planning. **These are interim guidelines specifically designed for the implementation phase of integrated fire management planning, and will be reviewed and replaced as implementation progresses.**

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6A.1 Decision to establish a Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee

While these Guidelines are primarily about the development of the municipal fire management plan, an initial decision for the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) will be whether to form a Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMP). The decision should be based on the level and nature of the fire risk in each municipal district.

This will be determined by a review of fire risk assessments already undertaken including through the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process. This review will be informed by the fire services using their expertise, information and tools at their disposal and facilitated by the relevant Fire Planning Network Manager. The review will identify the complexity of any fire risk, consider the level and range of potential consequences from historic and potential fire events for the municipal district and determine the need to form a MFMP.

To facilitate the development and maintenance of a fire management plan it is recommended that an MFMP be a sub-committee to the MEMPC. The MEMPC will be responsible for the development and endorsement of the terms of reference for the MFMP, committee membership and overseeing the election of the Chair of the MFMP.

In municipal districts where the risk from fire does not indicate the need for a specialist sub committee, the roles and responsibilities of the MFMP as set out below must be carried out by the MEMPC, including the development of a municipal fire management plan.

6A.2 Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee: Suggested Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Committee's purpose, of which the development of a municipal fire management plan is part, is to provide a municipal-level forum to build and sustain organisational partnerships, generate a common understanding and shared purpose with regard to fire management and ensure that the plans of individual agencies are linked and complement each other.

Membership

The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, appointed by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee, has representation from the following organisations:

- Municipal council
- Relevant Fire Service(s)
 - Country Fire Authority
 - Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
 - Metropolitan Fire Brigade
- Other members as required.

Role of the Committee

The Committee is to:

- plan for fire management in a manner that coordinates fire management activities across agencies
- provide information to and engage with the community on matters related to fire management planning
- using the planning guide issued by the State Fire Management Planning Committee, draft a Municipal Fire Management Plan for recommendation to the MEMPC and comment by the Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee, prior to consideration by the Council
- monitor, review and report on the delivery of the Municipal Fire Management Plan
- advocate to the Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee for municipal fire management needs
- work with the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee to align planning activities

- share knowledge and create an environment of continuous improvement.

Governance

The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee is established and undertakes planning as a sub-committee of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee formed under s. 21(3) of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*.

- The MFMPC will be chaired from within its membership
- The MFMPC will receive support and guidance from the Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee
- Composition will be as determined by the MEMPC.

Reporting

The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee will report quarterly to the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and the Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee.

Support

Administrative support requirements will be determined by the committee and resourced through committee members where possible.

Planning processes will be managed and supported with technical expertise by relevant fire services.

Schedule of Meetings

The Committee will meet at least once every quarter unless otherwise required.

6A.3 Municipal Fire Management Planning

Planning Process

The State Fire Management Planning Committee is responsible for providing direction and support to implement integrated fire management planning at regional and municipal levels. It has developed a detailed guide to assist committees in undertaking the planning process for integrated fire management.

A rigorous planning process is required to ensure integrated fire management planning is successfully implemented. This planning process supports the multi-agency approach to fire management. Fire management planning committees will work cooperatively and collaboratively on the development and implementation of plans through:

- implementing common planning models and methodologies
- allocating resources and responsibilities
- participating in common decision-making through the committee process
- collaboratively delivering fire management activities
- engaging cooperatively.

6A.4 Plan Endorsement and Adoption

The MEMPC/MFMPC shall seek endorsement, by signature, of the draft plan from committee and, where appropriate, non-committee members with responsibilities and accountabilities under the plan.

Once endorsed by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee, the plan will be sent to the Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee for comment, prior to the recommendation to council for consideration.

For councils wholly or partly within the Country Area of Victoria, the Municipal Fire Management Plan as adopted by council will be deemed to meet the requirement for a municipal fire prevention plan under S 55A(1) of the Country Fire Authority Act, provided that it contains the provisions as set out in S 55A(2).

6A.5 Audit

For councils wholly or partly within the Country Area of Victoria, the Municipal Fire Management Plan will also be audited under S 55B of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*. For other councils, audit arrangements will be determined prior to the initial audit of the Municipal Fire Management Plan.

6A.6 Contents of the Municipal Fire Management Plan

| Section | Heading | Suggested Contents |
|---------|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context and starting point to engage the reader into the fire management planning process, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> authority for the plan and planning processes period of the plan summary of the plan preparation process stakeholder analysis community and organisational engagement process |
| 2 | Engagement and communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of process undertaken and its outcomes |
| 3 | Summary of the environmental scan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of the municipal district, including demographic and geographic characteristics Outputs of environmental scanning, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> values of the region/municipal district assumptions about the future of the region/municipal district, and their implications for fire management |
| 4 | Municipal fire management objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment to regional objectives Objectives and outcomes proposed Strategic directions Required links to other business planning and program development of key stakeholders |
| 5 | Fire management risk strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matrix of the priority risks in the municipal district showing management strategies, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> physical and geographical risks as well as systems risks treatments and actions to implement fire management objectives timelines* responsible agencies |
| 6 | Improvement and plan reporting and review processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail intentions to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor, evaluate and report on plan outcomes review and update plan itself |
| 7 | Attachments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maps where appropriate reference and linkages with any local plans where appropriate |

* planning cycle for municipal-level treatment activities is 3 years

NB: In the country area of Victoria, the municipal fire management plan must contain provisions as required by S 55A(2) of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*.