Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme: Core Incident Management Team Capabilities

The Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme (the Scheme) is a program to credential emergency management practitioners who have completed a process to nationally recognise their skills, abilities and experience. The Scheme's initial focus is on Incident Management Teams.

The Scheme provides a mechanism for AFAC to:
- lead on developing EM practice and practitioners
- establish the standards that define emergency management capabilities and the quality of services provided
- assure the community, government and sector colleagues that practitioners are certified to undertake their duties.

Scope

This document sets out the core capabilities expected of five **Incident Management Team** functional roles:

- Incident Controller
- Operations Officer
- Planning Officer
- Logistics Officer
- Public Information Officer.

The remaining functional roles will be the subject of a separate project.

A capability refers to the behaviours expected from personnel to succeed in achieving their objectives[1]. The capabilities are synthesised from a research evidence base and validated against practitioner experience.

Summary

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 registered or credentialed as part of AFAC's Professionalisation Scheme.
These kinds of capabilities are likely to need a body of evidence gathered over a period of time (i.e. we are not creating one assessment form that can be used in a one-off simulation to sign someone off).

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
- an outline of what behavioural indicators can be used as evidence to provide evidence of the capability
- a form that can be used to sign off capabilities in a once-off observation.

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[1] For more information see *Supporting Evidence for the EMPS Core Incident Management Team Capabilities*

Areas of capability

There are two main areas of capability for Incident Management Team members (see Figure 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
   - 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
   - enabling consequence management.

   Demonstrate self-awareness: *the ability to monitor stress and fatigue, display resilience and agility and reflect and adjust to feedback. This involves:*
   - monitoring and managing self for symptoms of stress and fatigue
   - displaying resilience and agility
   - 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
   - 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 tables describe these capabilities and the expectations for each of the five functional roles, including examples of the behavioural indicators that can be used to demonstrate these capabilities for each credential.

Related documents

This document should be read in conjunction with:
- supporting evidence for the EMPS Core Incident Management Team Capabilities.

CORE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES

Model
Integrity, influence, governance

- Models ethics, inclusiveness and good governance
- Creates effective background conditions to build confident and capable teams and engaged stakeholders
- Applies effective decision-making

Think
Sense-making, scenarios, consequence

- Pursues sense-making and encourages in others
- Practices planning and strategic thinking
- Enables consequence management

Self-Aware
Reflect, adapt, persevere

- Monitors and manages self for symptoms of stress and fatigue
- Displays resilience and agility
- Recognises own strengths and limitations

Incident Management Capabilities

Hazard
Specialist understanding of the risks, consequence and behaviours of hazards.

Technical
Solid understanding and application of policies, systems and doctrine and their strengths and limitations.

Hazard Context Capabilities

Figure 1: Areas of capability for Incident Management Team members

Model leadership and teamwork
Models ethics, inclusiveness and good governance

Demonstrates the ability to:

- 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
- act with resilience and moral courage
- accept scrutiny as a naturally occurring process during a crisis.

Functional role	*Specific capabilities*	*Behavioural indicators (examples)*
Incident Controller (IC) Operations Officer (OO) Planning Officer (PO) Logistics Officer (LO) Public Information Officer (PIO)	*Models ethics, inclusiveness and good governance* is expected of all Incident Management Team leaders and members	• Acts in accordance with *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 in making difficult 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.

Model leadership and teamwork

Creates effective background conditions to build confident and capable teams and engaged stakeholders

Demonstrates the ability to:

- 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.

All incident management team members will demonstrate this core capability in enacting their responsibilities and be able to:

Functional role	Specific capabilities	Behavioural indicators (examples)
Incident Controller (IC)	- 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 - Advocates for the needs of the team - Monitor and maintain internal team cohesiveness and stakeholder support	- 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.

