

| JOINT SOP | |
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| Title | Public Information and Warnings for Class 1 Emergencies |
| Version | v16.0 |
| Purpose | To provide guidance to members of control and support agencies, in relation to the provision of timely, relevant and tailored public information and warnings to the community before, during, and after emergencies for the primary purpose of protecting life and property. |
| Scope | This Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) applies to all control agency members, and those supporting agency members in providing public information and warnings to the community during the response to and early recovery from Class 1 Emergencies. This Joint Standard Operating Procedure does not apply to Victoria Police. |
| Applicable Agencies | <p>The following agencies will apply this JSOP due to legislative responsibilities or agency role defined within the State Emergency Management Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA • DEECA (FFMVic) • EMV • FRV • VICSES <p>Victoria Police discharge their responsibilities as per their agency policies and procedures.</p> <p>Other agencies may apply this doctrine as applicable.</p> |
| Content | <p>The procedural contents of this JSOP are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1: Authorisation and provision of public information and warnings • Step 2: The Public Information Section • Step 3: Application of warning and community information templates • Step 4: Transition to recovery • Schedule One – Protocols for broadcasting frequency and SEWS • Schedule Two – Guideline for the use of Emergency Alert • Schedule Three – Other tools for warning the community • Schedule Four – Guideline for the monitoring and management of warnings |

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| Responsibilities | Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC), State Response Controller, Agency Commanders, Incident Controller, Deputy Incident Controller, State Communications Manager, Public Information Officer, Warnings Duty Officer, Media Officer, Spokesperson, Social Media Officer, Information and Warnings Officer, Community Officer, Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator |
| Definitions | <p>Common Emergency Management terms and definitions can be found in EM-COP under Library > Definitions.</p> <p>Within this document, the following definitions apply:</p> <p>Community Officer Person appointed to co-ordinate community liaison activities from the Incident Control Centre (ICC) associated with the incident. Reports to the Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee (EMJPIC) A state committee that supports operational public information processes by coordinating whole of government emergency management communications and community engagement. EMJPIC coordinates appropriate stakeholders for each specific event where possible, including state, local and federal agencies, businesses and relevant industries and fosters partnerships with media.</p> <p>Evacuation The planned movement of people from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas to safer areas and eventual return.</p> <p>Joint Public Information Committee (JPIC) Committee established to coordinate the public information across all agencies supporting the incident (IJPIC) or regional (RJPIC) tier to ensure consistent and holistic messaging throughout response and recovery.</p> <p>Information and Warnings Officer (IWO) Prepares, coordinates and disseminates information and warnings to communities and stakeholders (internal and external) during an incident. Reports to the Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Media accreditation card A card issued by the CFA to media personnel who have showing completion of the training course PUAOHS002A (Maintain Safety at an Incident Scene) that proves media have undertaken briefings about bushfire safety.</p> <p>Media Officer (MO) Works within the Media Unit at an Incident Control Centre or State Control Centre (SCC) and is responsible for writing key messages, media releases, organising media conferences and coordinating all media contact for emergency events. Reports to the Public Information Officer.</p> |

