

Victoria Police Manual

The Victoria Police Manual is issued under the authority of the Chief Commissioner in s.60, Victoria Police Act 2013. Non-compliance with or a departure from the Victoria Police Manual may be subject to management or disciplinary action. Employees must use the VPM Professional and ethical standards to inform the decisions they make to support compliance.

Professional and ethical standards

Context

Purpose

The Victoria Police mission is to provide a safe, secure and orderly society by serving the community and the law. Our members have a duty to preserve the peace, protect life and property, prevent offences, detect and apprehend offenders and help those in need of assistance. This mission and the important role that Victoria Police plays in the community, means employees are entrusted with considerable authority and responsibility. In turn, the community expects Victoria Police employees to use this authority professionally, fairly and with the highest level of integrity.

The conduct of employees on or off duty reflects on the reputation of Victoria Police. In taking on the authority and responsibility that comes with being a Victoria Police employee, employees are held to a higher standard of conduct in both their public and private lives and are more open to public scrutiny than many other members of the public.

Our Professional and Ethical Standards are provided to support employees in meeting these expectations and outline what the organisation considers to be professional and appropriate behaviour. These Standards reflect and reinforce the tenets of the Code of Ethics and organisational values.

Code of Ethics

Victoria Police employees are expected to commit to the highest ethical standards, as espoused in the code of ethics.

I uphold the right in my role within Victoria Police by acting impartially, with integrity and by providing service excellence to everyone.

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Scope and application

The Professional and Ethical Standards provide the minimum standards that all employees must apply. Non-compliance with or a departure from the Professional and Ethical Standards may subject an employee to management or disciplinary action.

VPS employees must also comply with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies.

Organisational values

The organisational values underpin Victoria Police's policies, procedures and practices and how employees interact with the community and each other.

Value	What does this look like in Victoria Police?
Courage We act with courage and uphold the values in the face of adversity	• Make robust and ethical decisions in challenging circumstances • Challenge inappropriate behaviours and encourage others to do the same • Show humility and strength of character • Be innovative
Compassion We act with compassion through tolerance, understanding and impartiality	• Have respect for difference through inclusiveness and open-mindedness • Build positive relationships with the community and our colleagues through empathy and active listening • Prioritise crime prevention and the needs of victims • Act with genuine kindness, empathy and understanding of the diverse needs of the community
Respect We treat everyone fairly, with dignity, and respect; they are valued and included	• Treat each other and every community member with respect and understanding • Celebrate and value equity, diversity and inclusion • Value the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as first nations people, and their rich history and culture, along with the diverse backgrounds of other community members
Professionalism We are accountable and professional; committed to maintaining the highest standards of conduct and presentation	• Behave in a manner that reflects positively on ourselves and our organisation • Perform our duties with care and skill, provide services that are engaging, accessible and equitable • Take pride in the way we look and act • Be open, adaptable and resilient, and valuing collaboration and teamwork
Integrity We act with integrity and honour, being fair and respectful of both the law and human rights	• Be honest, objective and impartial • Respect and champion human rights and commit to lawful and fair processes • Place the good of the community before our own interests • Build the trust and confidence of the community

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Professional and ethical decision making

Victoria Police employees will encounter many, varied and complex situations. Whatever the circumstances, decisions made must be lawful, informed, professional and ethical. While legislation and organisational policies will direct or inform how to deal with certain matters, they cannot prescribe every situation or experience.

Using a decision making framework that has regard to ethics, organisational values and human rights will help employees make decisions that reflect organisational standards and community expectations. When interpreting and applying legislation, policies and procedures, or when there is an absence of policy direction:

- use the organisational values to inform behaviour and decision making
 - use the SELF test to help make ethical decisions. Consider
 - **Scrutiny** – will the decision withstand public scrutiny by the community, Victoria Police, the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission and other relevant parties?
 - **Ethical** – is the decision ethical and in compliance with Victoria Police policies, practices or procedures? Does the decision comply with the Code of Ethics and the professional and ethical standards?
 - **Lawful** – is the decision lawful having regard to the law, regulations and Victoria Police instructions? Does the decision properly consider human rights?
 - **Fair** – is the decision fair on the community, colleagues, family, the decision maker and others? Does it support the community's expectation of the individual's right to equality?
 - ensure that human rights set out in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* have been properly considered when making a decision
 - ensure that decisions are compatible with human rights and that any limits on human rights are reasonable, justified and as least restrictive as possible
 - seek advice from a supervisor or subject matter expert if unsure about how to deal with the situation
- monitor and review the decision and be flexible in the approach to the situation.

2. Responsibilities of managers and supervisors

Managers and supervisors play an influential role in creating an environment that upholds the Professional and Ethical Standards and organisational values. They do this through their own behaviour and through how they lead and support their employees.

