

Municipal Emergency Management Planning Arrangements Guidelines for Committees

Part 6: Emergency Management Manual Victoria

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6.1 Introduction and Overview

Purpose of these Guidelines

In accordance with Section 21(5) of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, these guidelines are issued by the Minister for Emergency Services. These guidelines encourage and support a consistent approach to emergency management planning at the municipal level. They are directed at municipal emergency management planning committees to assist them in the preparation and maintenance of a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

Emergency management planning at the municipal level is a multi-agency responsibility with councils playing an important role as direct participants as well as facilitating the planning process through the appointment of the planning committees.

These guidelines reinforce the multi-agency nature of the planning process and assist the organisational representatives who contribute to the MEMP. They include information on the planning process, risk assessment and provide information on the expected roles and responsibilities for people and organisations involved in developing the plan.

They also incorporate 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommendations directed to MEMPs.

They must be read in conjunction with the *State Emergency Response Plan* (Part 3 of this Manual) and the *State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan* (Part 4 of this Manual).

Other requisite and useful information sources are also included.

Statutory Framework

The *Emergency Management Act 1986* (1986 Act) and *Emergency Management Act 2013* (2013 Act) provide the emergency management framework for Victoria. The objectives of the 1986 Act are: "... to ensure that the ...components of emergency management are organised within a structure which facilitates planning, preparedness, operational coordination and community participation." (s. 4A)

This includes responsibilities for the prevention of, response to and recovery¹ from emergencies at the State, Regional, and Municipal (Local) levels.

It does this through setting up structures to deal with emergencies and assigning roles and responsibilities to organisations and individuals.²

The 1986 Act provides the legislative basis for the MEMP as a document that lies within the emergency management planning hierarchy in Victoria.

¹ The components of emergency management are defined as:

- prevention – the elimination or reduction of the incidence or severity of emergencies and the mitigation of their effects [1986 Act, s.4A]
- response – the combating of emergencies and the provision of rescue services [2013 Act, s. 3]
- recovery – the assisting of persons and communities affected by emergencies to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning [2013 Act, s.3].

² For further information on Victoria's emergency management legislation and structures see Part 1 of this Manual.

Roles and Responsibilities

Part 4 of the 1986 Act specifies the responsibilities of municipal councils in connection with emergency management. These responsibilities include the preparation and maintenance of a MEMP. The MEMP is a multi-agency plan managed by the municipal council.

Councils are required to establish a multi-agency municipal emergency management planning committee. The function of this committee is to prepare a draft MEMP for consideration by the municipal council.

In developing the plan, the committee is required to give effect to any guidelines or directions issued by the Minister for Emergency Services.

A brief summary of the roles and responsibilities of key municipal positions is also provided in Appendix 3.

Other Plans

The 2013 Act also requires the Minister to arrange for the preparation and review of a state emergency response plan and a state emergency recovery plan. The Minister has delegated this responsibility to the Emergency Management Commissioner.

These state level plans are published as the *State Emergency Response Plan* (Part 3 of this Manual) and *State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan* (Part 4 of this Manual) and provide the foundation and guidance for other plans for regions, municipal districts, and local plans.

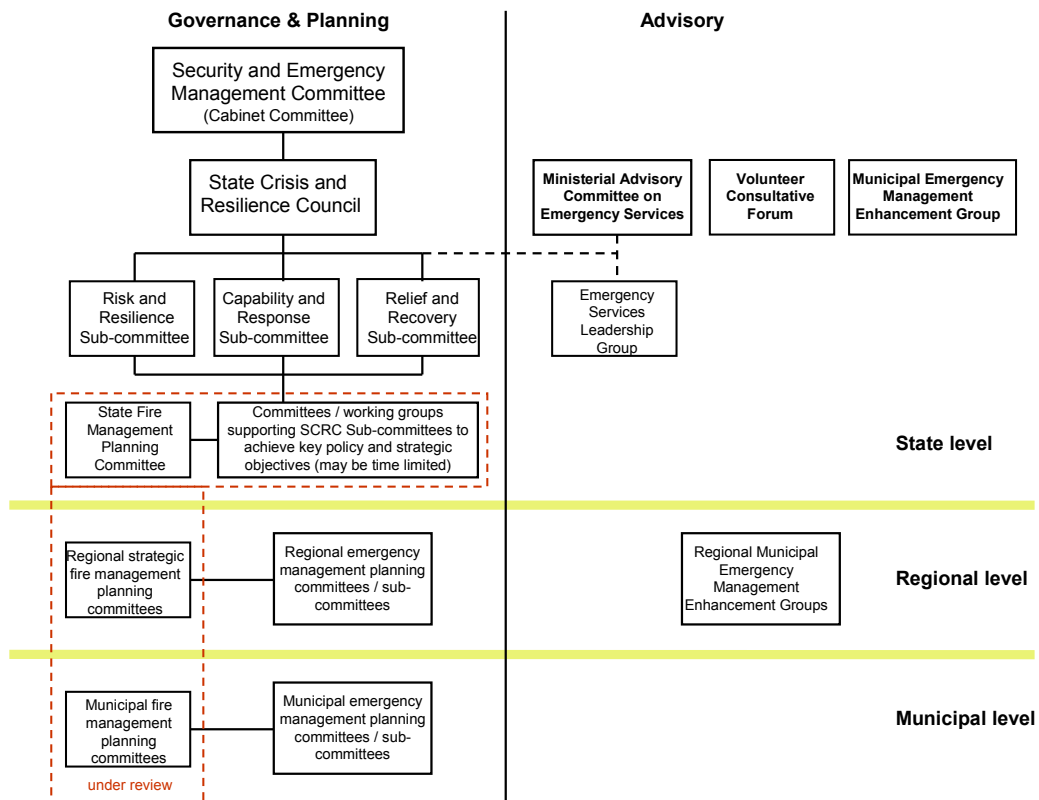


Figure 1. An overview of the State’s emergency management and planning and committee structure

6.2 Emergency Management Planning at the Municipal Level

Introduction and Purpose

Emergency management contributes to community safety through the reduction of the impact of emergency related events that can cause death, injury, loss of property and community disruption.

The planning for, and the management of, emergencies is a shared responsibility involving many people and organisations in the community. It is not something done by one organisation or sector of the community although some organisations have specialist roles in dealing with emergencies.

