

Victoria Police Manual – Policy Rules

Operational debriefings

Context

A debriefing is a meeting designed to provide an objective critique of the planning, organisation and execution of an operation or incident. The purpose of a debriefing is to identify issues with the conduct of an operation or incident in order to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and safety of future operations or incidents. The debriefing should identify problems that occurred and highlight areas that were handled well.

Debriefings are to be held following planned operations and unplanned incidents. The nature of the operation or incident will inform what type of debrief is required, what should be discussed and who should be involved. An informal, quick assessment, or 'hot' debrief, may be sufficient for routine or straightforward operations or incidents that ran in line with plans or policy. A more formally convened, considered assessment, or 'full' debrief, may be necessary for high risk, large or protracted matters, where there were issues or concerns with the way that the operation or incident was conducted, or where there was a serious outcome.

Application

Policy Rules are mandatory and provide the minimum standards that employees must apply. Non-compliance with or a departure from a Policy Rule may be subject to management or disciplinary action. Employees must use the **Professional and ethical standards** to inform the decisions they make to support compliance with Policy Rules.

These Policy Rules apply to:

- Operational members
- Line Managers of operational members

Rules and Responsibilities

1. Criteria for debriefings

1.1 *Hot debrief*

- A hot debrief must be held where the Area of Operations Commander, Incident Commander or Pursuit Controller considers it necessary to quickly assess the conduct of an operation or incident.

- Unless the Area of Operations Commander, Incident Commander or Pursuit Controller determines that a full debrief is required, a hot debrief is a sufficient level of review.

1.2 Full debrief

- A full debrief must be held following:
 - a critical incident
 - an incident where police were required to use force on a person under 18 years of age, which involved an ASP baton, CED, or OC spray/foam, or where a firearm is drawn.
- For other incidents, the Area of Operations Commander, Incident Commander or Pursuit Controller must determine whether a full debrief is required, having regard to **VPMG Operational debriefings**.
- A full debrief may follow a hot debrief, or may be determined as required without a hot debrief having been held first.

2. Conducting debriefs

2.1 Debriefing convenor

- General operations or incidents – Area of Operations or Incident Commander.
- Pursuits – Pursuit Controller or member nominated by the Senior Manager where the pursuit concluded.
- Critical incidents – the Critical Incident Management Review Committee (CIMRC) must appoint a Critical Incident Review Panel, headed by a Superintendent.

2.2 Timeframe

- A hot debrief may be held:
 - during large or protracted incidents; and/or
 - as soon as possible after the conclusion of the incident or operation.
- A full debrief must be convened as soon as practicable after an operation or incident has concluded, taking into account any investigation, medical, legal, welfare and other relevant issues.

2.3 Attendees and content

The convenor is responsible for determining who must attend the debriefing, having regard to **VPMG Operational Debriefings**.

2.4 *Debrief content*

The convenor is responsible for determining the content that will be covered in the debriefing, having regard to **VPMG Operational debriefings**.

3. Reports and recommendations

3.1 *Recording*

The convenor must detail the findings of the debriefing as follows:

- Hot debriefs – by verbal or written report, as determined by the convenor's Line Manager
- Hot debriefs following a pursuit – on an Incident Fact Sheet
- Full debrief – on a Debriefing Report; see **VPMG Operational debriefings**.

3.2 *Submission of reports*

- Hot debriefs – written reports must be submitted to the relevant Senior Manager and filed locally.
- Full debriefs – the Debriefing Report must be submitted through Line Managers to:
 - critical incidents – CIMRC
 - other incidents or operations – Assistant Commissioner (Education) who will refer it to the Use of Force Register.

3.3 *Findings and recommendations*

Where issues and recommendations are identified, the Senior Manager, Assistant Commissioner (Education) or CIMRC must ensure that the recommendations are allocated to relevant work units or Policy Owners for assessment and advice.

4. Other emergency service debriefs

Where a debriefing is to be conducted for an incident controlled by another emergency service and police have not already conducted a debriefing, the police Area of Operations Commander must:

- before attending the emergency service debriefing, conduct a full debrief with relevant police employees and submit a Debriefing Report
- attend the emergency service debrief and relate any issues or ideas identified at the police debriefing that are relevant to other services or joint operations
- report the details of the emergency service debriefing to the relevant Senior Manager.

Quick Links

- VPMG Operational debriefings
- VPM Death or serious injury/illness incidents involving police

Further Advice and Information

For further advice and assistance regarding these Policy Rules, contact your supervisor or local training officer.

Update history

Date of first issue	22/02/2010	
Date updated	Summary of change	Force File number
20/06/2011	The criteria for conducting a full debrief has been expanded to include where operational safety equipment is used in an incident with a child. This was a result of Critical Incident Management Review Committee Recommendations.	067499/11
04/06/21	Administrative update to remove reference to VPMP Critical incident, replaced by VPM Death or serious injury/illness incidents involving police	N/A