

Victoria Police Manual

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Crime attendance - initial action

Context

Police officers have a legal responsibility to investigate all reports of crime. This policy provides direction to police officers from initial action to commencing crime investigations so that:

- they respond to incidents of crime in an appropriate and timely manner
- the appropriate units attend the scene of a crime and the investigation is appropriately conducted, having regard to the nature and type of crime reported
- they carry out this responsibility effectively and consistently.

This policy includes:

- responsibilities for initial action including assessing crimes against Crime Screening Principles and Accountability and Resource Model (ARM) criteria and notifications to Investigation and Response (I&R) units
- requirements for investigation handover including considerations for crimes against the person
- additional requirements for investigating specific crime types
- the process when a victim requests no further police action.

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Definitions

- **Case file** – consists of all 'hard copy' documentation collected during initial action and recorded on the Investigation Case File [Form 1313] and any subsequent documentation collected during an investigation.

- **Frontline unit** – uniform, highway patrol and crime scene units.
- **Handover** - the process where frontline members handover the case file to an I&R investigator who assumes responsibility for the ongoing investigation.
- **Investigation** - an objective assessment of an act, omission, situation or event with a view to determining whether any breach of law is involved or to assign responsibility for the occurrence.
- **I&R unit** – which may be a geographically based general crime unit or a theme unit, including those crime units attached to a command.
- **Oversight** – the active supervision of an investigation by a supervisor to ensure that an investigation is conducted utilising a professional and methodical approach and progresses in a timely and efficient manner.
- **Significant follow-up** – is referenced in the Crime Screening Principles (see Appendix 1 of this policy). In determining significant follow up, consideration must be given to the number (or likely number) of investigative actions, the resource implications and the required level of investigative supervision or management. There are no set number of investigative actions or resources in determining the category and this decision will depend on the circumstances of each investigation. Considerations include:
 - the category of the investigation
 - the work unit and its resource capability
 - the skill and knowledge of the police officer conducting the investigation
 - the need for a team approach to investigate the offence
 - investigation priority
 - risk to victim or community safety
 - potential for the loss of evidence and
 - potential for significant undermining of Victoria Police reputation or loss of public confidence.

Also refer to the general VPM Dictionary for definitions and acronyms.

Scope and application

These instructions apply to all frontline and I&R units, specialist taskforces, supervisors and work unit managers performing investigative functions and must be read in conjunction with **VPM Crime investigation – case management**.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Initial action at a crime scene

1.1 *Frontline member responsibilities*

Frontline members are responsible for the following initial action at a crime scene, including but not limited to:

- preserving the scene in accordance with **VPM Scene management**
- handling all seized property in accordance with **VPM Seized property and special property types**
- notifying local Crime Scene Services (CSS) if the scene is non-complex in nature to assess whether crime scene officers are needed. If CSS are not operating:

- request that the victim leave the scene undisturbed as far as practicable
- advise the victim that CSS will contact them to arrange a suitable time to attend
- recording all preliminary findings and notes on the Initial Action Pad [Form 502]
- completing the Form 1313 as outlined in section 2 of this policy
- entering relevant crime reports on LEDR MK2 in all circumstances in accordance with **VPM Crime and event reporting and recording**, unless directed otherwise.

1.2 *Senior frontline member responsibilities*

Upon arrival at the scene, the senior frontline member must:

- notify the patrol supervisor (251) in accordance with **VPM Operational supervision and incident attendance**. Where they cannot be contacted to attend an incident, notify an I&R unit as soon as practicable, and
- take charge until the 251 or the I&R unit arrives.

1.3 *Patrol supervisor responsibilities*

Upon arrival at the scene, the 251 must:

- take charge and coordinate frontline members
- provide advice, guidance and leadership as appropriate
- assess all crimes against the Crime Screening Principles (see Appendix 1 of this policy) and categorise and prioritise them utilising the ARM criteria
- where a Category 1 or 2 crime offence is identified, notify an I&R unit as soon as practicable in accordance with the Crime Screening Principles
- assign all other investigations to a frontline unit, and
- consider whether the incident may draw significant media attention and seek advice from the Reactive Media Unit, Media Communications and Engagement Department.