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| | <p>Public Information Officer (PIO) The individual responsible for the provision of information to the community affected by the emergency. They manage and lead the Public Information Section. Their role includes engaging key stakeholders before, during and after an emergency to ensure the provision of information to the community is coordinated at the local, regional and state levels.</p> <p>Public Information Section (PIS) The section responsible for the preparation, coordination and dissemination of public information and warnings to current and potentially affected communities, media, other agencies, and operational personnel. The Information and Warnings Unit, Media Unit and Community Liaison Unit are part of the PIS.</p> <p>SCC Public Information Support Officer(s) Works within the Public Information Section and provides a 365 model for supporting public information and engaging with the Victorian community. This team provides media, social media, warnings and advice, intelligence and undertake operational communication duties and support.</p> <p>Social Media Officer Works within the Media Unit and is responsible for posting, monitoring and responding to community through agency social media channels.</p> <p>Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) The warning signal used in assisting the delivery of public warnings for major emergencies, as described in Appendix 3 Victorian Warnings Arrangements.</p> <p>State Communications Manager The State Communications Manager guides and sets the strategic communication direction for Class 1 and 2 Emergencies, fulfilling the EMCs legislative responsibilities through readiness, response to relief and early recovery, consequence management, coordination and informing both Government and the community on behalf of the State.</p> <p>Victorian Warning Arrangements The arrangements that outlines the requirements of emergency response and recovery agencies regarding coordinated and consistent information and warnings to inform the Victorian community of a potential or actual emergency event.</p> <p>Warnings Duty Officer (WDO) The WDO role supports agencies to issue warnings in the absence of a local Incident Warnings Duty Officer (IWDO) and is filled by respective agency duty officers. The WDO role is a 24/7 duty role that reports to the control agency.</p> |
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PROCEDURE

1. Authorisation and provision of public information and warnings

- 1.1 The Incident Controller is required to authorise all information and warning notifications for all emergencies, before they are disseminated to the community, unless this is impracticable.
- 1.1.1 To facilitate the rapid communication of information and warnings, the Incident Controller may authorise a Deputy Incident Controller or PIO to authorise the release of information and warnings to the community.
- 1.1.2 Where an extreme and imminent threat to life exists and it is not practicable to obtain authorisation from the Incident Controller, information and warnings may be issued by any response agency personnel. The Incident Controller is required to be advised as soon as possible when anything is issued under these circumstances.
- 1.1.3 In rapidly developing incidents where no Information and Warnings Officer (IWO) is in place, the Incident Controller may request assistance from the relevant agency Warnings Duty Officer (WDO) at local or State level.
- 1.1.4 Where the ICC IWO is seeking to release warnings and cannot do so, the IWO should contact the Region or State PIS or agency WDO to request them to issue them on their behalf.
- 1.1.5 Once information and warnings are authorised by the Incident Controller (or other persons authorised in accordance with section 1.1.1 to 1.1.4), they require no additional approval before release to the community.
- 1.2 Under section 42 of the Emergency Management Act 2013, the EMC must ensure that warnings are issued, and information is provided to the Victorian community in relation to fires for the purposes of protecting life and property. This is an oversight function to ensure that others with a duty to warn fulfil their responsibilities.
- 1.3 The following officers (the “statutory duty holders”) have the responsibility under legislation to issue warnings in relation to fire:
- 1.3.1 major fire – the State Response Controller¹
- 1.3.2 fire in the Fire Rescue Victoria fire district (other than a major fire) – Fire Rescue Victoria²
- 1.3.3 fire in the country area of Victoria (other than a major fire) – Chief Officer of the CFA³
- 1.3.4 fire in State forest, national park or on protected public land (other than a major fire) – Secretary to DEECA⁴.
- 1.4 This means that the statutory duty holders are legally responsible for issuing warnings for fire and may be exposed to potential legal liability if this duty is not discharged appropriately. Section 1.1 above authorises Incident Controllers to undertake this function on behalf of the statutory duty holder.

¹ Section 43(1) of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*.

² Section 43(2) of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and section 32AA of the *Fire Rescue Act 1958*.

³ Section 43(2) of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and section 50B of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*.

⁴ Section 43(2) of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and section 62AA of the *Forests Act 1958*. Under Section 29 of the *Forests Act* the Chief Fire Officer of DEECA is authorised to exercise this duty of the Secretary.