Municipal emergency management planning involves the identification and documentation of the overall multi-agency arrangements in place for the prevention of, response to and recovery from emergencies that affect the municipal district.

The planning process includes the identification of risks that are likely to affect the assets and people in the municipal district and the steps to be taken to address those risks. It also allows organisations involved in dealing with emergencies and their impacts the opportunity to discuss and better understand the capabilities of other organisations (including councils) that have a role in dealing with emergencies, and develop a comprehensive plan.

The MEMP is not a static document and while it is the outcome of the planning process conducted at a point in time, it must be maintained, regularly revisited and up-dated.

The Emergency Management Planning Process

The planning process can be seen as a series of steps that results in the development, maintenance and refinement of an emergency management plan. The diagram at figure 2 illustrates the continuous nature of the planning process and identifies its main steps.



Figure 2. Emergency management planning process

The following describe the steps in the emergency management planning process, and which body is responsible for each step in the process.

1. Establish Planning Committee: Council

- Identify stakeholders – which organisations and groups have responsibilities to assist in the emergency management process, including legislative responsibilities? This includes the control and coordination of the response to emergency events. In particular, engaging with community representatives and ensuring that the community has input into the process and is aware of the outcomes is good practice.
- Establish the planning committee – the MEMP committee is organised by the Council in accordance with the 1986 Act. The MEMP committee establishes its meeting procedure, subject to any regulations made under the s.39 of the 1986 Act. (There are none at this time.)
- A planning committee structure may also include a Risk Management Group and sub-committees that are risk/hazard specific, with one focused on understanding and promoting community resilience.

2. Risk Management Study: MEMP Committee (Risk Management Group and specialist risk groups)

- This involves an environmental or information scan to examine the data and information available, the identification of hazards³ (not limited to natural), the analysis of likelihood and consequence of emergencies (actual and/or potential) and the development of a list of priority risks.
- That list specifically informs both response planning and risk treatment (mitigation) planning.
- Groups at particular exposure in relation to priority risks should be identified and measures to assist those groups included in the MEMP (or hazard-specific sub-plans).

3. Develop Management Strategies: MEMP Committee and organisations

- Using information received from the risk assessment, develop the emergency management arrangements – discussing and recording the outcomes and arrangements for prevention/mitigation, response, relief and recovery activities. This should also cover issues such as communications, community involvement, public warnings and management arrangements.
- Councils' specific management and support arrangements are also relevant and may be explored in the context of the Committee.

³ A hazard is defined as a source of potential harm that can be a source of risk. The level of risk represented by a specific hazard in particular area is determined by a risk assessment. (Refer AS/NZS ISO 31000 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines)

- Identify the resources and services required from all sources – including resolving identified gaps or shortfalls.

4. Develop and Document the Plan: MEMP Committee

- Develop and document the plan – including a main plan and specific hazard-based sub-plans e.g. flood, fire⁴, storm surge ensuring compatibility between the main plan and the sub-plans. Wherever possible duplication of plan contents should be avoided and reference made to the contents of primary/higher level plans.
- Agencies endorse draft plan – confirming intention and capability to meet obligations
- Submit a draft MEMP for consideration by the municipal council
- Acknowledge feedback and review plan.

Adopt the MEMP: Council

- Consider the plan against legislative and audit requirements
- Public exhibition – prepare and exhibit. Develop communication and education strategies to increase community awareness and develop community resilience
- Provide feedback to committee.

5. Implement the Plan: Organisations with responsibilities under the Plan

- Mitigation and management strategies that have been determined by the committee and agreed by participating agencies are implemented and accountabilities assigned and accepted.

6. Monitor and Review: MEMP Committee and organisations with responsibilities under the plan

- This includes the conduct of exercises to test the plan and post incident reviews to ensure the currency of the plan. Planning should be seen as a continuous process.

Communication and Consultation: Multi-agency and community

- This is an integral and enabling component of the planning process and is conducted throughout each step. It also provides information and consultation with stakeholders on the contents of the plan.
- Advice should be provided to residents to enable them to properly prepare for likely emergencies. Community education, awareness and engagement programs should be considered.

⁴ This would be the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan for municipalities that include areas within the responsibility of the Country Fire Authority. See Part 6A of this Manual. Note: these plans are subject to a separate audit process in accordance with the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*.

The following diagram shows the municipal emergency management planning process in more detail.

