

JOINT SOP

Title	Red Flag Warnings
Version	v10.0
Purpose	To ensure all emergency personnel at emergencies receive timely and accurate information relevant to their safety.
Scope	This Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) applies to all emergency personnel when attending emergency incidents and planned burning operations.
Applicable Agencies	The following agencies will apply this JSOP due to legislative responsibilities or agency role defined within the State Emergency Management Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA • DEECA (FFMVic) • FRV • VICSES
Content	The procedural contents of this JSOP are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1: When a Red Flag Warning is Required • Step 2: Who can issue a Red Flag Warning • Step 3: Who to advise when a Red Flag Warning is issued • Step 4: Dissemination process • Step 5: Red Flag Warning Format • Step 6: Acknowledgement Process • Step 7: Actions when a reissued warning is not acknowledged • Step 8: Cancelling a Red Flag Warning
Responsibilities	CFA, DEECA (FFMVic), EMV, FRV and VICSES are required to ensure all their operational members are aware and have an understanding of this JSOP on the use of and processes associated with Red Flag Warnings.
Definitions	Common Emergency Management terms and definitions can be found in EM-COP under Library > Definitions. Within this document, the following definitions apply: Briefing A concise summary of the major factors of an operation to Emergency Personnel utilising the SMEACS-Q format.

Emergency Alerting System (EAS)

A dedicated messaging system which enables statewide emergency services staff and volunteers to be simultaneously alerted to emergency incidents via pager based text messages.

Emergency Personnel

All personnel assigned to a role in managing the response to an emergency including those they supervise, and those authorised to act in support or to operate on the incident ground.

Red Flag Warning

A process for passing and confirming receipt of critical safety information to emergency personnel.

PROCEDURE

03.11

1. When a Red Flag Warning is Required

1.1. A Red Flag Warning should be issued when there is, or is predicted to be, a significant risk to safety due to changed circumstances, including but not limited to:

- Weather conditions;
- Incident conditions and/ or behaviour;
- Equipment availability;
- Communications arrangements;
- Access.

1.2. Where practicable, Red Flag Warnings should be issued with enough time to enable Emergency Personnel to take the appropriate action.

2. Who can issue a Red Flag Warning

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

- Sector Commander;
- Division Commander;
- Operations Officer;
- Incident Controller;
- State Response Controller,
- Regional Controller,
- State and Regional Agency Commanders,
- State Duty Officer,
- Operations Manager,
- Rostered Area or District Duty Officer (to be issued via the Incident Controller).

2.2. The personnel referred to in the last point above should only issue Red Flag Warnings for the geographic area likely to be affected by the changed circumstances.

3. Who to advise when a Red Flag Warning is issued

3.1. Where a Red Flag Warning is issued, the person initiating the warning is required to also advise their immediate supervisor, who shall communicate the Red Flag Warning up the chain of command to the Regional Controller, and where appropriate, to other personnel under their supervision. In addition, the Red Flag

Warning should be noted in the next scheduled situation report issued on behalf of the Incident Controller.

3.2. Support agencies may, where appropriate, be notified through the established IMT/EMT briefing process of a Red Flag Warning being issued or cancelled.

4. Dissemination Process

4.1. Red Flag Warnings can be disseminated by any appropriate means including:

- Radio;
- Telephone;
- Written notice (e.g. email);
- Verbal.

4.2. When broadcast by radio, a Red Flag Warning is required to be given priority over all other radio traffic except for a "Mayday" message.

4.3. Pagers are not a preferred method to disseminate Red Flag Warnings and should only be used where deemed appropriate.

4.3.1. Personnel issuing the warning are required to consider that Emergency Alerting System (EAS) pager messages can only be sent as 'Non-Emergency', and therefore may be delayed under some circumstances, that agencies utilise different paging systems and pagers may not be carried by all personnel.

4.3.2. If used to disseminate warning, the pager message needs to contain the required acknowledgement process and details.

