

Becoming a registered or certified practitioner

2023

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Welcome

AFAC is the National Council for Fire and Emergency Services in Australia and New Zealand.

The Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme (EMPS) has been established by the AFAC National Council to promote the recognition of emergency management as a profession.

EMPS offers national credentialling for individuals who meet agreed practice standards in a range of areas of emergency management practice.

A panel of senior, experienced personnel from across the fire and emergency management sector oversees EMPS. They ensure that the Scheme is operating effectively, and endorse the professional practice standards for registration and certification.

Individuals who are registered or certified as practitioners are recorded in the EMPS database and issued with a card to evidence their status.

Those roles which are currently open for registration and certification can be confirmed by visiting our website www.emps.org.au

The EMPS team looks forward to assisting you with the process and can be contacted on 03 9419 2388 or email@emps.org.au

ROB WEBB
AFAC Chief Executive Officer

About the Scheme

Fire and emergency services have sometimes been defined as more of a 'trade' than a 'profession' when it comes to aspects of leadership, management and professional education. We are seen as professional at what we do, but not a profession.

The Professional Standards Councils defines 'profession' by reference to five 'pillars': Ethics, Education, Experience, Examination and Entity. EMPS offers these to Emergency Management Practitioners across Australia and New Zealand in the following way:

- **Ethics:** EMPS has developed a code of Ethics for fire and emergency personnel which guides behaviour for all who commit to the Scheme.
- **Education:** registration and certification under EMPS require evidence of assessed competence in the relevant practice area based on nationally accredited training.
- **Experience:** the EMPS Panel sets experiential requirements for each category of registration and certification, and it is a requirement to maintain and build on currency by engaging in Continuing Professional Development.
- **Examination:** all applications for EMPS registration or certification are assessed against professional standards; in addition applicants for certification are interviewed by a panel of senior practitioners.
- **Entity delivering the endorsement:** the AFAC National Council has established EMPS to promote emergency management as a profession in Australasia.

EMPS exists to develop professional pathways for our people, and demonstrates to the public sector and the community that we are on a professional journey. Fire and emergency services, and other emergency managers across government, have been closely scrutinised during post incident inquiries. Having a national professionalisation scheme will assist and support our people, by allowing them to demonstrate that their capability meets nationally agreed standards.

Skills, abilities and experience are benchmarked by EMPS against national standards and formally recognised. The Scheme will build progressively to include higher education qualifications, and emergency management expertise in a range of roles across the phases of emergency management. This will over time support career development through to the most senior positions within our agencies.

Can I apply?

You can apply if you are a career staff member or volunteer of a participating AFAC member agency, or another organisation that has made appropriate arrangements with EMPS.



Photo: Emergency Management Victoria

What does the Scheme offer?

You can be registered or certified under the Scheme.

Certified

**Expert
practitioner**

Proficient, experienced professional

Registered

**Capable
practitioner**

Acknowledged leader in complex emergencies



Photo: NSW Rural Fire Service

Eligibility – Registered Practitioner

For practitioners who demonstrate proficiency in the role.

Registered Practitioners may be involved in events from the routine to the complex. The specific professional standard will indicate whether it reflects proficiency in operating at a particular level of incident (as defined in AIIMS) or whether it reflects general proficiency in the role.

What will I be expected to demonstrate?

- Ethics – you will be expected to agree to the EMPS Code of Ethics.
- Education – you have been trained and assessed as competent to perform the role against nationally agreed criteria.
- Experience – you have a minimum period of relevant experience. The EMPS panel determines the required amount of experience required for each role and also determines what experience is relevant for each credential.
- Examination – your application will be assessed against nationally agreed professional standards.
- Your application is supported by your organisation or jurisdiction.



Photo: Queensland SES

Pathway to Registration

<p>EMPS sets standards for Registration</p> <p>▼</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMPS Panel will set standards for education (assessment against set criteria) and experience (practical experience in the role). Education standards will be set by reference to Nationally Recognised Training (NRT)¹ units of competency.
<p>Applicant is assessed as competent in the role</p> <p>▼</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant follows their organisation's L&D pathways to be trained and assessed in the role. Where an assessment does not use NRT units of competency, EMPS may agree that the assessment is equivalent to the NRT competency. A formal assessment against set criteria is always required to demonstrate competency.
<p>Applicant demonstrates proficiency in the role</p> <p>▼</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant performs the role in a practical setting (incident and/or exercise). The Applicant's authority to perform the role comes from their jurisdiction's laws and policies. EMPS will set standards as to the amount and quality of experience required to demonstrate and maintain proficiency.
<p>Applicant applies to EMPS for Registration</p> <p>▼</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant provides evidence of education and experience. The Applicant's organisation or jurisdiction must support their application. Some organisations may lodge block applications for groups of qualified people. The Applicant commits to the EMPS Code of Ethics.
<p>EMPS evaluates application and registers Applicant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMPS considers the evidence provided of education and experience. If it meets the criteria set by the EMPS Panel, the Applicant is registered. If there is any doubt about eligibility, the Applicant may be asked for more information. Disputed applications will be referred to the EMPS Panel.