Managers are expected to:

- personally demonstrate ethical and professional behaviour, and reinforce these standards in the workplace
- take action at the earliest opportunity if an employee is not upholding the professional and ethical standards of the organisation
- provide your employees with adequate supervision and support, as is appropriate to their training, experience and duties

- encourage employees to make lawful, professional and ethical decisions, and support these decisions. Supervisors are responsible for the actions and decisions of employees when they are under their management or supervision, especially regarding matters of integrity and ethical standards.
- acknowledge and reward good work performed by employees
- manage and support the performance and professional development of employees. Address performance issues promptly and directly
- create a working environment that fosters open and honest communication and the use of initiative
- demonstrate a commitment to Victoria Police policies and strategies and communicate new policies or practices to employees
- contribute to the development of the organisation by identifying and implementing improvements to policy and practice and encouraging your employees to do the same
- be proactive in their attitude, behaviour and performance to act against harassment, bullying and discriminatory activities and/or language; managers must take all reasonable precautions to prevent such behaviour. For further details see VPM Workplace behaviours
- delegate responsibility for particular functions or activities to other employees; however, managers are still accountable for the decisions and actions of those employees within the scope of the delegation.

Managers and supervisors are also required to comply with the additional responsibilities provided in **VPM Workplace standards and management**.

3. Employee's responsibilities

3.1 *Performance and conduct*

Victoria Police employees must:

- conduct themselves, both during and outside working hours, in a manner that protects their reputation and the reputation of the organisation
- provide an impartial, prompt and professional service to internal and external customers
- take responsibility for and be prepared to account for decisions and actions
- take responsibility for their own performance in line with professional development and assessment plans
- continuously improve their professional knowledge and skills and keep up to date with new or revised legislation, policies and organisational strategies
- when witness to an incident, either on or off duty, cooperate fully with any investigation and promptly make a statement if required to by an investigator from a law enforcement agency.

3.2 *Use of authority*

- A Victoria Police employee must only act within the authority given to them in legislation and by Victoria Police through their position accountabilities and organisational policies.

- Employees must not use their position as an employee to influence or affect persons who are having a private dispute with their family or friends. Police members should not investigate matters involving family, friends or other associates. See **VPM Conflict of interest** for further requirements regarding the use of police powers.

3.3 *Police members – liability for duty*

In addition to the above responsibilities, police members:

- must carry their certificate of identity when on duty (unless performing covert duty)
- are always liable for duty whether:
 - rostered for duty or not
 - in uniform or plain clothes
 - performing duty which has been detailed, or not engaged in specific duties
- are bound to act in the execution of their duty when called upon by any person having authority to do so, or when circumstances demand such action
- must not act in matters involving only civil disputes, except where legislation or policy requires them to be involved
- must not make inquiries unconnected with police duties, at the request of individuals or organisations.

4. Uniform and appearance

How employees present themselves as a representative of Victoria Police can have as much impact upon the professional image and reputation of the organisation as an individual's actions. When on duty an employee's individual style does not have precedence over the organisation's responsibility to provide a consistent and professional image and a safe workplace. Therefore:

- clothing, grooming and personal accessories:
 - must project a favourable image of Victoria Police as a professional and disciplined organisation
 - must not be extreme or detract from the need to present as employees of a disciplined and professional organisation.
- police members must have regard to the dress and appearance standards detailed in **VPM Uniform and appearance standards**. In applying these Guidelines, bear in mind the responsibility to:
 - present a neat, clean and professional image
 - provide a visible presence to the community
 - contribute to individual personal health and safety.
- Work Unit Managers and supervisors have a responsibility for ensuring that the dress and appearance of employees reflects and supports the professional image of Victoria Police.

5. Fitness for work

Employees are expected to be fit for work for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and the public. If an employee is unsure about their ability to perform their duties due to illness, injury, or due to taking medication they should notify a supervisor

or manager so that appropriate action can be taken, such as taking leave, modifying duties or obtaining welfare support or medical attention.

6. Alcohol and other drugs

Employees have a health and safety obligation to themselves, their colleagues and the public to be unaffected by alcohol or other drugs when performing their duties. Victoria Police has established specific policy regarding alcohol and other drugs, which must be complied with. See **VPM Alcohol and other drugs – workplace responsibilities and VPM Alcohol and other drugs – workplace testing**.

Employees who consume alcohol off duty, are encouraged to do so in a responsible and safe manner and must ensure that it does not affect their ability to meet the policy requirements. The use of illicit drugs is a criminal act and Victoria Police will not tolerate this activity by its employees.

If an employee is experiencing problems with alcohol or other drug use, Victoria Police can assist with welfare assistance and counselling. Employees experiencing such problems, are encouraged to talk to their supervisor or manager and seek the welfare assistance and referral available through Welfare Services.

7. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest arises if personal interests influence, or appear to influence, the impartial performance of a person's duties. Conflicts of interest can damage the confidence and trust members of the public have in Victoria Police and its employees, whether they are actual, potential or perceived conflicts. Having a conflict of interest is not unethical in and of itself. However, it can become an issue if the situation is not appropriately managed.

Employees are required to identify actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest between their role as a public servant and their private interests. Employees must take all reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest. Where a conflict of interest is identified or, if doubt exists, discuss the matter with a supervisor so that they can assist to resolve the matter. All conflicts of interest must be resolved in favour of the public interest.

In Victoria Police, there are some common situations where conflict of interest issues can arise, including secondary employment and outside interests, offers of gifts and benefits, pecuniary interests and associations. Refer to **VPM Conflict of interest** for further details on these requirements.

8. Information handling

8.1 *Use and disclosure of information*

- Employees have access to and are exposed to a significant amount of information that the organisation Victoria Police obtains, receives and holds to carry out its law enforcement and community policing functions and to manage the organisation. This law enforcement data and police information contains confidential and personal information which must be collected, used, disclosed and managed

sensitively and appropriately. Employees are responsible for the appropriate collection and handling of confidential, private and sensitive information and maintaining the integrity of such information.

- Unless specifically authorised by law or Victoria Police policy, employees must not collect, access, use or disclose any police information if their duty does not require the collection, access, use of or disclosure of information. For further details, see **VPMP Information management and information security framework** and associated information management and security policies and procedures.

8.2 *Commenting on political matters*

- Employees must not publicly comment on the administration of any government department as a Victoria Police employee, see s.95, *Constitution Act 1975*.
- During the performance of their duties employees must:
 - observe strict neutrality in all matters connected with politics
 - not criticise the Government or any employee or act of the Government
- Employees must not sign petitions or other applications concerning the administration of government departments. When necessary, make representations on such subjects through a Department Head.

9. Use of resources

9.1 *Work related use*

As a public service organisation, Victoria Police has an obligation to the community to properly manage its physical and financial resources. Any use of facilities and resources must be properly authorised and managed in accordance with relevant financial management legislation and policy rules. See the **Accounting Manual**.

9.2 *Personal use*

- Generally, employees must not use Victoria Police facilities and resources for private gain. However, incidental and occasional personal use of Victoria Police facilities and equipment is permitted if it:
 - constitutes a minor use of facilities and resources
 - does not interfere with work responsibilities
 - is endorsed by a Work Unit Manager.
- The occasional use of personally owned equipment for personal activities during work time is only permitted if it:
 - does not interfere with work responsibilities
 - does not pose an OH&S or information security risk
 - is endorsed by a Work Unit Manager.
- Employees must not use work time or resources for activities connected with any secondary employment, outside interests or running a business.
- Seek advice from a supervisor to determine if an intended use of Victoria Police facilities or resources is acceptable.

10. Reporting misconduct and corruption

10.1 *Obligation to report*

- Our integrity as employees depends on our personal conduct and willingness to act against misconduct. Employees (inclusive of police officers, PSOs, VPS employees and recruits) are required to report any act or suspected act of corruption or misconduct committed by any other Victoria Police employee. Under s.167(3) of the *Victoria Police Act* police officers and PSOs must also report the conduct of another police officer or PSO where they have reason to believe that the person is guilty of misconduct. Employees who discharge these duties can expect support from their colleagues and from the organisation.
- Acts or suspected acts of misconduct should be reported directly to Professional Standards Command (PSC) but may be reported to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission or to any supervisor. Where a report is made directly to a supervisor, the supervisor must immediately notify PSC.

10.2 *Support for internal sources*

- Victoria Police will fully support a report made as an internal source, regardless of the outcome of the investigation or any subsequent criminal or disciplinary process. The Internal Witness Support Unit will co-ordinate support and assist to ensure local managers provide the support required by the employee who made the report.
- Employees are reminded that victimisation and interference of internal sources, or causing others to do the same, is a criminal offence, punishable by a fine, imprisonment or both.

Related documents

- VPM Conflict of interest
- VPM Workplace standards and management
- VPM Alcohol and other drugs – workplace responsibilities
- VPM Alcohol and other drugs – workplace testing
- VPMP Appropriate use of information
- VPM Workplace behaviours
- Accounting Manual
- VPM Uniform and appearance standards
- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies (VPS employees only)
- VPM Human rights standards

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this Policy, contact the Risk Unit, Professional Standards Command.

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
17/08/20	Replaces VPMP Professional and ethical standards . Contains new Organisational Values	FF-171080
02/06/21	Updated to reflect references to new VPM Alcohol and other drugs	FF-118693
08/01/2025	Updated to correct wording in section 10.1	D24/118436
26/08/2025	Updated to reflect new organisational values and minor corrections	FF-275159