

PROTOCOL FOR INTER-COUNCIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESOURCE SHARING



MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA



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Acronyms and Definitions

Reference	Description
AFAC	Australasian Fire Authorities Council
Assisting Council	Council providing resources under this protocol
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
RERC	Regional Emergency Response Coordinator
EMA	Emergency Management Australia
EMMV	Emergency Management Manual Victoria
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MECC	Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre
MEMEG	Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (Police)
MERO	Municipal Emergency Resource Officer
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
Receiving Council	Council that requests and receives resources under this protocol

1. Introduction / Background

Emergencies sometimes require councils to source additional resources to ensure that the affected community is restored to normal functioning as efficiently as possible. Some emergency response agencies have agreements for mutual aid with kindred organisations that allows them to plan appropriately for responding to large scale or complex emergencies, and this protocol is intended to provide a similar agreement for local councils.

Council emergency management resources are generally sourced from within the municipal boundaries where the emergency occurs, which can impact significantly on the resources of the responsible council, particularly for larger or more complex emergencies. The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group (MEMEG) have identified a need to determine an agreed position between councils regarding the provision of council resources to assist other councils with response and recovery tasks during emergencies.

The EMA Guidelines for Interstate Disaster Assistance and the AFAC Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing Guidelines were recognised as having similar requirements to this inter-council resource sharing protocol. As such, some of the key concepts and policies detailed in these documents have been applied to this protocol.

This protocol is not intended to inhibit, or diminish the effectiveness, of any existing inter-council resource sharing arrangement. Councils should however review any such existing arrangements to ensure that issues identified in this protocol are addressed.

It is recognised that local government personnel who perform duties at another council in relation to an emergency event will gain valuable skills and experience. This knowledge will provide an opportunity for the council that provided personnel to refine their MEMP and enhance performance for future emergency events.

In order to be effective this protocol will require the support and commitment of council executive staff.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to provide an agreed position between councils for the provision of inter-council assistance for response and recovery activities during an emergency. This protocol details the process for initiating requests for resources from another council and identifies associated operational and administrative requirements.

The application of this protocol is expected to enhance the capability of councils to provide the best possible outcomes for emergency management and to support the step up arrangements as detailed in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV).

The co-ordination of responding agencies involves the systematic acquisition and application of resources (personnel, equipment and facilities) in accordance with the requirements of the emergency. This protocol will facilitate appropriate timely mustering of resources ready to discharge municipal functions.

3. Emergency Management Legislation and Policy

This protocol is consistent with the concepts and policy guidelines articulated in the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and the Emergency Management Manual of Victoria (EMMV).

4. Scope of Activities

This protocol applies to requests for human resources, equipment and/or facilities in relation to response or recovery activities associated with an emergency.

Duties undertaken by council staff seconded to another council for assisting with response and recovery operations should be within the scope of councils' emergency management responsibilities as set out in Part 6 of the EMMV (extract included as Appendix 2).

5. Memorandum of Understanding

Some councils may prefer to enter memoranda of understanding with neighbouring councils to formalise resource sharing arrangements, although this is not considered to be a requirement. There is an existing memorandum of understanding template included in the Municipal Public Health Emergency Management Guidelines. This memorandum of understanding was developed for the purpose of supporting partnerships between council environmental health departments, however it could be easily adapted for resource sharing in relation to emergency management. The Municipal Public Health Emergency Management Planning Guidelines are available from the Australian Institute of Environmental Health – Victorian Branch.

6. Commencement Date

Arrangements based on this protocol will commence operation immediately following the endorsement and agreement to operate within its framework by more than one council.

7. Requests for Assistance

Resources can be requested at any time during an emergency including the recovery stages. Requests for assistance may be initiated by the CEO (or person acting in this role) or by any person nominated by the CEO at the receiving council. Requests should be directed to the CEO, or any person nominated by the CEO, at the assisting council. It is noted that in many cases the person nominated by the CEO will be the MERO at both the assisting and receiving council.

Such requests may be oral or in writing, however oral requests must be confirmed in writing as soon as is practicable and in most cases will be logged at the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC).

Requests for assistance should include the following information:

- A description of the emergency for which assistance is needed;
- The number and type of personnel, equipment and/or facilities (resources) required;
- An estimate of time as to how long the resources will be required; and
- The location and time for the staging of the resources and a point of contact at that location.

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The Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) or Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC) should be contacted before the resources are moved. Requests for resources should be logged in the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC).

It is anticipated that a requesting council will initially seek assistance from surrounding councils. This will reduce travel times and expenses for assisting councils to respond and return.

Limitations

A council that has committed to this protocol and is requested to provide assistance should endeavour to provide the resources requested unless such resources are required for that council's own purposes.

A council that provides resources that are later required for that council's own purposes may request such resources to be returned prior to the agreed time-frame the receiving council will release those resources as soon as possible.