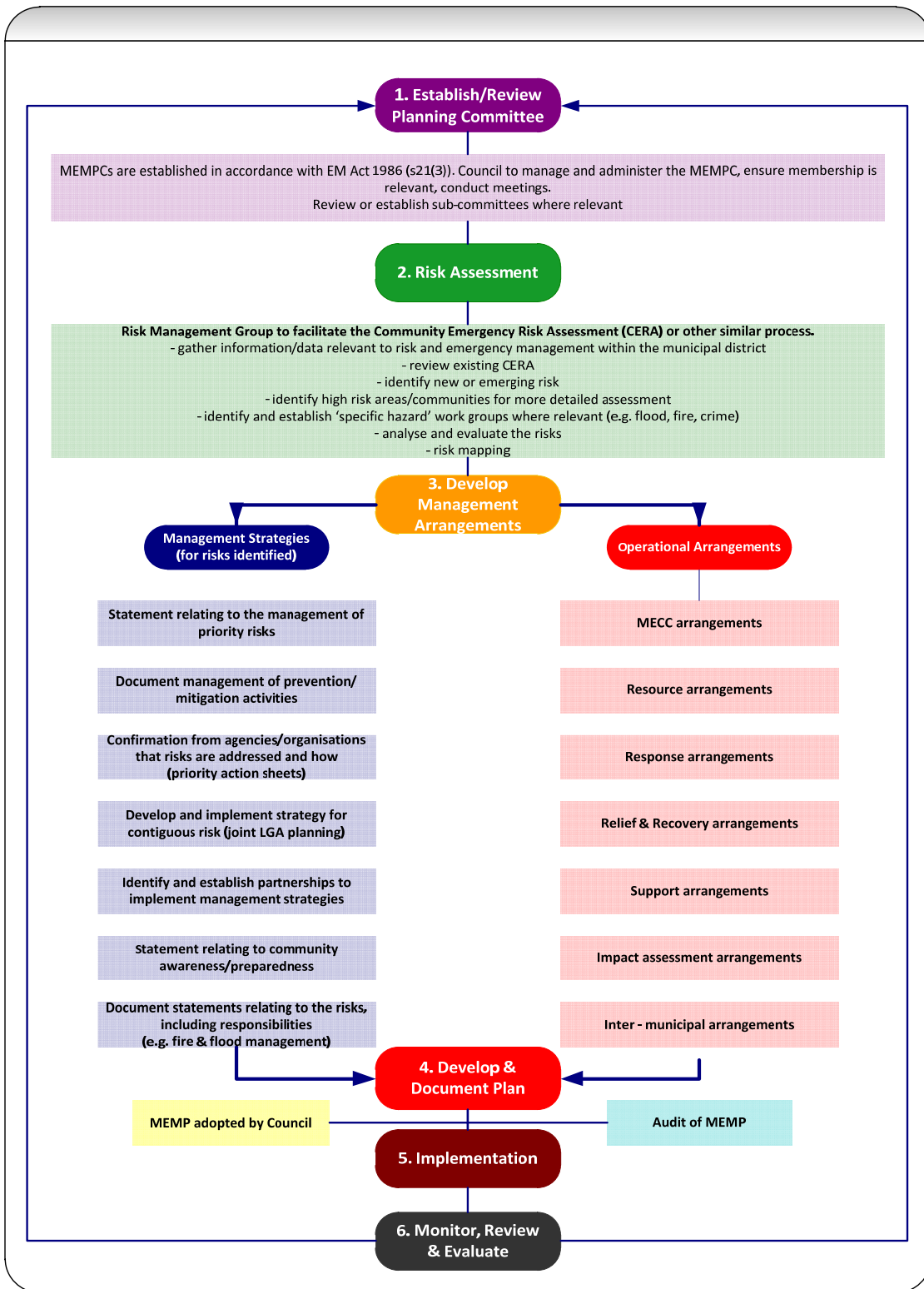


Figure 3: Detailed municipal emergency management planning process

Information on the CERA process can be obtained from the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES).

6.3 The Municipal Emergency Management Plan

The MEMP documents the outcomes of the planning process conducted by the municipal emergency management planning committee.

It is the overarching emergency management plan for the municipal district and provides information to emergency services, other organisations and the community on how risks will be dealt with and the management arrangements for emergencies, to promote community safety.

It provides the context for the development and integration of risk specific response and recovery plans.

The plan identifies what hazards are likely to impact the municipal district, what steps are to be taken to prevent, respond to and recover from emergency events and the role of organisations in relation to emergencies.

It is a record of the commitment of all of the participating organisations and groups to undertake and complete the tasks assigned to them under the plan, and to cooperate in the delivery of the MEMP's objectives.

It must also contain other information required by legislation, including municipal resources, fire refuges and neighbourhood safer places – places of last resort (for municipalities that include areas within the responsibility of the CFA).

A more detailed list of information required for inclusion in MEMPs and other material that is suggested to be included is provided in the following Sections.

Figure 4 illustrates the municipal emergency management planning structure established by the 1986 Act.

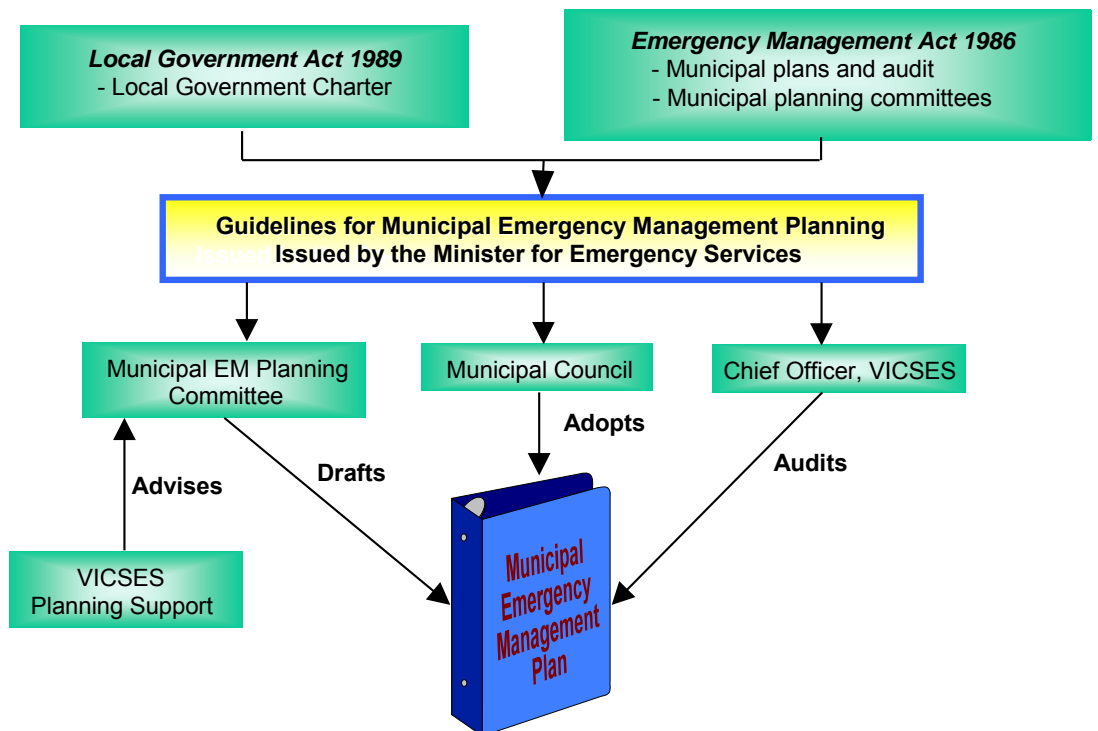


Figure 4. Municipal emergency Management Planning Structure

Specific Hazard Planning

The Plan need not incorporate the arrangements to deal with specific hazards such as fire, flood, storm etc. However, where they are identified as priority risks, hazard-specific plans should be developed as sub-plans. Sub-plans detail the relevant prevention and response arrangements, and are referenced in the MEMP. Where a risk is not as significant, the MEMP itself may well contain hazard-specific plans and information for that risk.

Sub-plans should be consistent with, and refer to, the overall arrangements contained in the MEMP.⁵

Provision for joint or integrated MEMPlanning⁶

Section 18 of the 1986 Act provides for two or more councils to carry out their municipal emergency management planning jointly. No external approval is needed for such arrangements as long as each council retains individual responsibility for meeting its planning requirements under the 1986 Act.