¹ for more information please see <https://training.gov.au/home/about>

Eligibility – Certified Practitioner

Awarded to practitioners operating at expert level, with substantial experience in managing high impact, complex emergencies. Not all roles have a certified level: this is reserved for those roles carrying the greatest significance in terms of risk and consequence.

What will I be expected to demonstrate?

- Ethics – you will be expected to agree to the EMPS Code of Ethics.
- Education – you have completed formal training and assessment in the role to approved national benchmarks.
- Experience – you have the equivalent of three years' or more current experience and have successfully fulfilled the role at complex, high impact, high consequence emergency events.
- Examination – you are assessed by the EMPS Panel at interview as meeting the professional standards and relevant role-specific capabilities and requirements.
- Your application is supported by your organisation or jurisdiction.

A woman with short, curly brown hair, wearing an orange high-visibility jacket, is shown in profile, looking down at a clipboard she is holding. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor emergency scene with some equipment.

Photo: AFAC

Pathway to Certification

<p>EMPS sets standards for Certification</p> <p>▼</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMPS Panel will set standards for capability (in terms of personal capabilities expected of practitioners at this level) and education/experience (assessed competency and practical experience in the role). • Competency standards will be set by reference to Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) units of competency and relate to competency to work at AIIMS Level 3 incidents.
<p>Applicant is assessed as competent in the role</p> <p>▼</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant follows their organisation's pathways to be trained and assessed as suitable to work at AIIMS Level 3 incidents. • Where an assessment does not use NRT units of competency, EMPS may agree that the assessment is equivalent to the NRT competency.
<p>Applicant acquires experience in the role</p> <p>▼</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant performs the role in a practical setting (AIIMS Level 3 incident and/or exercise). The applicant's authority to perform the role comes from their jurisdiction's laws and policies. • EMPS will set standards as to the amount and quality of experience required for Certification.
<p>Applicant applies to EMPS for Certification</p> <p>▼</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant assembles a portfolio of evidence of capability, education and experience, to include self-reflection on the required capabilities. • The Applicant's organisation or jurisdiction must support their application. • The Applicant commits to the EMPS Code of Ethics.
<p>Applicant is interviewed and Certified if successful at interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications that provide sufficient evidence of meeting the criteria are referred to the EMPS Panel. • Panel members interview applicants, and decide on the application based on the interview and the applicant's portfolio of evidence.

What are the benefits to me?

Being registered or certified will provide you with:

- National recognition of your knowledge, skills and experience through independent validation.
- Evidence of your ability to operate in the role as measured against national benchmarks, which may be requirement for activities such as international deployments.
- A pathway to professional development now and into the future.

How does your agency benefit?

Registration and certification under EMPS provides assurance to government and the public that:

- The level of professional standards in place meets nationally agreed criteria.
- Individuals are required to maintain a level of currency, as well as competency.
- Services are enhanced, and better community safety outcomes are the result.

What does it cost?

AFAC member agencies have made standing arrangements to cover the application and annual fees for their personnel.

Individuals whose application is not made through or with the support of an AFAC member agency pay a fee on application for certification or registration, and annually after that.

Please visit our website www.emps.org.au for detailed information about fees.

Who evaluates my application?

The EMPS Panel oversees the effective operation of the Scheme and the standards applicable to registration and certification.

Registered Practitioners

- Applications will be assessed against criteria agreed by the Panel. Evidence must be provided sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant meets the set criteria. A Panel member or delegate may decide on applications if eligibility is unclear.

Certified Practitioners

- Applications for certification are considered by the EMPS Panel and involve a face-to-face interview at which your eligibility will be tested.

Is my AIMS training recognised?

An element of the Scheme is the requirement for incident management practitioners to have completed AIMS training as part of education and competency requirements. This may be assumed, as part of the required knowledge for another competency, or may be specified as a standalone requirement.



Photo: Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Education and competency requirements

What is outlined in the Standards?

Minimum requirements apply for education and competency for registration and certification. You must meet the standard before being accepted as part of the Scheme. Education undertaken will be aligned with the role you are applying in relation to.