Where the 251 is unavailable, these tasks must be performed by the senior frontline member.

1.4 *Attending I&R unit member responsibilities*

Upon arriving at the scene, the I&R unit member must:

- supervise frontline members at in person handover (see sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this policy), including overseeing witness interviews and scene management, and providing guidance regarding evidence collection/preservation
- categorise and prioritise the incident/crime using the Crime Screening Principles and if applicable the ARM criteria (see section 4 of this policy), and
- report the incident to Police Communications where an incident or crime is assessed as Category 1 or 2, or specialist resources are required (see section 6 of this policy). Police Communications will advise the relevant Crime Command workgroup where required.

2. Completion of the Initial Action Package Checklist

- Frontline members must complete the Initial Action Package Checklist and any other relevant sections of the Form 1313 to record information obtained from the scene.
- The Form 1313 must be compiled for all investigations whether or not an investigation is to be handed over to an I&R unit or retained by frontline members (see section 3 of this policy for investigation allocation requirements).
- The Form 502 must be used to record notes for inclusion in the Initial Action Package Checklist.
- Frontline supervisors must:
 - check the contents of the Initial Action Package Checklist
 - make recommendations, including investigation handover, and
 - complete their name, rank and registered number and sign and date the Initial Action Package Checklist.

3. Allocation of investigations

3.1 *Crime Screening Principles*

- Depending on the seriousness of the crime or resources required, crime investigations may be conducted by frontline members, I&R units or specialist taskforces.
- To determine the most appropriate resources to undertake an investigation, each incident must be considered against the Crime Screening Principles as outlined in Appendix 1 of this policy.

3.2 *Considerations of disclosure*

Once a criminal investigation commences, police officers must create an investigation plan which includes assessing all relevant documents and material collected during an investigation in order to comply with disclosure obligations under common law and the *Criminal Procedure Act 2009*. Effective disclosure forms part of an effective investigation and police officers must continue to consider disclosure obligations at all stages of an investigation.

3.3 *Investigation handover*

- There are two types of investigation handover:
 - **in person handover** - when an I&R unit attends an incident and takes over the investigation at the scene from frontline members
 - **packaged handover** - when there is no requirement for an I&R unit member to attend as part of the initial action, frontline members 'package' the initial investigation case file so it may be passed onto an I&R unit at a later time.
- The packaged handover typically includes:
 - all statements, diagrams/sketches, photographs, exhibits and notes recorded on the Form 502
 - the completed Initial Action Checklist and other relevant sections of the Form 1313, and
 - any other information or documentation relevant to the case.

- The frontline supervisor is responsible for ensuring the Form 1313 is completed before handover to the I&R investigator.
- The I&R investigator accepting handover must sign and date the Initial Action Package Checklist.

3.4 *Crimes against the person handover requirements*

- All crimes against the person should be an in person handover to an I&R investigator except in the following circumstances:
 - minor assault(s) where both an offender is identified and not present but resides within the Police Service Area and the investigation is of a non-complex nature where no significant follow-up is required, or
 - where a frontline unit is able to arrest and process the offender(s) within the shift or where there is no significant follow-up.

Refer to **VPM Family violence** for investigation primacy in accordance with the family violence response model

- I&R supervisors will determine whether a crime against the person investigation will be a packaged handover or assigned to a frontline member.

3.5 *Investigation and Response investigations retained by frontline members*

- The complexity and subsequent resource requirements of an investigation may permit an I&R investigation to remain with a frontline member for a maximum of 30 days provided that the:
 - I&R Manager and frontline work unit manager agree that a frontline member can continue the investigation and this is recorded in the LEAP incident narrative
 - I&R investigator is the primary investigator and continues to provide active supervision and guidance to the frontline member
 - I&R supervisor records and manages the investigation on Interpose using the Interpose 'Oversight' function
 - I&R Manager monitors the quality and timeliness of the investigation, and
 - I&R unit retains responsibility for any incident which is identified as an I&R investigation under the Crime Screening Principles, irrespective of who is assigned the investigation.
- Where case resolution is not reached within 30 days, the investigation must revert to the primary I&R investigator, except where both the I&R Manager and frontline work unit manager agree that the matter should remain with the frontline member and either of the following apply:
 - resolution is imminent
 - the progress of the investigation relies on external stakeholders (i.e., information sourced via Request Management System functions).
- An I&R Manager may direct investigation primacy be reallocated to an I&R unit at any time. I&R units must accept the transfer of an active investigation where there is documented evidence of early and ongoing frontline supervision/intervention such as:
 - the Form 1313 was checked and signed and a LEAP entry made by the frontline supervisor within 48 hours of the file being created