Where there are totally integrated emergency arrangements planned for two or more councils, one of the councils must be nominated as the principal municipal council and approval must be obtained from the Minister for Emergency Services. In this case a planning committee will prepare one plan on behalf of all of the participating councils, and one council will be nominated as the principal council.

Agency roles

Emergency services and other agencies play key roles in the planning process. Agency representatives participate and contribute as members of the MEMP committee and provide expert advice on the content of the plan.

They contribute information on the structures in place for the response to and recovery from emergencies and the coordination arrangements in place for dealing with emergencies in the municipal district.

Some of those agencies will also be involved in the treatment management strategies/initiatives (commensurate with their jurisdiction) for identified risks.

Organisational responsibilities

The MEMP contains the actions that agencies will take in the response to and recovery from emergencies in the municipality. It relies on the ability of all participants to fulfil their obligations under the plan.

All agencies with responsibilities under the MEMP should provide written confirmation of their capability and commitment to meet their obligations. This can be evidenced by their endorsement of the draft MEMP, including revisions, before it is presented to the council for consideration.

⁵ These sub-plans are not normally subject to the same audit regime as MEMPs.

⁶ Where specific risks can impact more than one municipal district, the hazard-specific plan developed can be a sub-plan for more than one MEMP.

Where a group or organisation indicates that it will not, cannot or demonstrates that it does not meet its obligations as provided in the MEMP, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Chair or convenor of the MEMP committee.

The organisation or group in question should be requested to provide an explanation for its non-compliance and consideration may be given to the notification of the matter to the municipal emergency response coordinator (MERC) for consideration and any necessary action.

The MERC has the discretion to escalate the matter to the regional level if appropriate. This situation should rarely arise.

Audit

Each MEMP must be audited at least once every 3 years to ensure that it complies with these guidelines.

The audit process is intended to support the development of high quality MEMPs that are consistent with these guidelines. It provides councils with constructive comments to assist in the preparation and maintenance of MEMPs.

The Chief Officer, VICSES is responsible for the audit process, which is conducted using a standard set of criteria directly related to these guidelines. Those criteria⁷ may be used by MEMP committees and councils as a checklist to confirm that the plan contains the minimum required information. The MEMP provided for audit must be the most recent version endorsed by the MEMP Committee and adopted by the council.

An audit report is provided to the council, indicating whether or not the MEMP complies with these guidelines and if there are opportunities to improve the plan or planning process. Councils must within three months of receiving an audit report forward a copy of its written response to the Chief Officer, VICSES.

A MEMP that does not comply with these guidelines will be audited again in 12 months.

MEMP sub-plans are not audited as part of the MEMP audit process.

If a Municipal Fire Management Plan (that may be a sub-plan of the MEMP) has been developed in accordance with the Integrated Fire Management Planning framework, it will be audited in accordance with S. 55B of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* (see part 6A of this Manual).

⁷ See Appendix 2 – Audit Questions

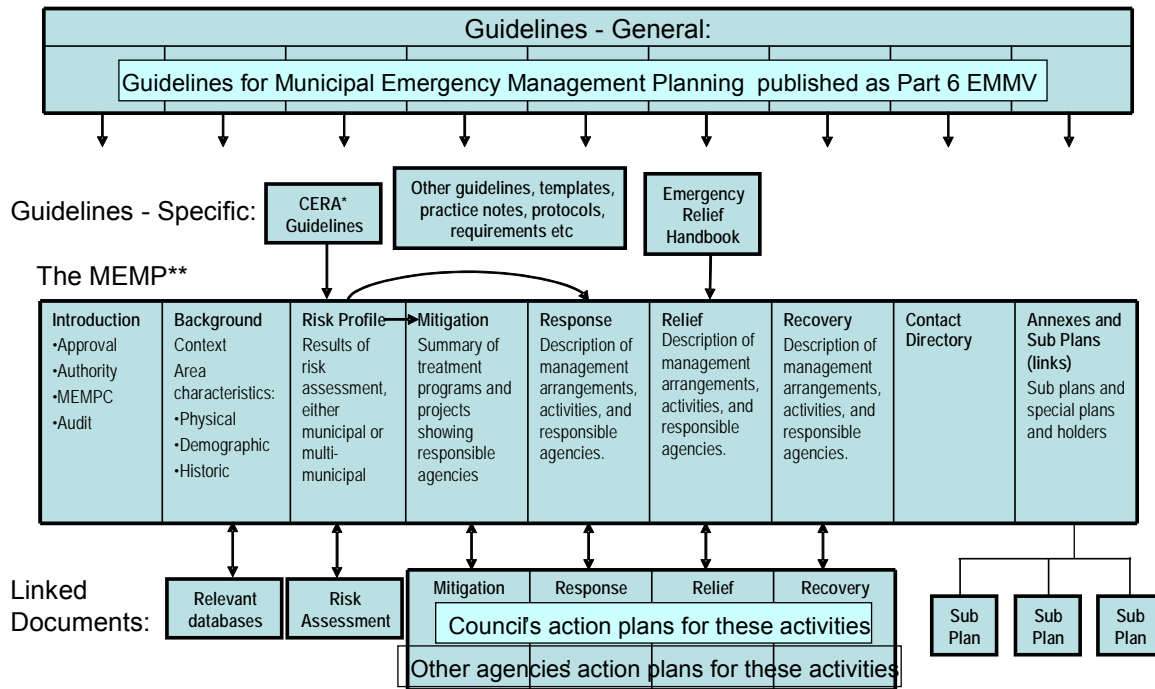
How it all comes together

The Municipal emergency management planning process and the resultant plans are shown in the following diagram.

The diagram illustrates the use of various information sources⁸ available to MEMP Committees to assist in the planning process; the breadth of information that the MEMP should contain; and the relationship of other plans to the MEMP.

The council is the custodian of the MEMP, as well as being one of the participants in the planning process during the development and maintenance phases. It is party to the MEMP just the same as the other agencies and organisations involved in the MEMP process, and it has its own specific organisational plan, as do other agencies and organisations involved in the MEMP process.

Municipal Emergency Management Plans and Guidelines



*Community Emergency Risk Assessment
** Confined to multi-agency information

⁸ See the Related Documents section of these Guidelines on page 21.

6.4 The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee

Introduction

The 1986 Act requires the appointment of a planning committee, specifies the general make-up of the committee, requires the committee to comply with directions and guidelines issued by the Minister for Emergency Services and allows for the making of regulations about the operation of the committee.