- 1.5 Where an emergency is not a fire, the responsibility to issue information and warnings is that of the Officer who has overall control of response activities.
- 1.6 For consistency throughout this procedure, the term Incident Controller includes these authorising officers.
- 1.7 The State Response Controller is responsible for ensuring information and warnings are issued to the community via a monitoring and quality control function through the SCC PIS. The State Response Controller exercises this responsibility on behalf of the EMC in the case of fires and is authorised under this JSOP to perform this monitoring and oversight function in relation to other emergencies.
- 1.7.1 Given this responsibility, there may be times when the members of the State Information and Warnings Unit have reason to initiate a new notification on behalf of the State Response Controller.
- 1.7.2 Schedule Four – ‘Guidelines for the monitoring and management of warnings’ outlines the process for making any changes to authorised information and warnings.
- 1.7.3 The state PIO or the SCC Public Information Support Officer(s) may make minor changes to warnings and community information if deemed necessary to correct errors.
- 1.7.4 Should major changes be required the State Response Controller will follow through the line of control will confirm requirements with the Incident Controller and request changes to be made.

2. The Public Information Section

- 2.1 A PIS should be established at the incident, regional and/or state tier, as deemed necessary as required by line of control.
- 2.2 Consideration should be given to establishing a full PIS at the Incident Management Team (IMT) to ensure it is as close as possible to the affected community. This PIS should be supported from the region and/or state level.
- 2.3 The PIO is responsible for the dissemination of community information and warnings on behalf of the Incident Controller and should ensure that notifications are based on reliable information.
- 2.4 The Incident Controller and the PIO are responsible for ensuring that all public information and warnings adhere to the Victorian Warnings Arrangements and follow operational guidelines.
- 2.5 For significant incidents, the relevant PIO should form a Joint Public Information Committee (JPIC), engaging relevant communications representatives from the EMT agencies.
- 2.6 The PIO should Chair the JPIC with a relevant recovery tier coordinator included to ensure consistent messaging and approach into recovery.
- 2.7 The JPIC will work closely with the relevant Emergency Management Team (EMT) and Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee (EMJPIC).
- 2.8 The Emergency Management Public Information Reference Manual provides further guidance on the processes for the units within the PIS.

3. Application of warnings and community information templates

3.1 All warnings are required to be issued from the consolidated warnings tools – EM-COP and Emergency Alert.

3.2 Warnings should be issued in line with the control agency hazard procedures.

3.3 Warnings can be issued at several different levels relating to the type and severity of the event.

3.3.1 **Emergency Warning** – An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk

3.3.2 **Watch and Act / Warning** – There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.

3.3.2.1 Note: For emergencies where AWS has been implemented (Fire/Flood/Storm/Cyclone and Extreme Heat), 'Warning' is a term that is no longer used. Where AWS is not yet implemented e.g. Earthquake, 'Warning' may still be used in place of 'Watch and Act'.

3.3.3 **Advice** – An incident has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.

Can also be used as a notification that activity in the area has subsided or is no longer a danger to you. This de-escalation is required as a follow up where a Watch and Act or Emergency Warning has been issued.

3.3.4 Evacuations

3.3.4.1 When an evacuation is planned, recommendations to evacuate are included as action statements within the three levels of warning. Refer to *JSOP 03.12 – Planned Evacuation for Major Emergencies* for the process on how evacuations are planned.

3.3.4.2 The following action statements for evacuation are included in the warning that is to be issued:

- **Prepare to Evacuate** – Issued when it is recommended that the community should quickly prepare to leave the area. This may include undertaking actions to prepare their family, gather critical items and protect their property.
- **Evacuate Now** – Issued when the community is recommended to immediately leave, or processes are in place to evacuate communities.
- **Safe to Return** – Issued when it is safe for the community to return to an area after an evacuation.

3.4 Information contained in a warning should be critical to assist a person's decision making during an event and should include incident situation, call to action, relief locations, road closures etc.

3.5 Warnings should be:

- Tailored: warnings are required to include specific details about the emergency and likely or actual impacts on the community. Where possible local knowledge is required to be utilised.
- Timely: warnings are required to be authorised as a priority with initial information issued in the shortest time practicable and updates provided in a timely manner. Warnings should be updated regularly.
- Relevant: warnings are required to contain explicit information in relation to severity, location, predicted direction and the likelihood impact of on communities. Advice on protective actions for the community to undertake should be relevant to the incident and community impacted.
- Accessible: warnings are required to be provided through multiple channels. Warnings should be written in plain language.

