

Professional Standard: Certified Planning Officer Capabilities

Authority

This standard was endorsed by the EMPS Panel in August 2018.

Context

This document is a high-level outline of capabilities that can be observed in practice. These are capabilities expected of personnel in an Incident Management Team who wish to have their practice acknowledged and certified as part of AFAC's Professionalisation Scheme. It is expected that demonstrating the capabilities will require a portfolio of evidence collected over time.

This document is NOT:

- a prescription of what training courses should be delivered;
- a replacement for agency sign off and validation that personnel are able to do the job;
- a selection and recruitment tool for trainees, or
- a template to be used to sign off capabilities in a once-off observation.

The Planning Officer is delegated the role and responsibility for planning at an incident by the Incident Controller.

The Planning Officer will be required to exercise critical thinking and judgement to determine the level of resources and structure required to manage the Planning function, as well as maintain effective information flow and reporting arrangements.

Planning is conducted in accordance with AIIMS (Au)/CIMS (NZ) and other systems aligned with AIIMS principles and functions.

Appointment of Planning Officers

Appointment to the role of Planning Officer for an emergency incident is made by the Incident Controller, or otherwise in accordance with jurisdictional emergency management arrangements. The Incident Controller retains ultimate responsibility for the effective management of the incident management team, including the Planning section.

Accountabilities

The Planning Officer will be required to:

- obtain a briefing from the Incident Controller
- lead and manage the Planning Section
- provide a safe and effective working environment for all planning personnel

- obtain intelligence from the Intelligence Unit/ Section (where established) in order to support the development of the Incident Action Plan
- collect and analyse information on the current and projected incident situation
- ensure that groups and businesses (including owners and operators of critical infrastructure) affected by the incident have input into the development of incident objectives and strategies
- identify new and emerging risks at the incident, including political, economic, social, public safety or environmental risks and addressing these in the Incident Action Plan
- develop alternative incident objectives and strategies and identify the risks and likely outcomes associated with each
- identify the preferred incident objective and strategies, including justification, for discussion by the Incident Management Team and approval by the Incident Controller
- disseminate information relevant to controlling the incident and potential safety issues to the Public Information Section (where established) and within the incident management structure
- conduct planning meetings
- document the Incident Action Plan for the subsequent operations period, and for the duration of the incident, if this is necessary or appropriate
- develop, and review as necessary, an appropriate Communications Plan
- plan for any contingency in the implementation of the Incident Action Plan
- develop and maintain an effective register of all resources requested, en route, allocated to, and released from an incident
- consider recovery and rehabilitation in Incident Action Plans
- support information sharing and transitional arrangements with recovery organisation(s)
- provide management support services (radio, telephone and computer operators, document distribution and administrative support)
- develop changeover and demobilisation plans
- collect, collate and store incident records.

The extent to which these accountabilities are required is determined by the scale of incident to be managed.

The explicit tasks and responsibilities are described and explained in the ***AIIMS Manual (2017)***.

Stakeholders

The Planning Officer may be required to manage relationships with a range of stakeholders including:

- the Public Information, Intelligence, Operations and Logistics sections in the incident management structure
- state and regional coordination and control centres.

Areas of capability

There are two main areas of capability for Incident Management Team members (see Appendix 1), these are:

1. capabilities to *manage the incident*, and
2. capabilities relevant to the specific *hazard context*.

1. Capabilities to manage the incident include the ability to:

Model Leadership and Teamwork: *the ability to act with integrity, influence others, and facilitate team efforts towards the achievement of common goals. This involves:*

- modelling ethics, inclusiveness and good governance;
- creating effective background conditions to build confident and capable teams and engaged stakeholders, and
- applying effective decision making.

Think and plan strategically: *the ability to consider multiple perspectives and scenarios to engage in strategic planning and consequence management. This involves:*

- pursuing sense-making and encouraging same in others;
- practicing strategic thinking and planning;
- planning and mapping diverse audiences;
- enabling consequence management.

Demonstrate self-awareness: *the ability to monitor stress and fatigue, display resilience and agility and reflect on and adjust to feedback. This involves:*

- monitoring and managing self for symptoms of stress and fatigue;
- displaying resilience and agility, and
- recognising own strengths and limitations.

2. Capabilities related to the specific hazard context include the ability to:

Apply technical skills/knowledge: *having a relevant understanding of existing policies, structures and doctrine to be applied when managing the incident. This involves:*

- effectively applying appropriate legislation, policy and procedures;
- effectively managing the Planning function at an incident in accordance with AIIMS doctrine;
- demonstrating understanding of broader stakeholder EM arrangements, and
- demonstrating understanding of available systems and technologies.

Employ expertise in hazard specific knowledge: *apply a specialist understanding in the Planning context (obtaining specialist advice as required) of the risks and behaviours of hazards such as fire, severe weather (flood, storm, and cyclone), search and rescue, hazardous materials, aviation and other hazards.*

The following table (Appendix 1) describe these capabilities and the expectations for each of the five areas of capability.

Review

This standard will commence August 2018. The Panel will review this standard after five years or as required.