Role

The Committee:

- develops and maintains the draft MEMP for consideration by the municipal Council
- assists in analysing and evaluating emergency related risks
- determines the need for a Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee in accordance with Part 6A, EMMV
- helps produce risk treatment strategies; and
- prepares risk specific response and recovery plans for the municipal district.

The committee should operate as a *planning* committee and not merely as a reporting committee.

Membership

Section 21(3) of the 1986 Act recommends that each Council appoint to the MEMPC representatives of:

- the municipal council (members and employees)
- response agencies
- recovery agencies; and
- local community groups involved in emergency management issues.

The actual size of the committee will depend on the risk profile for the municipality and whether councils decide to conduct joint emergency management planning. The number of committee members must be relevant and manageable.

Membership could include the following:

- Executive officer to the Committee (council officer)
- Municipal Community Safety Manager/Municipal Emergency Manager or Councillor as chairperson
- Municipal Emergency Resource Officer
- Municipal Recovery Manager
- Municipal Fire Prevention Officer
- Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (Victoria Police)
- Regional Recovery Coordinator or representative (Department of Health and Human Services and other Government departments)

- local emergency services' representatives
- local recovery agencies' representatives
- local representatives of other relevant agencies as needed (e.g. catchment management authority, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, infrastructure bodies such as VLine, Electricity distribution companies)
- local medical representatives
- interested community groups
- local media representatives and others as required.

Specialist sub-committees

It may be appropriate to form one or more specialist sub-committees of the MEMPC on subjects of major significance to the municipal district, such as priority risks such as floods, fire, exotic animal diseases etc. Consideration may be given to the formation of activity based planning sub-committees such as response, relief and recovery.

Meetings - procedure

The Committee is free to determine its own procedure subject to any regulations issued under s. 39 of the 1986 Act. Bear in mind that the committee exists to plan and review, and is not merely a reporting committee.

Frequency of meetings

Once a plan is prepared, the Committee should ideally meet three or four times a year, and each time an organisational change or emergency occurs.

6.5 Risk Management

Introduction

To commence the emergency management planning process and as a means towards reducing or eliminating risks within the municipal district, the MEMP Committee is tasked with carrying out/overseeing the risk management process that includes:

- establishment of context and risk criteria
- hazard identification
- risk analysis
- evaluation and prioritisation of risks and possible treatments
- acting in its own right and making recommendations to responsible bodies as regards risk treatments
- monitoring and review.

Planning committees should use a risk management process consistent with the Australian/New Zealand Standard ISO 31000:2009 *Risk management – Principles and guidelines*, such as the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process. VICSES can provide information and assistance on undertaking this process.

Emergency risk management allows a community to be aware of what risks exist and how these risks are to be dealt with to reduce future harm to the community. This enables the residents to prepare and seek assistance where necessary to enhance their safety.

The term risk management embraces the activities of establishing the context, risk assessment and risk treatment.

Establishing the Context

The information gathering stage provides the MEMP committee with a comprehensive picture of the municipal district; the people who live there, its geographic features, infrastructure, and the history of emergencies in the district.

Information can be obtained from a number of sources including:

- municipal databases e.g. the planning scheme
- previous risks assessments
- local historical societies
- emergency service organisations
- Government departments and agencies such as the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education and Training; Catchment Management Authorities and Parks Victoria
- essential services such as electricity, water, gas and public transport bodies
- major industrial facilities in the area, or adjoining municipal districts, and
- the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The development of risk criteria serves the determination of priority risks for preparation of sub-plans and for risk treatment.

Risk identification and assessment

The process of risk assessment identifies, analyses⁹, evaluates and prioritises the emergency-related risks faced within the municipal district, and identifies possible treatment/controls. Participants in the risk assessment process can be drawn from a wide range of interest groups.

Specialist risk groups/personnel should be utilised where possible to undertake more detailed analyses of specific hazards e.g. fire, flood, storm, landslip.

An appropriately experienced person could be appointed to coordinate and lead the risk assessment process.

Risk treatment

The responsibility for treatment of risks is shared by all agencies and the community. Treatment of specific risks for the municipal district is not the sole responsibility of the council. Many risk treatments will be carried out in the context of statewide programs or policies.

Consideration should be given to the establishment of specialist risk teams to identify and propose suitable risk treatments. These would be directed at both the sources of risk (i.e. hazards) and the elements at risk (i.e. population, physical assets, the environment and the economy).

Risk treatments include measures such as land-use planning, building control, major hazard facilities emergency planning (where applicable), health plans and a range of community safety programs.

Community education and engagement strategies are key elements in risk treatment at municipal level. There are a number of well established programs conducted by emergency services and others that inform and empower residents to assist in the prevention/mitigation of emergencies and enhance their own safety.

Selection of risk treatments involves cost-benefit analyses and consideration of the sources of funds. Some funding may be available from State agencies or grant funding programs.

Risk treatment activities should be monitored to ensure they meet the desired objectives.

A systematic record of risk treatment strategies is also helpful when seeking State government financial assistance as a demonstration of the measures that have been taken in the municipal district to minimise the risk to life and property.

Financial Arrangements

Financial responsibility for risk treatments varies according to the type of treatment and the agencies that are involved. At the date of publication, one source of grant funds for municipal mitigation projects in Victoria is as follows:

Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Scheme

This annual scheme funds natural disaster (and other) mitigation works, measures and related activities that contribute to safer, sustainable communities. These include natural disaster risk management studies,

⁹ A broad-based risk analysis should consider the consequences of possible emergencies of different magnitudes on a range of elements at risk including: people, the natural and built environments and the economy.

risk treatments, warning systems, community awareness and readiness measures, investment in disaster resilient public infrastructure and other risk reduction measures.

It is part funded by the Commonwealth Government under the Natural Disaster Resilience Program, with a contribution from the applicant and/or other project partners.

Further information may be found at www.emv.vic.gov.au and search under the following links: Our Work>Current projects>Natural Disaster Resilience Grants.

6.6 Plan for emergency activities

Introduction

Following the risk assessment process and the identification of residual risks¹⁰, the planning process should address the strategies and arrangements for response to emergency events, provision of relief services and the processes for recovery from likely emergencies.

A brief description of the processes involved is provided to assist the planning committees to plan for these issues and ensure that they are adequately addressed in the plan.