3.6 Information that is of interest or will assist the community once they have been affected by an emergency should be provided via a Community Information message.

- Incident Notification – issued when an event has potential to create significant community interest, but there is minimal, or no likely impact and no community action required.

4. Transition to recovery

4.1 Relief and recovery messaging should be integrated with response information as early as possible to facilitate a smooth transition into the recovery phase. These messages should include information about relief centres, impacts on critical infrastructure, access to assistance and other relevant details to assist the community.

4.2 The PIO should lead the development of a communications plan to ensure transition of all Public Information functions into recovery. If the Communications Officer role is activated, the PIO should collaborate with the State Communications Manager to assist in the development and implementation of the strategic communications plan.

4.3 Communications Plans should be undertaken in conjunction with relevant tier relief and recovery coordinator prior to transition to recovery and consider audiences, agreed messaging, processes and future resource requirements. Other key stakeholders should be engaged and included as early as practicable, ideally via the JPIC. Supporting documentation can be found in the IMT Toolbox. The Relief and Recovery Public Information and Communications Framework can be found under EM Arrangements.

4.4 Handover from the PIO to the relevant recovery tier coordinator should be completed outlining the key contacts, messages and the communications plan.

4.5 The relevant recovery tier coordinator should take over the role of Chair of the JPIC once the transition into recovery is complete.

4.6 The functional lead for each area in recovery is responsible for ensuring that appropriate approvals are gained for any public recovery information in line with that agency's business rules and plans.

4.7 The PIS may be called upon to provide communications personnel to support and facilitate the transition to recovery.

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.

REFERENCE

Related Documents

[Emergency Management Act 2013](#)

[Country Fire Authority Act 1958](#)

[Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958](#)

[Forests Act 1958](#)

[Victorian State Emergency Management Plan](#)

Victorian Warnings Arrangements

[JSOP 03.12 Planned Evacuation for Major Emergencies](#)

[JSOP 03.18 Incident Air Monitoring and Advice for Community Health](#)

[JSOP 03.19 Managing Significant Community Exposure to Fine Particles and Carbon Monoxide in Smoke from Fires](#)

Emergency Management Public Information & Communications Reference Manual

REVIEW

Date Issue

08 August 2024

Date Effective

19 September 2024

Date to be Reviewed

August 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 on file at the SCC | 08 August 2024 |
| Endorsed | Signature | Date |
| Jason Heffernan Chief Officer, CFA | Signed copy on file at the SCC | 08 August 2024 |
| Chris Hardman Chief Fire Officer, DEECA (FFMVic) | Signed copy on file at the SCC | 08 August 2024 |
| Allyson Lardner Acting Deputy Commissioner (EMV) | Signed copy on file at the SCC | 08 August 2024 |
| Gavin Freeman Commissioner, FRV | Signed copy on file at the SCC | 08 August 2024 |
| Tim Wiebush Chief Officer Operations, VICSES | Signed copy on file at the SCC | 08 August 2024 |

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Schedule 1

Protocol for broadcasting frequency and SEWS

How the Standard Emergency Warning System (SEWS) is used

SEWS is authorised as part of the sign off process for issuing Emergency Warnings and is automatically triggered as part of the issuing process.

Incident Controllers should consider if reduced broadcasting conditions should be applied during protracted events or in the evening (between 2100hrs and 0500hrs). If reduced broadcasting is required, then the SCC Media Unit should contact Emergency Broadcasters and notify them of the change in conditions (including the use of SEWS and frequency of updates).