Related professional standards

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- Code of Ethics (2017)
- Professional Standard: Planning Officer Requirements (2018)
- Professional Standard: Continuing Professional Development (2018)
- EMPS Core Incident Management Team Capabilities

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
<p>Model Leadership and Teamwork</p> <p><i>The ability to act with integrity, influence others, facilitate team efforts towards the achievement of common goals</i></p>	<p>Model ethics, inclusiveness and good governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behave in ways consistent with the <i>Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct</i> Engage in building partnerships with multiple stakeholders through establishing collaborative goals with agreed parameters and treating stakeholders with respect Demonstrate resilience and moral courage Accept scrutiny as a naturally occurring process during a crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts in accordance with the <i>Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct</i> Acts in alignment with organisational frameworks (e.g., OH&S policy) Employs compelling communication to deliver key messages with integrity Treats others with respect Applies governance processes and procedures for the greater good Displays courage to make hard decisions Establishes and maintains appropriate governance processes, including processes to engage in upward chain of command and lateral multi-agency coordination, along with whole-of-government processes
	<p>Create effective background conditions to build confident and capable teams and engaged stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage immediate team and stakeholders so that they are motivated to achieve the outcomes sought Create team communication climates where all team members feel safe to speak up about any concerns they may have regardless of rank or status, without fear of ridicule or recrimination Recognise and contribute critical information to support cross-functional team work and decision-making Proactively seek opportunities to help achieve team goals <p>Critical capabilities for a Planning Officer:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a collaborative team climate (e.g., communicates in a way that is open, direct, measured, and approachable) Pursues honest and open input and feedback Responds promptly and constructively to questions and concerns raised Uses effective communication to advocate for the needs of the team Monitors team member capability and addresses any dysfunctional behaviour or gaps

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the progress of other IMT members and alert them to upcoming critical decision and reporting time frames • Establish within the planning section a critically reflective and lateral-thinking team environment where members are encouraged to raise even speculative concerns and to test assumptions and members are accepting of different views 	
	Apply effective decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make effective decisions in a timely manner under conditions of uncertainty, incomplete information, tight deadlines, and pressure and to acknowledge the limitations of these conditions • Balance operational outcomes with government, community and stakeholder expectations with team requirements • Collaborate with others in decision-making to reach an agreed approach • Recognise and articulate the triggers that would require a decision change • Monitor progress to assess alignment with the objectives and reset as necessary <p>Critical capabilities for a Planning Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the plausibility of multiple scenarios and evaluate the implications of each using worst case scenario thinking • Diagnose preferred options for recommendation • Advocate for preferred options • Interpret the decision made and translate into an Incident Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is timely in making decisions that can be assessed as likely to be reasonable at their point in time • Employs decision-making styles appropriate and demonstrates flexibility appropriate to the context (e.g., balances the need for speed, thoroughness and inclusiveness with the time available) • Can explain, when asked, the reasons for the decision made as well as the processes used (e.g., can articulate how team and stakeholder needs have been taken into consideration in the decisions made) • Clearly articulates the triggers that would require a decision change and recognises them when they occur in practice • Proactively looks for early signs of when the decision needs to be adjusted • Employs conflict resolution and negotiation strategies to balance competing stakeholder needs and priorities, to achieve an agreed decision • Utilises effective communication to communicate decisions made and to ensure decision intent is implemented

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<p>Think and plan strategically</p> <p><i>The ability to consider multiple perspectives and scenarios to engage in strategic planning and consequence management</i></p>	<p>Pursue sense-making and encourage same in others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know when to change plans and adapt based on new information or assumptions that did not materialise • Make meaning from sometimes incomplete or conflicting information in high pressure environments • Ability to listen carefully and to recognise discrepancies between expectations and reality • Critically evaluate information and intelligence promptly, to assess risk and diagnose the decision most likely to lead to a positive outcome • Understand the sensitivity of various pieces of intelligence and gaps • Identify what is NOT being considered or said • Proactively attune to subtle signals that conditions are deteriorating and ask good questions to ascertain what is happening <p>Critical capabilities for a Planning Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek information to clarify and validate the situation • Interpret multiple options at different temporal and spatial scales in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes mechanisms for testing and improving situational awareness • Identifies knowledge gaps, uncertainty, threats and emerging issues so that these can be managed • Is able to identify patterns and trends in a timely manner • Encourages (and coaches if needed) other team members to engage in critical questioning and frank discussion to test assumptions and process conflicting information • Seeks alternative opinions and perspectives including contra-indicators • Can outline how a judgement has taken into account personal and group biases • Projects possible future conditions based on information and intelligence gathered, weighing up difference sources of credibility
	<p>Practice strategic thinking and planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert sense-making into a course of potential action • Articulate objectives, strategies and actions determined through sense-making so that they provide a good basis for planning and decision-making for all involved • Prioritise multiple time and space issues to identify what is important to plan for, and to filter what is not • Employ strategies to avoid being distracted by minutia and to maintain a wider focus, canvassing future outcomes, options and potential impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can predict future conditions that reflect the information gathered through sense-making and evaluate those options • Can clearly explain the significance and potential consequences of predictions • Can clearly and concisely explain the information strategies chosen • Explains the assumptions on which plans are based and triggers for reassessing plans • Acts quickly to adjust the strategy as the context changes