Municipal Resources and Other Functions

Although emergency planning is not solely about municipal resources, the following is provided for information.

Municipal resources are the resources owned by or under the direct control of council. The 1986 Act requires that the MEMP identify such resources and specify how they are to be used in emergency prevention, response and recovery. Planning must consider the matter of access to municipal resources for response, relief and recovery.

The Practice Note *Sourcing Supplementary Emergency Response Resources for Municipal Councils*¹¹ sets out in some detail the policy on responsibilities and reasonable expectations on councils in this matter, with an emphasis on response.

The Practice Note also explains the discretionary role of councils in providing access to 'other resources', defined as resources that are identified in the Plan as available, but are neither owned nor controlled by the municipal council.

MEMPs should identify local resources (both 'municipal' and 'other') that can be used during emergency response, relief and recovery operations. These resources may include:

- municipal council owned or controlled assets;
- municipal council employed or contracted personnel;
- local agencies that have agreed to participate in the formal emergency relief and recovery arrangements;
- local community agencies that have a capacity to assist people affected by emergencies; and
- private businesses and organisations with a capacity to provide emergency response, relief and recovery services or activities.

Where possible, these resources should be services and activities that are existing and already being provided to the community.

The MEMP must describe the arrangements that may be used to support the provision of municipal resources, to coordinate relief and recovery, and maintain community services in an emergency.

¹⁰ Residual risks are those that still exist after the implementation of risk treatments

¹¹ To obtain a copy of this document, refer to the section Related Documents on page 6-21

These functions can be delivered in a number of different ways, depending on the council and the situation. These include:

- a council presence in the Incident Control Centre, which could be facilitated by an Emergency Management Liaison Officer
- a physical facility, such as an operations centre run out of the council, and/or
- virtually, using phone and email, or an incident management system.

Financial arrangements¹²

As a general principle, municipal councils, government and non-government agencies and organisations are responsible for funding the provision of these services themselves.

Council financial responsibilities

Councils are responsible for the costs of providing municipal resources (owned or under the direct control of council) including:

- equipment such as heavy machinery (even where under existing contract from external suppliers)
- personnel for response, relief and recovery activities
- resources for relief and recovery activities

The provision of some council resources for response activities may be subject to limits and/or constraints, e.g. the use of some equipment may be limited due to the expense of its operation.

Natural Disaster Financial Assistance

Some financial assistance towards councils' operational expenditures in a natural disaster is provided under the State of Victoria's Natural Disaster Financial Assistance arrangements to assist in the recovery process and alleviate some of the financial burden. Financial assistance is provided through the Department of Treasury and Finance under the Commonwealth's Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

Further information and claim form may be found at www.dtf.vic.gov.au and search under Publications (topic: Victoria's Economy).

Response

This part of the planning process should include:

- response management definitions including command, control and coordination drawn from the State Emergency Response Plan
- control and support agencies and information on the local arrangements for response to identified emergencies, including evacuation
- response/recovery interface to reinforce the understanding that recovery arrangements commence during the response to emergencies and manage the transition of coordination between response and recovery.

¹² See also Appendix 1 *Financial Arrangements* in Part 8 of this Manual.

Evacuation

Evacuation is a risk management strategy that involves the movement of people to a safer location. However, to be effective it must be correctly planned and executed.

As with emergency response activities, the main priority when deciding to undertake evacuation is the protection of life.

There are five stages in the evacuation process: decision, warning, withdrawal, shelter and return, detailed in the *Evacuation Guidelines*. (Refer to Part 8, Appendix 9 of this Manual)

Evacuation is a scalable activity that may be applied to individuals, a house, a street, a large facility (e.g. school or hospital), a suburb/town, or a large area of the State.

Primary responsibilities for evacuation are held by the control agency and Victoria Police (Evacuation Manager). A list of roles and responsibilities is included in the *Evacuation Guidelines*.

In Victoria, evacuation is largely voluntary. The controller makes a recommendation to evacuate and it the choice of individuals as to how they respond to this recommendation. However, in particular circumstances, legislation provides some emergency service personnel with authority to remove people from areas or prohibit their entry. (Refer to 'Restricting freedom of movement' in Part 3 of this Manual)

Vulnerable Persons

The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommended that MEMPs contain information about vulnerable people. Therefore MEMPs must contain both:

- information about community organisations already working with vulnerable individuals at the local level,
- a register of facilities where vulnerable people are likely to be situated – for example, aged care facilities, hospitals, schools and child care centres

Victoria Police, as the agency responsible for facilitating evacuations, depends on the MEMPs containing such information.

The Department of Health and Human Services *Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy* provides further guidance on planning for the needs of vulnerable people.

Community Fire Refuges

Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort)

Where a municipal district is located wholly or partly in the country area of Victoria within the meaning of the Country Fire Authority Act, provisions identifying all designated neighbourhood safer places and community fire refuges in the municipal district are required to be included in MEMPs.

Relief

Emergency relief is the provision of essential needs to individuals, families and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

The municipal councils are responsible for coordinating relief at the local level. Municipal councils will be assisted by other organisations and supported by the Department of Health and Human Services as the agency responsible for regional and state relief coordination.

The State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan (Part 4 of this Manual) specifies the relief principles, responsibilities and planning requirements for MEMPs. Appendix 7 of the plan summarises the arrangements that must be addressed in MEMPs.

The *Emergency Relief Handbook: A planning guide*¹³ can also assist with the preparation of local relief plans and operational procedures.

Recovery

Recovery assists individuals and communities affected by emergencies to achieve an effective level of functioning. Recovery requires collaboration across five inter-related recovery environments:

1. **social environment** – the emotional, social, spiritual, financial and physical wellbeing of affected individuals and communities
2. **built environment** – the restoration of essential and community infrastructure
3. **economic environment** – the revitalisation of the affected economy
4. **natural environment** – the rehabilitation of the affected environment
5. **agricultural environment** – the restoration of affected agricultural activities.

The municipal councils are responsible for coordinating recovery at the local level. Municipal councils will be assisted by other organisations and supported by the Department of Health and Human Services as the agency responsible for regional and state recovery coordination.

The State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan (Part 4 of this Manual) specifies the recovery principles, responsibilities and planning requirements for MEMPs. Appendix 7 of the plan summarises the arrangements that must be addressed in MEMPs.

