

Professional Standard: Registered Public Information Officer

Authority

This standard was approved by the AFAC Council on 30 April 2018.

Context

The Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme (the Scheme) is a program to register or certify emergency management practitioners who have completed a process to formally recognise their skills, abilities and experience.

Established by AFAC, the national council and peak body for fire, land management and emergency service agencies in Australia and New Zealand, the Scheme is a new initiative specifically designed to reinforce emergency management as a profession.

The Scheme is open to career and volunteer personnel of AFAC member agencies, as well as individuals from commercial or government entities.

Scope of application

This standard applies to applicants seeking registration in the role of Public Information Officer. A proficient Public Information Officer will be able to manage the Public Information Section in a fully developed incident management structure, including an understanding of the purpose and function of the Units within the Public Information Section and the ability to manage those units in the context of a complex incident.

Hazard specific expertise is evaluated as part of the education component of eligibility and is a matter for the assessing agency to determine. Registration is limited to the role and is not separated into hazard classes.

Applicants may be career staff or volunteers of AFAC member agencies or personnel from approved commercial or other government entities. It is not a requirement for registration that the applicant works for a fire or emergency service agency, but applicants require experience of working within an AIIMS incident management structure at emergency incidents.

Registration

Registration as a Public Information Officer is available to an individual who has successfully fulfilled all eligibility requirements. Individuals will be recognised as proficient in management of the Public Information function as defined in AIIMS, with experience in running a Public Information section at incidents of moderate to significant impact and complexity.

No distinction is drawn between registration of Public Information Officers for level 2 and level 3 incidents. This is because in order to be eligible for registration, an applicant must demonstrate their ability to manage a developed Public Information Section at an incident. Familiarity with managing elements of public information, for example issuing a warning, at a less complex incident is not sufficient to meet the requirements for registration. The practical difference between managing a developed Public Information section at a level 2 as opposed to a level 3 incident will be limited and there is no 'level 3' unit of competency in the Public Safety Training Package.

Advanced practitioners with substantial experience in managing the public information function at high-impact, high-consequence events may be eligible for certification.

Education requirements for Registered Public Information Officer

Applicants must be able to provide documented evidence of successful completion of one or more of the education components and all associated prerequisites as specified in Table 1.

Table 1:

Course or Program
PUAOPEXXXA Manage public information at a complex incident 22459VIC Course in the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System
An AFAC member agency course for Public Information Officers working in developed incident management structures which is formally assessed against criteria equivalent to PUAOPEXXXA Manage public information at a complex incident and 22459VIC Course in the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System
A qualification which was awarded after formal assessment and which in the view of the Panel provides evidence of the Applicant’s competence to manage the Public Information Section in developed incident management structures equivalent to PUAOPEXXXA Manage public information at a complex incident and 22459VIC Course in the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System

Eligibility – Registered Public Information Officer

Applicants must be able to provide documented evidence to demonstrate that he or she:

- Has signed and committed to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct 2017.
- Has successfully fulfilled the role of Public Information Officer managing a developed Public Information Section at moderate to high impact emergency events, including managing Units within the Section, for at least two years and in a minimum of three instances, with at least one instance being in the 12 months before applying.
- Is in compliance with the *Professional Standard: Continuing Professional Development*.
- Is supported by their home agency or jurisdiction.

Definitions

A moderate to high impact event:	Is a Level 2 or level 3 incident or equivalent as described in the AIIMS Manual and as determined by the Panel.
Instance:	Is an operational incident, an exercise involving a realistic simulation of an operational incident, or a pre-formed incident management team stood up in anticipation of an operational incident.

Review

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

Related professional standards

- Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct (2017).
- Professional Standard: Continuing Professional Development (2018).