8. Operation

Command and Co-ordination

The council receiving assistance will be responsible for the command and management of council functions for the emergency response and recovery activities, and specifically for the management of resources made available.

The control agency will manage municipal resources assigned to response activities.

The council receiving assistance will endeavour to afford the same powers, duties, rights and privileges to staff from the assisting council as its own staff performing equivalent roles or functions.

Authority to Perform Duties

Where staff from an assisting council are requested to perform duties in specific roles, those staff must be appropriately authorised to undertake the role prior to commencement.

Induction / Occupational Health & Safety

The statutory and common law obligations which require the receiving council to provide for the health and safety of its own employees apply equally in relation to those personnel deployed from an assisting council.

The control agency will be responsible for the occupational health and safety (OH&S) of all council personnel deployed in emergency response roles.

Prior to personnel from assisting councils being deployed to assist with the emergency, the council receiving assistance will make arrangements for such personnel to be registered and appropriately briefed and debriefed. The briefing must include details of hazards and safety requirements and any measures required to respond to these, an overview of the emergency, the tasks/activities to be performed and reporting lines including the process for reporting OH&S concerns or incidents. A representative from the control agency should participate in the induction briefing sessions and it should be recorded that this induction took place.

The receiving council will be diligent in assigning appropriate roles to the personnel from an assisting council. The performance of some duties may require personnel to

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possess specific qualifications or accreditation. Personnel from an assisting council will not be assigned to a role if uncertainty exists regarding the competency of the person to perform those duties. Personnel from an assisting council may be reassigned to alternative duties or stood down at any time.

The receiving council will assume an employer's normal responsibilities for the wellbeing of personnel from the assisting council/s. This responsibility covers issues such as rostering, fatigue, psychological well-being, and all occupational health and safety requirements.

The assisting Council will be responsible for the payment of workers compensation premiums for their own staff and for the payment of any accident compensation payments to their own staff. The assisting council is responsible for ongoing staff support and should ensure that any notifiable workplace incidents under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)* that may have occurred during the emergency event are reported to Worksafe and recorded in an incident register for investigation follow up as per OH&S regulations. The assisting council should ensure that debriefing opportunities and support services are available for their staff as necessary.

Payment of Expenses

The council receiving assistance will be responsible for the reimbursement, or payment, of all expenses incurred by the assisting council, including salaries, overtime, penalties, travel and accommodation expenses and consumables utilised in conjunction with the resources provided.

The assisting council will calculate expenses and provide a detailed account for all reasonable costs incurred by the seconded staff. Salaries, overtime and penalty rates will be calculated at rates applicable to the assisting council. The assisting council may at its absolute discretion waive any part of these costs.

Claims for Reimbursement of Expenditure from the State

Claims for reimbursement of eligible municipal expenditure on defined natural disasters from the State Government may include the expenses paid to the assisting council.

Liability for Loss or Injury

It is agreed and understood that each individual council (assisting/receiving council) will be responsible for its own potential liabilities in respect to any losses arising out of activities associated with "Resource Sharing" under this protocol on the assumption that common law will prevail.

It is further agreed and understood that each council's CMP Liability Insurance Policy is extended to indemnify those councils providing the resource service/equipment (principal/assisting council) in respect of any claim able to be indemnified under the policy brought in respect of personal injury or damage to property caused by an occurrence, or for breach of professional duty arising directly and solely out of the negligent acts, errors or omissions of those councils receiving the resource service/equipment. This extension does not extend to any negligent acts, errors or omissions of the principal council, its staff or agents themselves.

Withdrawal from Protocol

A participating council may withdraw from the arrangements based on this protocol at anytime by providing written notice to the MAV.

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Participating Councils

A list of participating councils will be maintained by the MAV and will be available on the MAV website. The MAV will notify all councils of any changes to the protocol membership. Membership will be reviewed and confirmed on a three yearly basis by the MAV.

Councils are requested to formally committ to this protocol by signing and returning the attached letter template for this purpose.

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(Insert Council Letterhead)

[Name]

Policy Advisor

Municipal Association Victoria

GPO Box 4326,

Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear [salutation],

Re: Protocol for Inter-council Emergency Management Resource Sharing

The _____ Council confirms its commitment to this protocol.

The purpose of this protocol is to provide an agreed position between councils for the provision of inter-council assistance for response and recovery activities during an emergency. This protocol details the process for initiating requests for resources from another council and identifies associated operational and administrative requirements.

The application of this protocol is expected to enhance the capability of councils to provide the best possible outcomes for emergency management and to support the step up arrangements as detailed in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV).

The co-ordination of responding agencies involves the systematic acquisition and application of resources (personnel, equipment and facilities) in accordance with the requirements of the emergency. This protocol will facilitate appropriate timely mustering of resources ready to discharge municipal functions.