¹³ To obtain a copy of this document, refer to the section Related Documents on page 6-21

6.7 Other Information

Municipal emergency management plan publication

After completing a draft of the plan, the Committee may choose to circulate it for comment and seek users' views on the content, organisation, presentation, consistency, and ease of use of the document. These may include key stakeholders, members of the community facing particular risks, interested organisations and local businesses. The draft plan could be posted in the council offices or a meeting could be held to discuss its contents.

The Committee would then seek and expect to receive the endorsement of all agencies and organisations with roles and responsibilities listed in the MEMP before its presentation to the municipal council for consideration/adoption.

When publishing and distributing the MEMP, consideration should be given to the following:

- who needs and who will receive the MEMP? - Make sure identified stakeholders and organisations mentioned in the plan are on the distribution list.
- how to make the plan available/accessible to stakeholders;
- arrangements for updating the MEMP
- the number of copies required; and
- publicising the MEMP including within council.

Legal Deposit

Councils should also be aware of the legislative requirement for a copy of each plan to be provided to the State Library of Victoria. Legal deposit is required under s. 49 of the *Libraries Act 1988*. The Act requires the deposit, within two months, of every new or amended publication published in Victoria. For more information see: www.slv.vic.gov.au/services/make-legal-deposit

Municipal emergency management personnel

There are a number of positions that have important roles in municipal emergency management processes. Information on the suggested range of responsibilities for these key council roles is at Appendix 3.

Roles of Commonwealth and State Governments

The Commonwealth Government has no constitutional responsibility for local safety and emergency services. But, it is responsible for the military defence of Australia and the civil defence of the Australian community during hostilities.

The Commonwealth supports emergency management in the states and territories in various ways. These include the provision of funds to the States to support emergency management and community resilience initiatives, and the direct involvement of Commonwealth agencies such as the Bureau of Meteorology, Centrelink and the Australian Defence Force.

State departments and agencies are responsible for providing emergency and emergency related services to the community, such as policing, social welfare and recovery services, agriculture, education, health and ambulance, land use planning policy, building control policy, and fire, rescue and other emergency services.

These services are delivered through regional offices/local branches, brigades/units and councils.

Related Documents

- *Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV)*: Available in downloadable pdf format at www.emv.vic.gov.au/policies/emmv
- *Emergency Relief Handbook*: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency
- Practice Note: *Operation of a Municipal Emergency Co-ordination Centre* at www.mav.asn.au and search under the following links: Policy & services>Emergency management>Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group
- Practice Note: *Sourcing Supplementary Emergency Response Resources from Municipal Councils*: www.mav.asn.au and search under the following links: Policy & services>Emergency Management>Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group..

Appendix 1 – Suggested Structure and Content of a Municipal Emergency Management Plan

PART ONE – INTRODUCTION

1. Agency and Municipal Council endorsement
2. Audit report
3. Aim
4. Objectives

PART TWO – BACKGROUND

1. Context
2. Area Characteristics
 - a. Topography
 - b. Demography
 - c. Vulnerable persons: community organisations and facilities
 - d. Municipal locations map
 - e. History of emergencies

PART THREE – PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS

1. Planning structures and responsibilities
2. Audit requirements and process

PART FOUR – PREVENTION/MITIGATION ARRANGEMENTS

1. Background/Introduction
2. Hazard, Exposure, Vulnerability and Resilience
3. Risk assessment process and results
4. Treatment plans
5. Monitoring and review

PART FIVE: RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Introduction
2. Command, Control, Coordination
3. Local response arrangements and responsible agencies
4. Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre(s) (MECC)
5. Financial considerations
6. Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort) and Fire Refuges
7. Planning for cross boundary events
8. Resource sharing protocols
9. Debriefing arrangements
10. Response/Recovery transition

PART SIX – RELIEF and RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS

1. Introduction
2. Overview
3. Objectives of the Relief and Recovery
4. Management structure
5. Summary of relief and recovery arrangements, roles and responsibilities
 - a. Role of Department of Health and Human Services in Recovery
 - b. Supply of Goods/Services
 - c. Counselling, Emergency Grants and Temporary Accommodation
 - d. Public Funding
6. Government Assistance Measures

APPENDICES

A ADMINISTRATION

- Amendment History
- Distribution List
- Contact Directory

B SPECIAL PLANS AND ARRANGEMENTS (a list may be sufficient), including:

MUNICIPAL LEVEL

- Neighbourhood Safer Places (places of last resort)
- Community Fire Refuges
- Municipal Fire Management Plan
- Municipal Flood Management Plan (as required)
- Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre
- Emergency Relief Centres
- Others

COUNCIL

- Council Relief and Recovery Plan
- Other plans and standard operating procedures

C MAPS

Appendix 2 – Audit Questions



- 1 Describe and demonstrate how the MEMP reflects and incorporates the characteristics of the municipal district.
- 2 Describe how Council has prepared and maintained the MEMP in relation to the identification, use and coordination of municipal resources for emergency management activities.
- 3 Outline who has been appointed by the Council, to coordinate, support and manage municipal emergency management activities.
- 4 Provide evidence that the Council has appointed a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) and that the plan identifies appropriate representation of agencies/ groups.
- 5 How often and under what circumstances does the MEMPC convene?
- 6 Explain the process by which the MEMP has been developed and maintained.
- 7 Explain how the MEMP has been reviewed by the MEMPC and the frequency.
- 8 Explain the process by which the contact directory is reviewed, updated and maintained.
- 9 Provide evidence that the MEMP has been presented to the Municipal Council for consideration.
- 10 Explain the process for the distribution of amendments to the MEMP, and to whom.
- 11 Describe and elaborate on the linkages between the MEMP and other municipal plans or strategies.
- 12 Outline the process by which the emergency risk management process is conducted and reviewed.
- 13 Explain what process has been undertaken to analyse and evaluate the identified risks.
- 14 Outline the process which was undertaken to develop an action plan for the treatment of risks.
- 15 Provide evidence that sub-plans are consistent with the risk profile of the municipal district.
- 16 Explain and demonstrate where the MEMP addresses the frequency of and details for exercises, which test elements of the MEMP.
- 17 Demonstrate that arrangements are in place for community awareness and information.
- 18 Demonstrate how the MEMP has considered and identified the response arrangements and whether these are consistent with State and Regional level plans.
- 19 Outline what procedures and arrangements are in place for the management of municipal response activities.