- the Form 1313 and LEAP incident case progress narrative contains an investigation plan including avenues of enquiry to be completed, endorsed by a frontline supervisor within five days of the incident report date
 - evidence demonstrating single member dependency has not impacted progression of the investigation, and
 - the LEAP incident case progress narrative has been updated every five days as a minimum, detailing the outcome of avenues of enquiry and progress of the investigation.
- When an I&R unit does not accept the transfer of an I&R investigation, the I&R supervisor must endorse the LEAP incident with the reason(s) why, based on the evidence requirements detailed above. Any dispute as to the transfer of the investigation should be settled in the first instance by the respective I&R and frontline work unit managers and escalated to the Tasking and Co-ordination Manager if required.

3.6 *Confined investigations*

- Frontline members are responsible for attending and investigating the majority of crimes reported to Victoria Police. Investigations allocated to frontline members following the Crime Screening Principles are referred to as 'confined investigations.'
- Confined investigations do not usually require significant follow-up and generally involve crime of a minor nature. Follow-up must be determined based on the circumstances of the case, including resource capability and capacity, investigation priority, potential loss of evidence and risk to the victim/community.
- Confined investigations may include the following:
 - incidents where no people are, or are likely to be, at risk of harm
 - family violence matters where investigation primacy is determined as per the family violence response model detailed in **VPM Family violence**
 - incidents that are not part of significant cross border activity
 - injury and non-injury collisions
 - all minor property offences that do not involve significant follow-up
 - incidents where there are minimal or limited investigative actions required, or
 - investigations capable of being substantially completed (excluding brief preparation) within the shift or shortly after where there is no significant follow up required, such as where all evidence is able to be gathered and the offender processed within the shift.

4. Investigation and Response unit investigations

4.1 *Accountability and Resource Model*

- The ARM identifies investigative primacy for reported crime. The level of support and oversight is determined by the case priority and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- The ARM outlines criteria used to classify a crime as either:
 - Category 1 – a relevant Command i.e., Crime Command, Family Violence Command etc. take investigation primacy and the Regions/Transit and Public Safety Command provide support in accordance with the case priority

- Category 2 and 3 - Regions/Transit and Public Safety Command take investigation primacy and the relevant Command may provide support in accordance with the case priority.
- Irrespective of the I&R investigator's initial classification of crime, the Detective Superintendent, Tasking and Coordination Operations or the Duty Crime Superintendent can declare that the relevant Command takes investigative primacy for a particular crime.
- The relevant Command workgroup which has investigative primacy must:
 - provide appropriate support, as determined by the ARM classification and prioritisation, and facilitate specialist services as required
 - notify the relevant Crime Command squad of any offences falling within their respective investigative criteria
 - ensure the incident is recorded on LEAP and Interpose, and
 - an Incident Fact Sheet is submitted where required as per **VPM Operational duties and responsibilities**.

4.2 *Investigation and Response investigator responsibilities*

The I&R primary investigator is responsible for:

- accepting the Investigation Case File from the attending frontline member and assessing it against the Initial Action Package Checklist
- managing the scene in accordance with **VPM Scene management** and identifying and implementing investigation procedures
- handling seized property in accordance with **VPM Seized property and special property types**, and
- ensuring compliance with **VPM Confiscation Act**.

4.3 *Case management*

- Refer to **VPM Crime investigation - case management** for case file requirements, including creating an investigation shell, preparing an investigation plan and retention periods.