Emergency Broadcasters can contact the SCC Media Unit to request the Incident Controller consider reducing broadcasting conditions. Before altering the broadcasting frequency, the following should be undertaken:

- i) *Check with the Incident Controller when next update will be issued (e.g. warning expiry set for 6am)*
- ii) *Incident Controller or SCC PIO confirms that the community is sufficiently informed and that reduced updates won't impact community awareness*
- iii) *Emergency Broadcasters and the SCC PIO consult with each other and both agree to the altered frequency of broadcasting, providing approval from the Incident Controller is ascertained*
- iv) *Emergency Broadcasters will inform listeners that the frequency of updates will be reduced to hourly and when the next update will be*

If a new warning is issued the broadcaster is required to resume normal emergency broadcasting (e.g. break in to programming for an Emergency Warning).

The State Agency Commander of the Control Agency or the State Response Controller, shall monitor the use of SEWS and where they consider it appropriate provide advice to the Incident Controller about reduced broadcasting conditions.

The SCC PIS will assist with monitoring the issue of Emergency Warnings and the use of SEWS. They will support the incident if a request is made to alter broadcasting conditions.

Where there is more than one incident occurring within the state that is generating Emergency Warnings, broadcasters may adjust the use of SEWS to play it only once before a block of warnings are broadcast.

These arrangements have been incorporated in the 'Practice Note for Emergency Broadcasting in Victoria', as the procedure for implementing the Memoranda of Understanding between the Victorian Government and Emergency Broadcasters.

Example of SEWS instructions to broadcasters;

SEWS REQUIRED

This is an official emergency warning announcement issued by NAME.

Please broadcast this warning VERBATIM.

The 'Safety Information' and 'Stay Informed' sections should be broadcast at least once in the case of multiple warnings.

Broadcasters should break into programming to broadcast this emergency announcement, preceded by the Standard Emergency Warning Signal.

The announcement is to be repeated 5 mins after the original break into programming, including the SEWS.

After this time there is no further need for SEWS for this specific warning, please revert to reading the warning every 15 minutes in line with the Practice Note for Emergency Broadcasting in Victoria.

If an updated warning is received, please start these broadcasting instructions anew.

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Schedule 2

Guideline for the use of Emergency Alert (EA)

Decision to utilise

The decision to use Emergency Alert, whilst dependent on the situation at the time, is more likely to be used as a warning channel when one or more of the following apply:

- contributes to saving lives and property
- it is deemed the best way of warning the community in the event of an actual or likely emergency
- alternate channels have been considered and alone may not achieve objective(s)
- time is of the essence and specific action following receipt of the warning is required
- targeted messaging for a defined geographical area, it should be noted that Emergency Alert isn't designed for large geographical area campaigns in a mass communication strategy

Emergency Alert has several different campaign modes available. These are voice, SMS – Service Address and SMS Location Based. The user should choose the campaign mode(s) and/or change the default mode based on the circumstances and operational requirements.

Like all warnings, agencies should be mindful that overuse of Emergency Alert may contribute to community complacency and/or the community becoming desensitised to the importance of the warning content.

Promotional and marketing messages are not to be disseminated through Emergency Alert.

The decision to utilise the telephony system will be the responsibility of the Incident Controller. Agency protocols are to contain sufficient information about the use of Emergency Alert.

Agencies are to ensure that they maintain accurate records of all decision-making activities and processes, messages disseminated and associated costs.

Message construction

Users of Emergency Alert need to ensure that the message content considers the limitation of the system.

- SMS – 612 characters maximum (includes spacing)
- Voice – 4,000 characters, equivalent of approximately four minutes. (An average message length is approximately 30 seconds. Longer messages may unnecessarily congest the network)



Emergency Alert contains templates developed by Agency Authorisers. The templates contain generic content for specific hazards with variable fields compatible with the Common Alerting Protocol⁵. Below is an example template.

| Message Type | Severity | Voice Message | Text Message |
|--------------|----------|--|--|
| Bushfire | Warning | Emergency. Emergency. This is a Bush Fire Emergency Warning message issued by the CFA. Residents in the //LOCATION// and surrounding areas should seek shelter now. Further information is available via the media, or go to | Bushfire Emergency Warning from CFA. //LOCATION// and surrounding areas. Seek shelter now. Check local radio or www.emergency.vic.gov.au |

*Voice Message content uses phonetic spelling



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Users should ensure they listen to the voice playback prior to submitting the message (e.g. phonetically, residents may sound clearer when spelt 'resadents').

