Professional Standard:
Certified Incident Controller Capabilities

Authority

This standard was approved by the AFAC Council on 30 April 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 the Emergency Management 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 role of Incident Controller is to lead and manage all activities and resources necessary for the resolution of an emergency incident and the provision of risk information and warnings to the public.

In fulfilling this role the Incident Controller will be responsible for the strategic, operational and tactical decisions necessary to reduce the impact and consequence of emergency events on communities, where safety, wellbeing and the prosperity of communities is of primary concern.

The Incident Controller will be required to exercise critical thinking and judgement to determine the level of resources and incident structure required to manage the emergency, as well as establish effective information flow and reporting arrangements.

Incident Control is practiced in accordance with AIIMS (Au)/CIMS (NZ) and other systems aligned with AIIMS principles and functions.

Appointment of Incident Controllers

Appointment to the role of Incident Controller for an emergency incident is made by the organisation with the relevant legislative authority. Therefore, when appointed, the Incident Controller has the legislative authority to make directions and take actions to resolve the incident.

Accountabilities

The Incident Controller will be required to:

- establish and take control of the incident;

- maintain a strong focus on providing warnings and information to the public;
- establish and manage an incident management structure;
- assess the situation, identify risks and determine priorities;
- develop and execute an Incident Action Plan;
- communicate risk, impact and consequences to community and stakeholders;
- establish and maintain multi-agency communication and cooperation;
- establish and operate a control facility;
- establish and manage media relations;
- manage the safety and welfare of emergency workers and the Incident Management Team, and
- initiate demobilisation and transition to relief and recovery.

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 Incident Controller may be required to manage relationships with a broad range of stakeholders including:

- affected communities and individuals
- executive and senior managers
- emergency management/services commissioners and chief officers
- state and regional coordination and control centres
- multi-jurisdictional emergency management response and recovery agencies
- local governments
- national media and public information agencies

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, and
- 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 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: *having a specialist understanding 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 April 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: Certified Incident Controller Requirements (2018)
- Professional Standard: Continuing Professional Development (2018)
- EMPS Core Incident Management Team Capabilities

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
Model Leadership and Teamwork *The ability to act with integrity, influence others, facilitate team efforts towards the achievement of common goals*	Model ethics, inclusiveness and good governance	• Behave in ways consistent with the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct* • 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	• Acts in accordance with the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct* • 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
	Create effective background conditions to build confident and capable teams and engaged stakeholders	• 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 **Critical capabilities for an Incident Controller:**	• 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 compelling 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
		• Create the shared purpose and direction for the whole team • Quickly assess team members and assign tasks appropriately to build on individual and team strengths • Encourage other team members to engage in critical questioning and frank discussion • Build and sustain positive relationships with personnel from other agencies including government heads and elected leaders • Include team and stakeholders considerations in decision-making • Balance between competing needs of stakeholders • Advocate for the needs of the team • Monitor and maintain internal team cohesiveness and stakeholder support	
	Apply effective decision-making	• 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	• 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 appropriates 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 outlines the triggers that would require a decision change • Proactively looks for early signs of when the decision needs to be adjusted

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		Critical capabilities for an Incident Controller: • Lead team members to achieve goals, acknowledging the impacts of constraints (e.g. uncertainty, time pressure, high stakes) • Identify and facilitate team awareness of triggers that require reassessment and change • Proactively look for early signs of when the decision needs to be adjusted • Adapt the leadership style to be appropriate to the context of the incident • Balance competing stakeholder needs and priorities, employing conflict resolution to achieve an agreed decision • Utilise compelling communication to communicate decisions made and to ensure decision intent is implemented • Maintain the appropriate authorising environment for team members to enact their own decisions	• Employs conflict resolution and negotiation strategies to balance competing stakeholder needs and priorities, to achieve an agreed decision • Utilises compelling communication to communicate decisions made and to ensure decision intent is implemented
Think and plan strategically *The ability to consider multiple perspectives*	Pursue sense-making and encourage same in others	• 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	• 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