- 20 Demonstrate how the MEMP has considered and identified the emergency relief and recovery arrangements and whether these are consistent with Regional and State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plans.
- 21 Outline the procedures and policies in place for municipal emergency relief arrangements in relation to the coordination, management and provision of emergency relief activities.
- 22 Outline the procedures and policies in place for municipal recovery arrangements in relation to the coordination, management and service provision of emergency recovery activities.
- 23 Outline what procedures and arrangements are in place for municipal emergency relief and recovery arrangements in relation to the gathering and processing of information.
- 24 Outline what procedures and arrangements are in place for the establishment and functioning of Community Recovery Committee.

Appendix 3 – Key Municipal Emergency Management Roles – Indicative Functions

Councils are required by the 1986 Act to appoint functional positions in relation to emergency management, including the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer(s) (MERO) who is responsible for the coordination of municipal resources to be used in emergency response and recovery operations. These positions will almost certainly also have a role in the MEMP process.

In addition, while not having a legislative basis, additional managerial roles such as Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) and Municipal Emergency Manager (MEM) may assist in the planning for, and the delivery of council's emergency management roles and responsibilities.

For more information on these roles in connection with their responsibilities in the operation of a Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre see the Practice Note - *Operation of a Municipal Emergency Co-ordination Centre*.

In addition to municipal personnel, the VicPol Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) plays an important role in the MEMP process to ensure that proper response plans are in place and that the municipal district arrangements are appropriate. For more information on the MERC role see the State Emergency Response Plan, Part 3 of this Manual.

Municipal Emergency Resource Officer

The 1986 Act requires each council to appoint a Municipal Emergency Resource Officer/s (MERO).

The role of the MERO is to:

- coordinate municipal resources in emergency response¹⁴;
- provide council resources when requested by emergency services or police during response activities;
- maintain effective liaison with emergency agencies within or servicing the municipal district;
- maintain an effective contact base so municipal resources can be accessed on a twenty-four hour basis;
- keep the municipal emergency coordination centre(s) prepared to ensure prompt activation if needed;
- liaise with the MEM and the MRM on the best use of municipal resources;
- organise a response debrief if requested by the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC), an appointee of Victoria Police;
- ensure procedures and systems are in place to monitor and record expenditure by the council in relation to emergencies; and
- perform other duties as determined.

¹⁴ The MERO is also responsible for coordination of municipal recovery resources if no municipal recovery manager is appointed

Municipal Recovery Manager

The MRM should be a senior officer, as the recovery process can involve many aspects of council's activities over a considerable period. If the MERO is also the MRM, special planning is needed to minimise a clash of priorities in the early stages of dealing with emergencies, as response and recovery activities will be operating simultaneously.

The role of the MRM to:

- coordinate municipal and community resources for recovery;
- assist with collating and evaluate information gathered in the post-impact assessment;
- establish priorities for the restoration of community services and needs;
- liaise with the MEM and MERO on the best use of municipal resources;
- establish an information and coordination centre at the municipal offices or a location more appropriate to the affected area;
- liaise, consult and negotiate with recovery agencies and council on behalf of the affected area and community recovery committees;
- liaise with the regional recovery committee and Department of Health and Human Services;
- undertake other specific recovery activities as determined.

Municipal Emergency Manager (Suggested)

The suggested roles and responsibilities for the MEM are;

- chair the Risk Management Group;
- coordinate a range of risk reduction activities to ensure maximum efficiency and synergy is obtained;
- liaise with the community on all safety matters and support staff and groups designated to deal with specific risks;
- track the progress of risk treatment programs.
- chair the MEMPC;
- ensure the MEMPC is effective and current;
- ensure that municipal resources are utilised effectively in a community emergency, for response and recovery activities;
- coordinate the emergency management activities of, and liaise closely with the MERO, MRM and MFPO;
- ensure that an MECC can be activated at short notice in event of an emergency;
- arrange meetings of the MEMPC or the Municipal Emergency Coordination Group as appropriate during an emergency;
- maintain effective liaison with all regional, state or Commonwealth emergency related agencies servicing the municipal district;
- ensure that an effective contact base is maintained so that municipal resources can be accessed on a 24-hour basis;

- ensure that contractual arrangements with contractors to provide response or recovery support during an emergency are agreed to and documented in advance of such events;
- ensure that appropriate operating procedures and processes are developed, documented and tested by those required to use them during an emergency, and that suitable training takes place;
- ensure that appropriate procedures, processes and systems are in place to record and monitor any council expenditure specifically applicable to an emergency;
- ensure that applications for expenditures eligible for assistance from State sources are submitted to appropriate agencies;
- ensure that debriefing sessions are held for any response and recovery operation after an emergency to examine effectiveness of the MEMP, and upgrade it as necessary;
- keep the Council and Chief Executive informed on emergency management activities, including the presentation of an annual report on activities that includes expenditure incurred by the council during the previous 12 months.

Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO)

The Country Fire Authority Act and the *Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958* require each municipal council to appoint a fire prevention officer (generally known as a Municipal Fire Prevention Officer) and any number of assistant fire prevention officers.

With the introduction of the Integrated Fire Management Planning framework, a Municipal Fire Management Plan may be developed as a sub-plan to the MEMP or the risk may be dealt with by the MEMP.

The role of the MFPO is to:

- undertake and regularly review council's fire prevention planning and plans (together with the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMP), if one exists);
- liaise with fire services, brigades, other authorities and councils regarding fire prevention planning and implementation;
- advise and assist the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (or MFMP) on fire prevention and related matters;
- ensure the MEMP contains reference to the Municipal Fire Management Plan;
- report to council on fire prevention and related matters;
- carry out statutory tasks related to fire prevention notices and infringement notices;
- investigate and act on complaints regarding potential fire hazards;
- advise, assist and make recommendations to the general public on fire prevention and related matters;
- issue permits to burn (under s. 38 of the Country Fire Authority Act); and
- facilitate community fire safety education programs and support Community Fireguard groups in fire-prone areas. Support fire

services in the delivery of community fire safety education programs.

Municipal Emergency Coordination Group

It has become common practice to utilise a core group of municipal emergency management staff to manage the roles that council undertakes during emergencies.

The Municipal Emergency Coordination Group is a key municipal decision making group that includes the MERC, MERO and MRM and performs a leadership role in the MECC. There is a constant information flow and regular consultation between these positions.

The Group provides a link between the Incident Control Centre/Emergency Operation Centre, Emergency Management Liaison Officers and the MECC staff to ensure that requests for resources and any other related requirements can be addressed.