Usually, the education and competency requirements will be expressed in terms of a unit or units of competency from the Australian Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) system. NRT units of competency represent a national consensus on the elements required to demonstrate competencies in a range of roles. AFAC and representative bodies are involved in the process of drafting and approving public safety NRT competencies.

In some cases, applicants may have undertaken a formal training course for a role followed by assessment, which did not result in a statement of attainment being awarded for the equivalent NRT unit/s of competency.



Photo: Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

EMPS may deem such courses acceptable as evidence of competency, if it can be shown that they contain broadly the same subject-matter as the NRT content.

Some practitioners may have been undertaking a role for many years and consider that they are competent in the role, without ever having been formally assessed. In those circumstances, the home agency of the practitioner should be able to arrange for their skills to be recognised and a statement of attainment issued. Any Registered Training Organisation (RTO) will be able to make the necessary arrangements.

It is not possible for registration or certification to be issued under the Scheme without some kind of formal statement of attainment or competency in the role being available following an assessment by a qualified assessor. For that reason we cannot accept long experience as adequate evidence of competency, if no assessment has been carried out.



Photo: CFA Strategic Communications

CPD requirements

What is outlined in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Standard?

The minimum requirements for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provide industry guidance and direction to assist individuals in meeting their obligations and achieving their professional development goals.

Those who have been registered or certified under EMPS must comply with the standard in order to maintain their currency. CPD undertaken must be directly relevant to the practice of emergency/incident management.



Photo: Courtesy of News Limited

Requirements for Registered Practitioners

- To meet CPD obligations, registered practitioners need to demonstrate they have completed 10 hours of CPD per year.

Practitioners can attain the required hours from:

- agency mandated training/refresh requirements
- performance in the designated role in actual or simulated events (including pre-formed IMTs that have been stood up in anticipation of an event)
- participation in theory based professional development activities.

Practitioners can accumulate hours through a range of CPD activities, however the following must be demonstrated:

- at least five hours from performing the role (actual or simulated).



Photo: CFA Strategic Communications

Requirements for Certified Practitioners

To meet CPD obligations, certified practitioners need to demonstrate they have completed 20 hours of CPD per year.

Practitioners can attain the required hours from:

- agency mandated training/refresh requirements
- performance in the designated IMT role in actual or simulated events
- mentoring others in the role, in an operational setting
- participation in theory based professional development activities.

Practitioners can accumulate hours through a range of CPD activities, however the following must be demonstrated:

- at least ten hours from performing or mentoring in the role (actual or simulated)
- at least five hours of theory based professional development.

For more information, refer to the Professional Standard: Continuing Professional Development available at www.emps.org.au



Photo: Fire and Rescue NSW

Code of Ethics

Practitioners will:

- at all times behave in a way that upholds the reputation of fire and emergency management professionals and act with integrity, competence and diligence
- be truthful and honest at all times
- work to serve the community, not to benefit themselves
- use publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment, only for the purposes for which they have been provided
- take reasonable steps to comply with all laws, regulations, codes and standards applicable to their professional activities
- contribute positively to multi-agency and interoperable working environments
- undertake continuing professional development to maintain their competence and maintain records of it
- treat others registered under the Scheme with courtesy and respect, acknowledging and respecting their national credentials awarded under the Scheme
- challenge behaviour by colleagues that conflicts with this code, and escalate through appropriate channels if it cannot be resolved at a person-to-person level.

Practitioners will not:

- discriminate against colleagues or any other person on the grounds of race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability or employment status or use language that suggests such discrimination
- disclose private, confidential or privileged information that they acquire in the course of their duties except for professional reasons or as required by law
- knowingly submit false or misleading information of credentials, skills, competency, experience and endorsements
- use public or private social networking, electronic communications, or other media opportunities in a manner that discredits or embarrasses their organisation or the broader fire and emergency service sector
- accept gifts, benefits, compensation or consideration that might reasonably be expected to create a conflict of interest.

As part of the application process, registered and certified practitioners agree to follow the Code of Ethics.

A full copy of the Code of Ethics can be downloaded from www.emps.org.au or by emailing email@emps.org.au

How to apply

Detailed information about applying for certification or registration is available from our website www.emps.org.au.

All applications must be supported by the applicant's organisation or jurisdiction. We have agreed with some organisations that all applications from their personnel will be managed through a central point. You may wish to find out from your organisation if this applies to you.

If you have a question that is not answered on our website www.emps.org.au you can contact us using the details below.

Contact us

+61 03 9419 2388

email@emps.org.au

Notes

