

## JOINT SOP

<b>Title</b>	Incident Communications Planning
<b>Purpose</b>	To ensure effective communications plans are developed, implemented and reviewed at emergencies between the agencies involved.
<b>Scope</b>	This Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) applies to the development, implementation and review of Default and Incident Communications Plans, and the use of the Emergency Alerting System Paging during periods of high emergency activity.
<b>Applicable Agencies</b>	This procedure applies to the following agency personnel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFA</li> <li>• DELWP (FFMVic)</li> <li>• MFB</li> <li>• VICSES</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	The procedural contents of this SOP are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 1: Default Communications Plans</li> <li>• Step 2: Incident Communications Plans</li> <li>• Step 3: EAS Paging</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	Incident Controller is responsible for ensuring the development of the Incident Communications Plan.  All emergency personnel are required to adhere to the Incident Communications Plan
<b>Definitions</b>	The following definitions apply to this procedure: <p><b>Incident Communications Plan</b> A plan prepared for a specific incident detailing the methods of communication to be used at that incident.</p> <p><b>Incident Communications Planning Officer</b> The suitably trained Communications Planning person within the Incident Management Team (IMT) who is delegated the responsibility for the development of that part of the Incident Action Plan that specifies the communication arrangements and plans for the incident.</p> <p><b>Joint Default Communications Plan</b> Pre-planned and agreed communications arrangements for use by initial responders at a multi-agency incident.</p>

**Local Mutual Aid Plans**

The documents developed annually at Emergency Management Region level contain information, plans and procedures that are specific to the respective preparedness and response of the fire agencies within the Region.

**EAS Paging**

The Emergency Alerting System (EAS) is a dedicated alerting system used to alert and simultaneously mobilise CFA, VICSES and Ambulance Victoria resources for both career staff and volunteer members.

**PROCEDURE****1. Default Communications Plans**

- 1.1. Agencies need to ensure that Default Communications Plans are prepared to cover response areas.
- 1.2. Considerations for known black spot solutions should be included in the Default Communications Plans.
- 1.3. Joint Default Communications Plans for fire are required to be documented in all relevant Local Mutual Aid Plans (LMAP) in accordance with JSOP J2.01 – Local Mutual Aid Plans.
- 1.4. Joint Default Communications Plans are required to be implemented at each multi-agency incident, until the Incident Controller replaces it with a specific Incident Communications Plan, as required.
- 1.5. Joint Default Communications Plans are required to be implemented in readiness.

**2. Incident Communications Plans**

- 2.1. The Incident Controller (IC) is required to ensure the development, implementation and regular review of the integrated Incident Communications Plan as required. This plan will be developed by the Incident Communications Planning Officer on behalf of the IC and needs to consider the following for all incident personnel:
  - Information and communications technology applications
  - Radio channels, talk groups, radio trunk numbers
  - Interference issues associated with channel selection across geographical area including aircraft interference
  - Adjacent Incident Control Centre (ICC) that may need to coordinate communications to reduce interference
  - Telephone number (including mobile and satellite phones)
  - Fax number
  - Paging
  - Redundancy options
  - Addresses known communications black spots.
- 2.2. Agency based communication protocols should be considered when developing an Incident Communications Plan e.g. allocation of radio channels outside of default plan.

2.2.1. Allocation of radio channels outside of Default Communications Plans should only be done by an Incident Communications Planning Officer.

2.3. An Incident Communications Plan is required to be incident-based, having consideration for all agencies involved.

2.4. The IC is required to ensure that the Incident Communications Plan is conveyed to all Incident Personnel, and is conveyed in written form to all command personnel as soon as practicable.

2.5. Effective transfer of control from the incident ground to an ICC includes the effective transfer of communications from dispatch channels/fireground channels to incident channels where appropriate and should be undertaken in a timely manner to avoid excessive radio traffic on dispatch channels.

2.6. Incident Communications Plans and Incident Action Plans should ensure that strategies are put in place and outlined in these plans to ensure radio traffic is limited and appropriate to the incident structure. I.e. Operations, Divisions, Sectors, geographical barriers.

2.7. When two or more neighbouring ICCs are active Incident Communications Planning Officers need to be deployed to all ICCs to coordinate the communications activities due to the potential to interfere with each other.

### 3. EAS paging

3.1. Where there is significant risk of/or actual emergency events anywhere within the State e.g. Extreme weather and Code Red Fire Danger, the EAS paging system use should be limited to dispatch and operational safety messages to maintain service continuity.

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## **SAFETY**

Protection and preservation of life is paramount. This includes:

- Safety of emergency response personnel
- Safety of community members including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists

In the application of this JSOP the following safety considerations apply:

- Incident Communications Planning Officers need to coordinate with their ICC to avoid interference with other emergencies.
- All personnel need to be familiar with protocols relating to safety communications processes i.e. Red Flag Warnings, Field Information Updates
- Incident personnel need to ensure agreed communication methods are maintained
- Agency personnel are to ensure they are briefed, can access and continually monitor the agreed communication methods for the incident.

<b>REFERENCE</b>	
<b>Related Documents</b>	<p>Emergency Management Act 2013</p> <p>State Emergency Response Plan 1 August 2016 (EMMV Part 3)</p> <p>SOP J2.01 Local Mutual Aid Plans</p> <p>SOP J3.03 Incident Action Plan</p> <p>SOP J3.06 Incident Briefings</p> <p>SOP J3.15 Transfer of Control and IMT Relocation for Class 1 Emergencies</p> <p>SOP J3.11 Red Flag Warnings</p>
<b>Environment</b>	Nil

## REVIEW

<b>Date Issue</b>	28 August 2017
<b>Date Effective</b>	1 October 2017
<b>Date to be Reviewed</b>	September 2020
<b>Date to Cease</b>	N/A

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## AUTHORITY

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The Emergency Management Commissioner has issued this SOP under section 50 of the Emergency Management Act 2013.

<b>Approved</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Craig Lapsley Emergency Management Commissioner		
<b>Endorsed</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Steve Warrington Chief Officer, CFA		
Stephanie Rotarangi Chief Fire Officer, DELWP (FFMVic)		
David Bruce Acting Chief Officer, MFB		
Trevor White Chief Officer Operations, VICSES		