Message dissemination

Warnings disseminated through the telephony-based system should:

- define geographical area for telephony warning dissemination
- agree to mode of dissemination i.e. mobile based and/or landline based
- undertake telephony messaging procedures as outlined in the Telstra telephony warning user guide
- ensure that other channels that are referenced have the correct information

If the telephone alert message directs people to seek further information, that information or warning must be published prior to the telephone alert campaign unless there are confounding reasons against such use.

System capability, application, and performance

Agencies are responsible for undertaking appropriate training and familiarisation activities to ensure users understand the functionality, capability, and capacity of the system.

There is a comprehensive User Guide accessible via the help tab on the IMT Toolbox, dedicated 24hr Service Desk and a stand-alone training site to further support registered users. The User Guide includes Recommended Use Guidelines to follow to optimise the performance of the system. The User Guide also outlines the technical configuration of Emergency Alert including supported system browsers, and minimum PC operating configuration to optimise performance.

The system does have some inherent limitations. These include:

- capacity of existing telecommunications networks and infrastructure
- capacity of local telephone exchanges

⁵ Common Alerting Protocol – simple format used for exchanging all hazard emergency alerts and public warnings. CAP allows a consistent warning message to be disseminated simultaneously over a range of technology networks and warning mediums, thus increasing warning effectiveness while simplifying the warning task. [CAP Australian Profile (CAP-AP) V1.0]

- existing mobile phone coverage
- integrity and accuracy of data within the Integrated Public Number Database (IPND). The Location Based Number Store (LBNS) is the data source for Emergency Alert and uses information from IPND
- for location-based SMS - the last known location of the mobile phone handset may be up to an hour old. The network updates the location when the handset interacts with the network e.g. makes or receives a call, sends or receives an SMS. If there have not been any network interactions the network updates the handset location every hour (more frequent updates would overload the network)
- restricted access to data due to privacy legislation

A number of factors may affect message dissemination, including:

- the length of the message
- the number of retries configured for fixed line services
- the Campaign Validity Period
- the time taken to authorise a Campaign
- fixed line congestion
- SMS network load
- number of concurrent Campaigns
- size of the Campaign
- Power disruption or infrastructure failure of communications network

The Emergency Alert system will continue to be examined in the context of continuous improvement and improved effectiveness.

Schedule 3

Other tools for warning the community

VicEmergency Hotline

- VicEmergency Hotline is a telephone service that can provide the public with information relevant to emergencies.
- The VicEmergency Hotline operational hours are dependent of agency business rules and operational requirements. The State Response Controller and respective agency can nominate hotline operational hours. During recovery, the State Relief and Recovery Manager can activate and nominate the hotline operational hours. The process and form for actioning this can be found in SOP – SCC Planned Activation.
- When the VicEmergency Hotline is not activated community members can call the hotline to listen to the latest warnings. A text to speech converter means that warnings published to VicEmergency will be read out to the caller. Community members have the option to listen to warnings issued in a post code (that they enter) or if they can select to listen to all warnings issued for Victoria.
- The PIS and the VicEmergency Hotline will work together to provide the community with the most up to date information before, during and after emergencies.
 1. When the VicEmergency Hotline is activated the PIS should ensure that they are provided with updated and approved key messages. Approved key messages should be provided to the VicEmergency Hotline Customer Service Centre through email (cscemergency.info@delwp.vic.gov.au).
 2. The PIS at the SCC will provide support to VicEmergency Hotline by providing them with relevant information and assisting with difficult questions.
 3. During recovery, when the PIS is deactivated, key messages will be provided to the VicEmergency Hotline Customer Service Centre by either the State Relief and Recovery Unit (when activated) or by ERV when recovery is occurring at region.
 4. New information provided by the VicEmergency Hotline to the PIS is to be passed to the SCC Intelligence Section to follow up immediately with the IMT Situation Unit. A response is to be provided to the VicEmergency Hotline regarding the validation of the information provided.