Operations Officer (OO)	• Establish confidence in frontline personnel that their safety and the safety of affected communities are paramount • Establish a communications climate where frontline personnel feel confident that they can raise issues of concern about tactical operation • Monitor incident ground performance without micro-management	
Planning Officer (PO)	• Monitor the progress of other IMT members and alert them to upcoming critical decision and reporting time frames • Establish, especially within the planning unit, 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	
Logistics Officer (LO)	• Build collaborative relationships with external stakeholders and utilise local knowledge to inform team awareness • Collaborate with the OO and PO to track resources and contribute to team awareness of existing resource deployment and future resource needs, including the application of relevant policy	
Public Information Officer (PIO)	• Collaborate with other team members, especially the PO and OO, to identify actual and potential communities at risk and other stakeholders of interest • Interpret and communicate information from a range of sources to effectively advocate for the needs of communities and other stakeholders	

Model leadership and teamwork

Applies effective decision making

Demonstrates the ability to:

- make effective decisions in a timely manner under conditions of uncertainty, incomplete information, tight deadlines, and pressure to acknowledge the limitations of these conditions
- balance operational outcomes and team requirements with government, community and stakeholder expectations
- 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.

All incident management team members will demonstrate this core capability in enacting their responsibilities and be able to:

Functional role	Specific capabilities	Behavioural indicators (examples)
Incident Controller (IC)	• 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 leadership style as appropriate for the context of the incident • Balance competing stakeholder needs and priorities, employing conflict resolution to achieve agreement • 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	• Is timely in making decisions that can be assessed as likely to be reasonable at their point in time • Employs appropriate decision-making styles 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 outlines the triggers that would require a decision change • Proactively looks for early signs of when the decision needs to be adjusted

Operations Officer (OO)	• Apply hazard-appropriate operational tactics to implement the decision made in alignment with the Incident Action Plan • Clearly explain the decision intent to a distributed frontline team so that they can confidently adapt as needed • Communicate effectively so that front line personnel have ownership and understand the expectations • Quickly recognise early triggers signalling trouble and act to secure the safety of responders and communities threatened by the event	• 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
Planning Officer (PO)	• Assess the plausibility of multiple scenarios and evaluate the implications of each using worst case scenario thinking • Diagnose the most preferred option for recommendation • Advocate for the preferred option • Interpret the decision made and translate into an Incident Action Plan • Know when to change plans and adapt based on new information or assumptions that did not materialise	
Logistics Officer (LO)	• Anticipate the needs of other team members and pre-emptively procure needed resources without being explicitly asked • Maintain flexibility to adjust if resources are not required • Adapt and change based on new information, accept error and move on	
Public Information Officer (PIO)	• Recognise critical triggers and act quickly when warnings are needed, and effectively advocate and negotiate for action to expedite decisions • Identify critical information from community and other sources and use compelling communication to convey this information to team members in support of team decisions	

Thinks and plans strategically

Pursues sense-making and encourages same in others

Demonstrates the ability to:

- make meaning from sometimes incomplete or conflicting information in high pressure environments
- 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
- 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.

All incident management team members will demonstrate this core capability in enacting their responsibilities and be able to:

Functional role	Specific capabilities	Behavioural indicators (examples)
Incident Controller (IC)	- Facilitate team members to think about 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	- 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, in a timely manner, identify patterns and trends - Encourages (and coaches if needed) other team members to engage in critical questioning and frank discussion to test assumptions and to process conflicting information - Seeks alternative opinions and perspectives including contra-indicators - Can outline how a judgement has taken into account personal and group biases
Operations Officer (OO)	- Recognise the cues that a plan is failing or needs significant change - Engage frontline personnel in sense-making to test assumptions - Quickly recognise the implications of an evolving event - Assess the strength of competing information	

Planning Officer (PO)	• Seek information to clarify and validate the situation • Interpret multiple options at different temporal and spatial scales in a timely manner	• Projects possible outcomes based on information and intelligence gathered, weighing up difference sources of credibility
Logistics Officer (LO)	• Establishes and maintains strong situational awareness of current and future operational needs with other IMT members • Diagnose the resource requirements of multiple options and assess strategies for procurement in alignment with what can be achieved in the time available	
Public Information Officer (PIO)	• Make sense of information from affected communities and sources to determine strength and credibility • Assess the credibility of various information sources, determining their relative strength • Synthesise emerging information trends and identifying discrepancies • Evaluate the implications of incomplete and conflicting information • Synthesise disparate information and match information needs to diverse communities and stakeholders	

Thinks and plans strategically

Practices planning and strategic thinking

Demonstrates the ability to:

- convert sense-making into a course of potential action
- articulate the objectives, strategies and actions determined through sense-making so that they provide a solid 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.