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
and scenarios to engage in strategic planning and consequence management		• Proactively attune to subtle signals that conditions are deteriorating and ask good questions to ascertain what is happening • Engage in continuous ongoing monitoring to identify gaps in the implementation of the plan and assess the significance of those gaps on the outcome sought **Critical capabilities for an Incident Controller:** • Facilitate thinking by team members the implications of multiple sources of information that may be conflicting • Encourage vigorous discussion to test assumptions • Lead team members to apply creative thinking • Help others to identify divergence in expectations and to clarify differences • Help others and to identify individual and group bias in thinking and decision making • Identify and mediate dysfunctional ways of operating that inhibit sense-making and critical thinking	• Can outline how a judgement has taken into account personal and group biases • Projects possible outcomes based on information and intelligence gathered, weighing up difference sources of credibility
	Practice strategic thinking and planning	• 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	• Can predict future options that reflect the information gathered through sense-making and evaluate those options • Recognises the consequences of options available • Can clearly explain the significance and potential consequences of predictions • Can clearly and concisely explain the planning strategies chosen • Explains the assumptions on which plans are based and triggers for reassessing plans

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
		Critical capabilities for an Incident Controller: • Formulate strategic intent appropriate to the situation • Utilise compelling communication to gain support and resources needed to achieve objectives from higher levels of command and other stakeholders • Recognise local resource needs in the context of a wider emergency event • Identify key measures of success and monitor progress • Facilitate team member thinking, deliberative planning and problem solving	• Acts quickly to adjust the strategy as the context changes • Demonstrates creativity and flexibility in adapting plans to improvise in novel situations
	Enables consequence management	• 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. **Critical Incident Controller capabilities include:** • Use influencing strategies to negotiate actions taken to address consequences • Evaluate the consequences of competing stakeholder priorities and needs • Negotiate with relevant government heads and elected leaders about the consequences of the incident	• 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
Demonstrate self-awareness	Monitor and manage self for symptoms of stress and fatigue	• 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	• Maintains focus and remains grounded when under pressure • Uses coping strategies to manage under sub-optimal conditions

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
The ability to monitor stress and fatigue, display resilience and agility, and reflect and adjust to feedback			• Self-regulates emotions under the pressure of challenging circumstances • Monitors self-behaviour and its impact on others
	Display resilience and agility	• 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	• 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 is 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
	Recognise own strengths and limitations	• Recognise and monitor personal limitations and biases • Critically reflect on and identify areas of self-improvement in action and in review	• 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 • Demonstrates learning from feedback and experience • Seeks opportunities to extend knowledge, skills and experience • Enacts plans for continued professional development

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
Apply technical skills / knowledge	Apply appropriate legislation, policy and procedures	• 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 such as emergency warnings	• Can explain, appropriately interpret, and apply legislation, policies and doctrine relevant to the jurisdiction
	Manage an incident in accordance with AIIMS doctrine	• Apply AIIMS to manage the incident • Lead, manage and operate to Incident Management Systems principles and structures	• Appropriately applies AIIMS to manage the incident
	Demonstrate understanding of broader stakeholder EM arrangements	• Apply emergency management arrangements • Recognise organisational capabilities and limitations of stakeholders • Understand the application of multi-organisational arrangements	• Works within the organisational and multi-organisational arrangement
	Demonstrate understanding available systems and technologies	• Recognise and deploy appropriate systems and technologies • Understand the strengths and limitations of systems and technologies	• Selects and uses technologies appropriate to the incident
Employ expertise in Hazard Specific Knowledge	Fire, Severe Weather (flood, storm, cyclone), Search and Rescue, Hazardous Materials, Aviation and other hazards	• Use 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) • Employ expertise in hazard-specific knowledge including understanding the behavioural characteristics and the risks that the hazard poses. **Critical Incident Controller capabilities include:**	• Uses hazard specific knowledge to inform their management of the incident

Area of Capability	Capability	Incident Management Capability	Behavioural Indicators
		• Hazard-specific knowledge and experience is desirable • The ability to access needed hazard specific expertise is essential	