Signed CEO or Delegated Officer.

Appendix 1 – Checklist

Requesting Assistance or Resources from Another Council

Action to Complete	Yes/No
CEO (or person acting in this role) or person nominated by the CEO at the receiving council to direct request for resources to the CEO at the assisting council either verbal or in writing.	
Request for resources must be confirmed in writing and should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the emergency; The number and type of personnel, equipment and/or facilities required; An estimate of how long resources will be required; and The location and time for the staging of the resources and a point of contact at that location. 	
The Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) or Divisional Emergency Response Coordinator (DERC) should be contacted before resources are moved.	
Control agency to manage municipal resources assigned to response activities. Receiving council to endeavour to afford the same powers, duties, rights and privileges to staff from the assisting council as its own staff performing equivalent roles or functions.	
Staff from an assisting council must be appropriately authorised to undertake roles prior to commencement.	
Personnel from assisting council should be registered and appropriately briefed prior to being deployed. Any briefing should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of hazard and safety requirements; An overview of the emergency; The tasks/activities to be performed; and Reporting lines including for OH&S incidents. A representative of the control agency should participate in this briefing.	
Receiving council should reimburse, or directly pay, for all expenses incurred by the assisting council including salaries, overtime, penalties, travel and accommodation expenses and consumables utilised in conjunction with the resources provided as outlined by the assisting council. The assisting council will calculate expenses and provide a detailed account for all reasonable costs incurred.	
Assisting council should ensure that appropriate debriefing and support services are available for their staff. The assisting council should also ensure that any workplace incidents that may have occurred during the emergency event are recorded and that WorkSafe is advised	

Appendix 2 - Extract from Part 6 of the EMMV

Operational role statement for municipal councils

The operational role statement identifies the resources or services councils should provide within Victoria's emergency management arrangements, and sets out key operational management requirements.

The council is responsible for managing and coordinating municipal resources for responding to, and recovering from emergencies. *Municipal resources* include those owned by the council and those under its control if sourced from other agencies. Local and regional planning ensures that agencies' expectations of council services are based on a realistic assessment of council capability.

Councils may obtain part or all of these services or resources from outside contractors. In such cases, the council is responsible for providing the agreed resources on time, and paying the costs incurred.

Response

Response activities

A council's response activities include:

- **Establishing and operating centres and facilities** such as:
 - a municipal emergency coordination centre (MECC);
 - emergency relief centres; and
 - emergency services staging areas.
- **Providing and coordinating emergency catering:**
 - in conjunction with Red Cross and other providers;
 - for response agency personnel; and
 - for affected members of the community.
- **Facilitating the provision of information:**
 - as warnings to the community in consultation with other agencies; and
 - as information to public and media in consultation with control agencies.
- **Coordinating and ensuring effective transport** in the area by:
 - providing transport for those at risk;
 - clearing impassable roads, including removing trees;
 - unblocking drains; and
 - assisting with resources to partially or completely close roads and determining alternative routes.
- **Providing and coordinating equipment** for response support:
 - equipment for traffic or crowd diversion (e.g. barricades, traffic signs);
 - material to absorb spilt fluids;
 - levee or damming materials; and
 - heavy equipment for tasks such as: earth moving; clearing large material or debris; transporting large or heavy materials, water or personnel; lifting materials or personnel; and pumping water.

Recovery

Recovery activities

Activities required at a local level may include, and should be documented in the MEMPlan:

Coordinating and managing:

- municipal resources through the Municipal Recovery Manager;
- the provision of material needs to affected persons;
- environmental health such as food, water, sanitation, and vector control;
- volunteer helpers; and
- public appeals.

Providing:

- community development services;
- personal support services (e.g. counselling, advocacy); and
- emergency and/or temporary accommodation.

Gathering and processing information:

- for post-impact assessments; through survey and determination of occupancy of damaged buildings; and by monitoring the progress of recovery.

Providing information and advice:

- through provision and staffing of recovery/information centre(s); information services to the affected community such as public meetings, newsletters, and advertising; and to recovery agencies and the State Government.

Organising clean-up and repair activities:

- removing debris, clearing blocks (hazard removal);
- disposing of dead, maimed or diseased stock;
- repairing/restoring infrastructure such as roads, bridges, sporting facilities, and public amenities;
- supervising and inspecting rebuilding and redevelopment; and
- providing heavy equipment for earth moving; clearing large material or debris; transporting large and/or heavy materials, water or personnel; and lifting materials or personnel.

Sponsorship and advocacy:

- of community recovery committees;
- of the interests of the affected community.

Councils will need to identify and negotiate with local agencies that are able to provide these services. Some services may be internally provided, others may be local agencies, State or Australian government agencies. Agencies are responsible for funding the provision of these services themselves, as these services are existing services that they already provide to the community.