All incident management team members will demonstrate this core capability in enacting their responsibilities and be able to:

Functional role	Specific capabilities	Behavioural indicators (examples)
Incident Controller (IC)	- Formulate strategic intent appropriate to the situation - Utilise compelling communication to gain the 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 and deliberative planning and problem solving	- 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 - Explains clearly and concisely the planning 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 - Demonstrates creativity and flexibility in adapting plans to improvise in novel situations
Operations Officer (OO)	- Collaborate with the PO to develop plans across multiple time scales and multiple geographical locations - Monitor the effectiveness of tactical operations and adjust as necessary - Maintain a broader strategic view and avoid becoming overly fixated on the details	

	• Proactively anticipate potential gaps and breakdowns as the event is unfolding and show agility in thinking about how to address these gaps
Planning Officer (PO)	• 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
Logistics Officer (LO)	• Collaborate to develop resource plans for multiple scenarios • Translate multiple scenarios into resource needs and efficient plans for procurement • Engage in problem solving to address gaps • Develop strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of resources • Project likely resource requirements and potential barriers that will need to be overcome to obtain them
Public Information Officer (PIO)	• Use compelling communication to inform stakeholder planning and strategic thinking • Identify emerging information needs in the future and proactively plan communication strategy • Identify emerging issues in the political environment, advising the IC of potential gaps • Monitor stakeholder understanding and gaps, and develop communication plans to match needs

Thinks and plans strategically

Enables consequence management

Demonstrates the ability to:

- maintain a focus on the consequences of the incident and actions, and assess the consequences of actions to resolve the incident
- engage in contingency planning and adjust strategies
- assess broader issues beyond the immediate incident.

All incident management team members will demonstrate this core capability in enacting their responsibilities and be able to:

Functional role	Specific capabilities	Behavioural indicators (examples)
Incident Controller (IC)	• 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
Operations Officer (OO)	• Identify the consequences from what can – and cannot – be tactically achieved, and develop strategies to minimise any negative impacts on those affected • Identify the longer-term consequences of operational response on all front line personnel and enact appropriate OH&S policy • Identify the longer-term consequences of operational response on all stakeholders and support efforts to move quickly towards recovery	
Planning Officer (PO)	• 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 • Balance response needs with community needs in developing plans to manage the consequences of the event.	

Logistics Officer (LO)	• Proactively identify impacts on the internal operations of the agency and its capacity to sustain future operations, and • Proactively identify impacts and future resourcing limits of contractors and any other service providers and to feed this back into the IMT.	
Public Information Officer (PIO)	• Identify consequences of the event for stakeholder groups to support IMT planning and decision making and quickly move to support recovery efforts.	

Demonstrates self-awareness		
Monitors and manages self for symptoms of stress and fatigue		
Demonstrates the ability to: • 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.		
Functional role	*Specific capabilities*	*Behavioural indicators (examples)*
Incident Controller (IC) Operations Officer (OO) Planning Officer (PO) Logistics Officer (LO) Public Information Officer (PIO)	*Monitors and manages self for symptoms of stress and fatigue* is expected of all Incident Management Team leaders and members	• Maintains focus and remains grounded under pressure • Uses coping strategies to manage under sub-optimal conditions • Self-regulates emotions under pressure of challenging circumstances • Monitors own behaviour and its impact on others

Demonstrates self-awareness		
Displays resilience and agility		
Demonstrates the ability to: • adapt to 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.		
Functional role	*Specific capabilities*	*Behavioural indicators (examples)*
Incident Controller (IC) Operations Officer (OO) Planning Officer (PO) Logistics Officer (LO) Public Information Officer (PIO)	*Displays resilience and agility is expected of all Incident Management Team leaders and members*	• Engages in a realistic assessment of predicted tough days • Copes with flux, the unexpected and incomplete information • Recovers quickly from setbacks and perseveres 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

Demonstrates self-awareness		
Recognises own strengths and limitations		

Demonstrates the ability to:

- recognise and monitor personal limitations and biases
- critically reflect and identify areas of self-improvement in action and in review.