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
		<p>Critical capabilities for a Planning Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptualise multiple scenarios and what is needed to address them • Confidently engage in provocative questioning to reveal weaknesses and assumptions • Develop scenarios for use in the decision-making process • Utilise intelligence in future modelling and options analyses • Formulate a preferred plan appropriate to the complexity and conditions of the event • Utilise worst case scenario planning and develop contingency plans • Maintain a futures-oriented oversight of progress against the plan and alert team members to upcoming demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates creativity and flexibility in adapting plans to improvise in novel situations
	Enables consequence management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a focus on consequences of the incident and actions and assess the consequences of actions to resolve the incident • Engage in contingency planning, adjust strategies • Assess broader issues beyond the immediate incident. <p>Critical capabilities for a Planning Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify future time-critical demands and decision points to support consequence management • Monitor resource capability needs; to engage in risk /capability analyses to ensure others are aware of existing capability and limitations, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can identify all those who are potentially affected by the incident • Can explain the long term impacts of the incident including the consequences of actions to resolve the incident • Anticipates what might go wrong and any unintended adverse effects • Explains contingency planning for adverse effects • Flexibly matches communication style to audience

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance response needs with community needs in developing plans to manage the consequences of the event. 	
<p>Demonstrate self-awareness</p> <p><i>The ability to monitor stress and fatigue, display resilience and agility, and reflect and adjust to feedback</i></p>	<p>Monitor and manage self for symptoms of stress and fatigue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop effective strategies to manage psychological and physiological demands Employ strategies to identify and manage personal limitations and impact of biases Manage emotion and display empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains focus and remains grounded when under pressure Uses coping strategies to manage under sub-optimal conditions Self-regulates emotions under the pressure of challenging circumstances Monitors self-behaviour and its impact on others
	<p>Display resilience and agility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt and overcome adversity Employ personal strategies to operate effectively in challenging conditions to maintain well-being Respond to pressure and setbacks whilst remaining focused on objectives and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in a realistic assessment of predicted tough days Copes with flux, the unexpected and incomplete information Recovers quickly from setbacks and persevere to get things done despite difficulties Is flexible when faced with sub-optimal or novel conditions and improvises in response Accepts that things do go wrong and sometimes there are limits to what can be controlled Acts promptly to signs that action is not producing the desired outcomes
	<p>Recognise own strengths and limitations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and monitor personal limitations and biases Critically reflect on and identify areas of self-improvement in action and in review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates limitations and avoids arrogance and hubris Accepts feedback or criticism and adjust appropriately and objectively Objectively evaluates what went well and what did not Critically reflects on own performance and takes responsibility

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates learning from feedback and experience • Seeks opportunities to extend knowledge, skills and experience • Enacts plans for continued professional development
Apply technical skills / knowledge	Apply appropriate legislation, policy and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain, appropriately interpret, and apply relevant legislation, policies and doctrine • Lead, manage and operate within legislative and governance frameworks • Act in alignment with policies supporting decision making, for example in relation to issue of warnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can explain, appropriately interpret, and apply legislation, policies and doctrine relevant to the jurisdiction
	Demonstrate community engagement background or experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key factors in effective engagement of communities • Understand needs of diverse cross-section of community members • Maintains effective communication to communities/individuals in stressful situations or demonstrating distress and anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can articulate/explain the requirements of effective community engagement and communication as they apply to the range of communities and individuals encountered in practice • Can apply effective communication techniques for stressed communities and manage challenging community feedback and emotions including anger and distress
	Manage the Planning Section in accordance with AIIMS doctrine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply AIIMS to manage the Planning Section • Lead, manage and operate to Incident Management Systems principles and structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately applies AIIMS to manage the Planning Section
	Demonstrate understanding of broader stakeholder EM arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply emergency management arrangements • Recognise organisational capabilities and limitations of stakeholders • Understand the application of multi-organisational arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works within the organisational and multi-organisational arrangement

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
	<p>Demonstrate understanding of available systems and technologies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and deploy appropriate systems and technologies Understand the strengths and limitations of systems and technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects and uses technologies appropriate to the incident
<p>Employ expertise in Hazard Specific Knowledge</p>	<p>Demonstrate understanding of Fire, Severe Weather (flood, storm, cyclone), Search and Rescue, Hazardous Materials, Aviation and other hazards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply specialist understanding of the risks and behaviours of hazards (such as fire, severe weather (i.e. flood, storm and cyclone), search and rescue, hazardous materials, aviation, and other hazards) Apply expertise in hazard-specific knowledge including understanding the behavioural characteristics and the risks that the hazard poses. Seek specialist advice as required to support decision making <p>Critical Planning Officer capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazard-specific knowledge and experience is essential The ability to access needed hazard specific expertise is essential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses hazard specific knowledge to inform their management of the Planning function