5. Red Flag Warning Format

5.1. Red Flag Warnings, regardless of how they are disseminated, are required to be preceded by the words, "Red Flag Warning" and be communicated utilising the following template as guidance:

"Red Flag Warning from (name, position).

All personnel are advised of (actual / forecast where appropriate) conditions that may present a hazard to personnel as follows: ... (actual / forecast conditions).

All personnel are to take this information into account in determining strategy, tactics and deployment.

The following action(s) is/are recommended to be taken for your safety _____

This warning is to be passed to all personnel under your command and is current up to _____ hrs. __/__/__. Acknowledgement is required."

5.2. The warning should be specific to the key audience (e.g. the Eastern Division) to minimise radio congestion.

6. Acknowledgement Process

6.1. Emergency Personnel who receive a Red Flag Warning are required to:

- Immediately confirm that they have received the Red Flag Warning,
- Repeat the key points of the warning (e.g. time, etc.) back to demonstrate that they understand the warning;
- Notify all responding and supporting agency personnel and any other resources that they are supervising or who are reporting to them of the Red Flag Warning; and

- Obtain a confirmation from the response and support agency personnel that they are supervising that they have received the Red Flag Warning.

Note: Refer to Schedule 1 for an example of the Red Flag Warning dissemination and acknowledgement process.

6.2. Should acknowledgement not be received, a reissue of the communication containing the Red Flag Warning is to be undertaken.

6.3. Any person, to Crew Leader level, who receives and/or forwards a Red Flag Warning are required to log:

- Who communicated the Red Flag Warning;
- The time it was received;
- What information it contained;
- How it was received (e.g. telephone, radio etc.);
- Who you disseminated it on to; and
- The time acknowledgements were received from those you supervise.

7. Actions when a reissued warning is not acknowledged;

7.1. If the repeated Red Flag Warning has not been acknowledged, the person sending the warning should take appropriate steps to ensure receipt of warning information has occurred, and where required disseminated further and subsequently acknowledged.

7.2. If a Red Flag Warning is not acknowledged despite repeated attempts, the issuing person should take urgent steps to ensure that the Red Flag Warning has been received e.g. alternative communication methods or send someone to the area of the personnel not responding.

8. Cancelling a Red Flag Warning

8.1. If no timing was given in the warning when issued, consideration should be given to advising those warned when the dangerous situation has concluded. This should be done by normal means of communication.

SAFETY

Protection and preservation of life and relief of suffering is paramount. This includes: -

- Safety of emergency response personnel; and
- Safety of community members including those most at risk in emergencies both residents and visitors/tourists.

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

- If a Red Flag Warning is issued, it is essential that all emergency personnel are advised of the information and what actions they need to take for their safety.
- Emergency personnel should confirm receipt of the confirmation and take appropriate action.
- Where a Red Flag Warning has been issued or concerns have been raised about the process of issuing a red flag warning these should be considered as part of the incident debrief process.

REFERENCE

Related Documents

[Emergency Management Act 2013](#)
[Victorian State Emergency Management Plan](#)
[JSOP 02.02 Incident Communications Planning](#)
[JSOP 03.04 Incident Safety Management Functions](#)

REVIEW

Date Issued

14 November 2024

Date Effective

22 November 2024

Date to be Reviewed

November 2027

Date to Cease

N/A

AUTHORITY

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

Approved

Signature

Date

Rick Nugent
Emergency Management Commissioner

Signed copy kept on file at the SCC

14 November 2024

Endorsed

Signature

Date

Jason Heffernan
Chief Officer, CFA

Signed copy kept on file at the SCC

14 November 2024

Aaron Kennedy
Acting Chief Fire Officer DEECA (FFMVic)