Functional role	*Specific capabilities*	*Behavioural indicators (examples)*
Incident Controller (IC) Operations Officer (OO) Planning Officer (PO) Logistics Officer (LO) Public Information Officer (PIO)	*Recognises own strengths and limitations* is expected of all Incident Management Team leaders and members	• Appreciates limitations and avoids arrogance and hubris • Accepts feedback or criticism and adjusts 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

Applies technical skills/knowledge

Applies appropriate legislation, policy and procedures

Demonstrates the ability to:

- explain, appropriately interpret, and apply relevant legislation, policies and doctrine
- lead, manage and operate within legislative and governance framework
- act in alignment with policies supporting decision making such as emergency warnings.

Functional role	Specific capabilities	Behavioural indicators (examples)
Incident Controller (IC) Operations Officer (OO) Planning Officer (PO) Logistics Officer (LO) Public Information Officer (PIO)	*Applies appropriate legislation, policy and procedures* is expected of all Incident Management Team leaders and members	• Can explain, appropriately interpret and apply legislation, policies and doctrine relevant to the jurisdiction

Applies technical skills/knowledge

Manages an incident in accordance with AIIMS doctrine

Demonstrates the ability to:

- apply AIIMS to manage the incident
- lead, manage and operate to Incident Management Systems principles and structures.

Functional role	Specific capabilities	Behavioural indicators (examples)
Incident Controller (IC) Operations Officer (OO) Planning Officer (PO) Logistics Officer (LO) Public Information Officer (PIO)	*Manages an incident in accordance with AIIMS doctrine* is expected of all Incident Management Team leaders and members	• Appropriately applies AIIMS to manage the incident

Applies technical skills/knowledge		
Demonstrates understanding of broader stakeholder EM arrangements		
Demonstrates the ability to:		
• apply emergency management arrangements • recognise organisational capabilities and limitations of stakeholders • understand the application of multi-organisational arrangements.		
Functional role	*Specific capabilities*	*Behavioural indicators (examples)*
Incident Controller (IC) Operations Officer (OO) Planning Officer (PO) Logistics Officer (LO) Public Information Officer (PIO)	*Demonstrates understanding of broader stakeholder EM arrangements* is expected of all Incident Management Team leaders and members	• Demonstrates significant understanding of emergency management arrangements, as well as organisational capabilities and limitations

Applies technical skills/Knowledge		
Demonstrates understanding of available systems and technologies		
Demonstrates the ability to:		
• recognise and deploy appropriate systems and technologies • understand the strengths and limitations of systems and technologies.		
Functional role	*Specific capabilities*	*Behavioural indicators (examples)*
Incident Controller (IC) Operations Officer (OO) Planning Officer (PO) Logistics Officer (LO) Public Information Officer (PIO)	*Demonstrates understanding of available systems and technologies* is expected of all Incident Management Team leaders and members	• Selects and uses technologies appropriate to the incident

Employs expertise in hazard apecific knowledge

Demonstrates the ability to:

- 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.

All incident management team members will demonstrate this core capability in enacting their responsibilities, and:

Functional role	*Specific capabilities*	*Behavioural indicators (examples)*
Incident Controller (IC)	• Hazard-specific knowledge and experience is desirable. The ability to access needed hazard-specific expertise is essential.	• Uses hazard-specific knowledge to inform their management of the incident
Operations Officer (OO)	• Hazard-specific knowledge and experience is essential.	
Planning Officer (PO)	• Hazard-specific knowledge and experience is desirable. The ability to access needed hazard-specific expertise is essential.	
Logistics Officer (LO)	• Hazard-specific knowledge and experience is desirable.	
Public Information Officer (PIO)	• The ability to access needed hazard-specific expertise is essential.	