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Commuted Allowance, Duty Officer, and Incident Management roles

Version 0.2 (April 2024)

This fact sheet supports applicants in assessing their suitability for roles with Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) which include an expectation or requirement to perform Duty Officer and/or Incident Management Team (IMT) roles.

1. General information for applicants

This fact sheet is a guide only and does not intend to replace the requirements and information contained within the Victoria State Emergency Service Enterprise Agreement 2020 (VICSES EBA) (or any agreement which supersedes that document) or the VICSES policies, procedures, and doctrine.

The information outlined in this document is of a general nature only as individual experiences and circumstances may vary. Applicants should make their own enquiries and assessment when considering roles with VICSES.

It is important that all applicants appreciate that they are applying to join an emergency service with a vital role in the multi-agency readiness and response to emergencies.

As an emergency service that forms part of the multi-agency readiness and response plans for Victoria, applicants should be aware of the dynamic nature of the organisation. Not all emergencies can be predicted, and major emergencies can extend beyond the initial estimates. We use a team approach to resourcing during major emergencies to ensure we manage resources and fatigue effectively. Staff that undertake a Duty Officer or IMT role may be required for various shifts over a 24-hour/7-day period and deployments may be required to other parts of Victoria, interstate or, where a need exists, internationally.

2. Duty Officer function

The Duty Officer function is part of a roster of positions responsible for overseeing and supporting our volunteer members and partner agencies in responding to complex requests for assistance, high demand periods or specialist expertise. In our EBA, this is known as Duty Officer Outside of Ordinary Hours of Work (DOOHOW), where these hours are outside the person's normal working hours.

To ensure VICSES can respond to emergencies and requests as they come through, the Duty Officer function includes an on-call requirement 24-hours a day for a typical period of three and seven consecutive calendar days. This period includes work after business hours and on weekends and public holidays. Actions required of this role will take precedence over standard business operations. For individuals in receipt of Commuted Allowance, this duty time is scheduled but not voluntary as the allowance is compensation for undertaking a minimum amount of duty officer time per year.

An employee who is rostered on as a DOOHOW must:

- Be able to be contacted and response established within four minutes of first call.

- Be able to travel from their location at the time of the call to the required work location within 60 minutes. If travel is to a remote work location, the time limit will be as agreed with the relevant manager on a case-by-case basis.
- Be fit for duty, meaning nil consumption of drugs, alcohol and/or prescription and/or non-prescription medication that potentially impacts upon performance and decision making, and sufficiently rested.
- Carry a VICSES pager, phone, other equipment, and will be allocated a marked vehicle for use during this time.
- Undertake training to perform this role.

The operational Duty Officer function within VICSES is performed by six key roles:

- Regional Duty Officer (RDO)
- Regional Agency Commander (RAC)
- Regional or Zone Controller (RC or ZC)
- State Duty Officer (SDO)
- State Agency Commander (SAC)
- State Response Controller (SRC)

The Executive Officer role is also performed on a rostered basis but does not count towards the requirements for receiving Commuted Allowance.

Tasks typically performed by a Regional or State Duty Officer can include:

- Coordination of VICSES unit/regional/state resources and members where required to support current and potential operational activities.
- Requesting support from partner agencies in support of and response to events (e.g. High Angle Rescue teams from Fire Rescue Victoria).
- Coordinating the welfare of staff and volunteers during deployments, including accommodation and meals.
- Support the RAC/SAC in coordinating the formation of crews, taskforces, and IMT personnel for both state and interstate resource requests.
- Preparing and issuing relevant public information and warning messages to the community.
- Providing operational support and advice or troubleshooting problems for units, Unit Duty Officers, and Unit Controllers.
- Managing notifications of requests for assistance.
- Providing situational reports and updates to the relevant groups or roles.