Signed copy kept on file at the SCC

14 November 2024

Gavin Freeman
Commissioner, FRV

Signed copy kept on file at the SCC

14 November 2024

Alistair Drayton
Acting Chief Officer Operations VICSES

Signed copy kept on file at the SCC

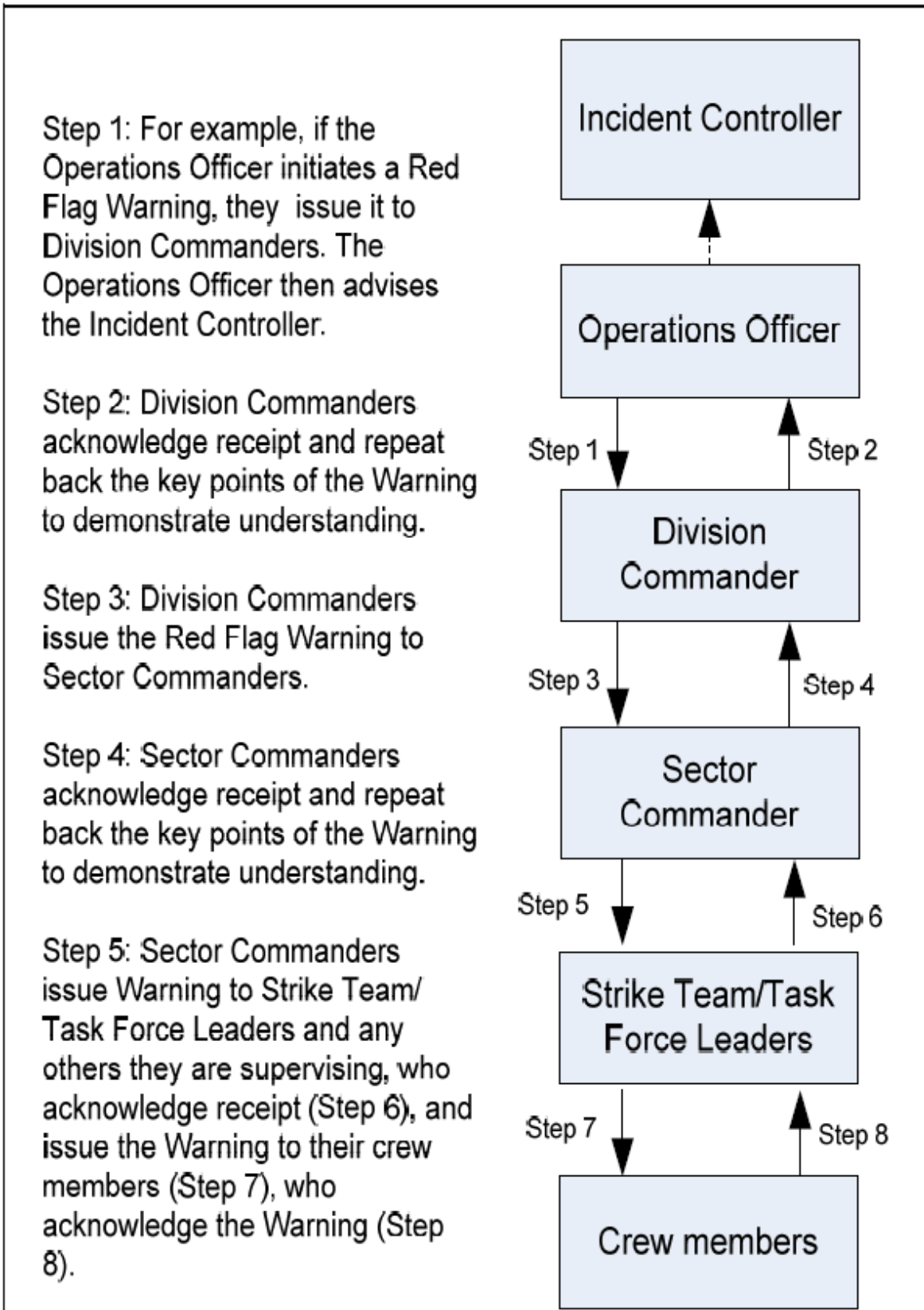
14 November 2024

JSOP

03.11

Schedule 1

Example of Red Flag Warning dissemination and acknowledgement process



Note: Should acknowledgement not occur, Red Flag Warning should be re issued.