Community Alerting Sirens

Community Alerting Sirens are activated at the discretion of the Incident Controller to alert the community of an imminent threat to the community and community members should immediately seek further information.

Sirens are activated using EM-COP Public Publishing. The option to sound a community alerting siren is available for Watch & Act warnings and Emergency Warnings, including Evacuation Warnings where the control agency has determined that it might use a siren. Community Alerting Sirens can be used to alert the community to any hazard.

Siren lengths:

- Short Siren (up to 90 seconds) – indicates a CFA Brigade has responded to an emergency incident nearby. Stay informed.
- Extended Siren (5 minutes) – indicates that a current emergency has been identified in the local area and people should seek further information immediately. The emergency incident will impact people in this area.

Less than [40 Victorian communities](#) have community alert sirens. The location of the sirens is available within EM-COP by turning on the Infrastructure – Community – Warning Sirens data layer.

Social Media

Social media is an important tool that is used during activation and non-activation periods to engage and alert the community when an incident in Victoria has occurred. The Social Media Officer sits with the PIS at a SCC or ICC during incidents. Social Media is its own functional unit within the PIS with many responsibilities to support class 1 incidents.

Social media utilises many social media platforms with emergency management agencies holding social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to support class 1 emergencies in getting tailored, timely and relevant information out to the community.

EM-COP has internal configuring to automate messages to agency social media channels when Community Information, Advice, Watch and Act, and Emergency warnings are issued.

The Social Media Officer updates Watch and Act, Emergency Warnings to include social media tiles to visually alert the community on incident location with a map image of the incident area.

Social Media as a tool has proven to provide valuable information to communities in affected areas pre, during and post emergencies. It also drives awareness to communities outside of affect areas to support emergency services, generate volunteers and to connect with family and friends.



Schedule 4

Guideline for the monitoring and management of warnings

The key role of the members of the State Information & Warnings Unit and the SCC Public Information Support Officer(s) is to monitor and support the agency's dissemination of information and warnings.

This ensures the State Response Controller's legislative responsibility to provide information and warnings to the Victorian community under section 42 of the Emergency Management Act 2013 is met.

Given this responsibility, there may be times when the members of the State Information and Warnings Unit or the SCC Public Information Support Officer(s) have reason to update or reissue a warning authorised by an Incident Controller. In this instance the State Response Controller/State Agency Commander needs to liaise with their Regional counterpart.

In line with this Standard Operating Procedure 1.1.2, where an **extreme and imminent threat to life** exists and it is not practicable to obtain authorisation from the Incident Controller in the circumstances, the State Response Controller can request the State Information and Warnings Unit initiate a warning.

PROCESS FOR CHANGES

Should an update or reissue be deemed necessary by either the State Information and Warnings Unit or SCC Public Information Support Officer(s) they will:

- Confirm the need with the State PIO or State Agency Commander.
- Contact the relevant Incident Information and Warnings Officer or Warnings Duty Officer first to give them the opportunity to send an update.
- Should the local officer agree that the changes are necessary but is unable to action within 10 minutes, then the State Information and Warnings unit will make the changes on behalf of the Incident Controller.
- The local Warnings Officer or Warnings Duty Officer may request the State Information and Warnings Unit make the changes if they are unable to do so in a timely manner.

Where the ICC IWO or WDO cannot be contacted within 10 minutes then the State PIO or State Agency Commander can authorise the reissue or update of a notification as per procedure 1.4 in this JSOP. The incident Information & Warnings Officer and Incident Controller is required be made aware of the reissue or update as soon as possible.

The following instances are considered 'major' changes and need to be raised through the State Response Controller to confirm notification requirements with the Regional Agency Commander/Incident Controller:

1. Where the template chosen does not appropriately represent the notification content
2. Any changes to the impacted area/towns
3. Any changes to the time to impact
4. Incident Name