Tasks typically performed by a Regional or State Agency Commander can include:

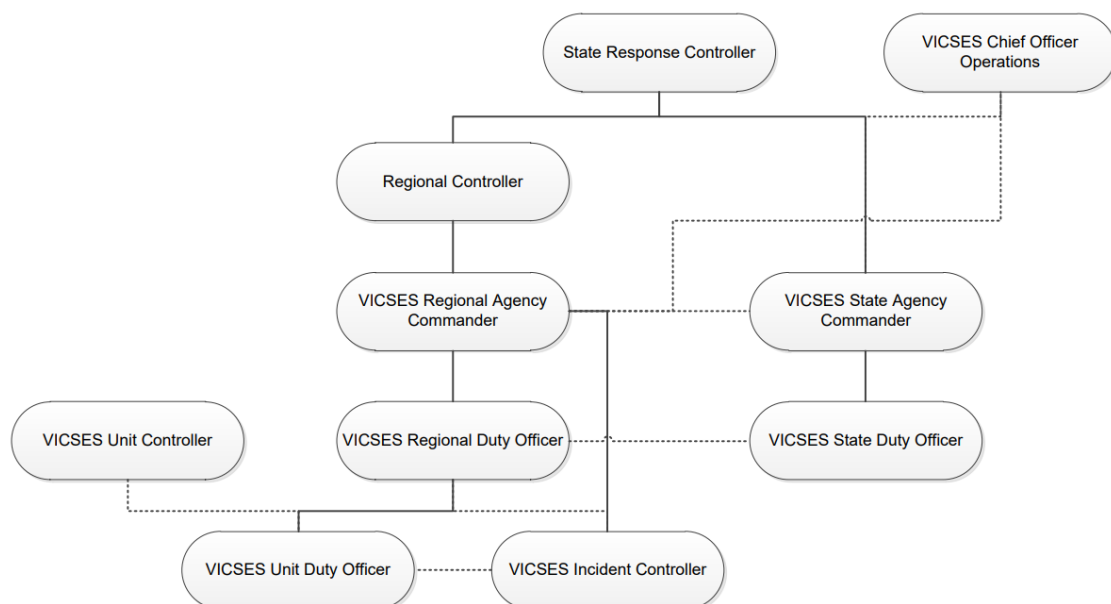
- Exercise overall command of VICSES resources at the relevant level, including for the purposes of supporting an IMT.
- Ensuring requests or recommendations are made to activate Incident or Regional Control Centres.
- Ensure relevant relief and recovery arrangements are implemented during and after an emergency.

- Provide advice on agency capabilities, readiness and operational activity to the wider organisation, community, media representatives and other organisations.
- Have oversight of the readiness and response to emergencies by VICSES.
- Represent VICSES at Regional Control Team and Regional Emergency Management Team meetings to ensure VICSES activities and requirements are integrated into the planning, response, and recovery process of emergency events.

3. Reporting structure

The regional and state level teams work in parallel and collaboratively to manage operational situations as they arise. The chart below shows how the Duty Officer role formally reports into the Agency Commander role for the relevant level through the solid black lines.

The dotted black lines indicate where a role liaises with or informs another of operational activities. For example, while the RDO does not report into the SDO, the RDO may be asked to provide situational reports to the SDO to assist with decision making.



4. What is the Commuted Allowance compensation for?

The VICSES EBA details that Commuted Allowance is paid in compensation for:

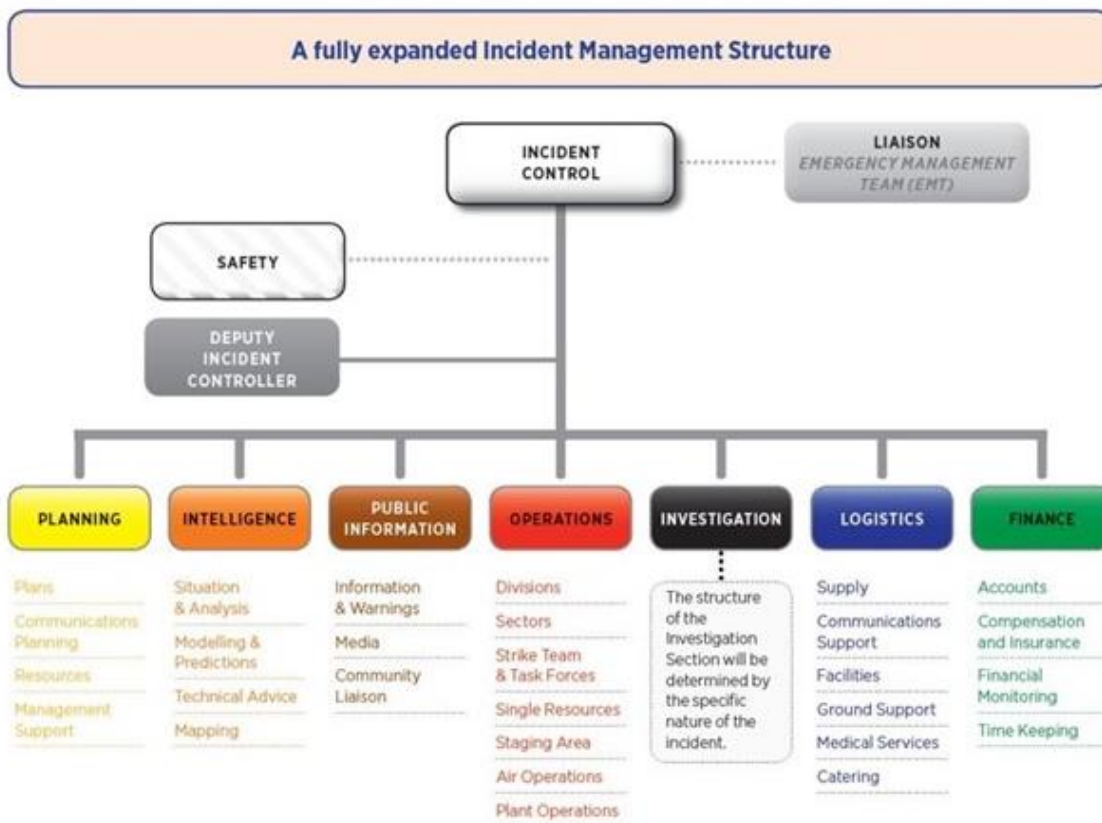
- The requirement to be rostered as DOOOHOW for between 11 and 13 weeks per financial year* (an average of 1 week per month).
- Accumulation of Time in Lieu (TIL) instead of overtime payment.
- Management of hours by the employee with their manager to ensure the employee meets their work requirements without incurring excessive time on duty or TIL.

*This requirement is on a pro-rata basis for staff who work part-time, commence part way through or take certain types of leave during the financial year.

Further information can be found in the VICSES EBA..

5. Incident Management Teams

An IMT is a group of specially trained individuals who come together to manage an event or potential event using the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS). Under the AIIMS structure, there are defined functions which work together to respond to and transition the incident to a recovery phase.



VICSES members are developed and supported into IMT roles with access to appropriate courses, mentoring, exercises, assessment, and leadership development as they progress in their IMT roles.

When an event reaches or is anticipated to reach a specified threshold, the Chief Officer Operations may declare an operation in response to the event. A Declared Operation status allows VICSES to charge the operational costs back to the government, ensuring sufficient resources are available to respond to the event. As part of this, an Incident Control Centre (ICC) may be stood up to coordinate the response. ICCs are specially equipped locations across Victoria where an IMT works on a local event. For example, the Bendigo ICC is often the location for IMTs working on events in northwest Victoria.

As IMTs and ICCs are stood up based on developing events, advance warning of deployment might not be possible. Staff may be requested or directed to deploy to the relevant ICC with limited notice to fulfil the staffing requirements of the IMT.

The VICSES EBA outlines the arrangements for deployments, shift periods and payment for hours worked during a Declared Operation.

6. Additional resources

Further information on staff entitlements and requirements can be found in the [VICSES EBA./](#).

For further information on VICSES, its activities and how to join as a volunteer or staff member, please visit the [VICSES website](#)