5. Initial investigation

5.1 *Investigating member responsibilities*

- The investigating member must:
 - not investigate any crime that could create a real conflict of interest unless a supervising Sub-officer determines it that is appropriate to do so; refer to **VPM Conflict of interest**.
 - ensure the incident is managed in accordance with **VPM Scene management**, and
 - ensure all seized property is handled in accordance with **VPM Seized property and special property types**.

5.2 *Identifying an offender*

Investigating members must consider whether any investigative techniques could be used to assist in identifying an offender, such as:

- identification evidence - must be obtained in a manner that is fair and adequately tests the ability of the witness to recognise the suspect. See **VPMG Identifying offenders** for further details, including identification parade requirements
- forensic procedures including fingerprints and DNA - must be conducted in accordance with **VPM Forensic procedures**, **VPM Fingerprinting** and **VPM DNA profile samples**
- CCTV footage - police officers must comply with **VPMG Obtaining information from external organisations**, and/or
- LEAP person/vehicle whereabouts – police officers must comply with **VPMG Tagging of records to locate suspects or offenders**.

6. Specific crime investigations

In addition to the general requirements regarding crime investigations, the following requirements apply to investigating and responding to specific crime types:

Specific investigation requirements	
Type of investigation	Requirements
Assaults	• Refer to VPMG Assault investigations
Reportable incidents in aged care settings under the <i>Aged Care Act 1997</i>	• Refer to Serious Incident Response Scheme Factsheet
Sexual offences	• Refer to VPM Sexual Offences Investigations and Code of Practice for the Investigation of Sexual Crime
Drug investigations	• Refer to VPMG Drug investigations
Motor vehicle theft	• Refer to VPM Motor vehicle theft investigations
Missing persons	• Refer to VPM Missing persons investigations
Organised crime offences	• Refer to VPMG Coercive powers
Commonwealth offences	• Refer to VPMG Commonwealth offence investigations
Workplace incidents	• Refer to VPM Investigation of workplace incidents
Animals	• Refer to VPM Animals
Prejudice Motivated Crime	• Refer to VPMG Prejudice motivated crime
Family Violence	• Refer to VPM Family violence and Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence
Fraud investigations	• Refer to VPM Fraud offences
Fire investigations	• Notify the Coroner of any fire involving: - a person held in custody - a reportable death - serious injury where death is a likely possibility - significant damage to public property - community concern or public health or safety concern • In addition to any other reports, complete the following for any fire incident: - Fire Report [Form L26] - Other Names re Fire [Form L8A]
Confirmed or potential explosives present	• Members must notify the Arson and Explosives Squad immediately via Police Communications where explosive or incendiary material and/or devices are identified or suspected

Specific investigation requirements	
Type of investigation	Requirements
Reports of crimes at sea	- Refer to VPMG Commonwealth offence investigations when the crime falls under Commonwealth jurisdiction - Investigating members should seek advice from the Marine Investigation Unit, Water Police Squad
Petrol theft	- If a petrol drive-off is reported to police, it must not be recorded as an offence unless there is information available to establish that a crime has been committed - Where there is information to suggest that the retailer or console operator has made arrangements with the customer to pay, the matter is to be managed by the retailer as a civil debt notwithstanding the customer may not have subsequently made the payment - Members must not provide any details of the registered vehicle owner, directly or indirectly, to the retailer or any other person
Public transport offences	- Transit Safety Division must be notified of any offences occurring on the public transport system - Transit Safety Division CIU must investigate any offences: - that have a clear impact on passenger safety and security - against a person who is a passenger on public transport or a public transport employee - Where there is no direct bearing on passenger or employee safety, the local CIU must investigate: - thefts or burglaries from or on public transport buildings and other areas of the system - frauds committed on the public transport operator by employees or customers that do not require specialist knowledge of the public transport system and procedures - criminal damage to or theft from vending machines or kiosks located on public transport property
Reports of criminal offences at schools	- Comply with the Overarching Relationship Principles Memorandum of Understanding (the Protocol) between Victoria Police and Department of Education where a criminal offence is alleged to have been committed by a student: - at school - travelling directly to or from school, or - during school sponsored activities - Under the Protocol, a criminal offence means any behaviour that may seriously threaten the safety, security or wellbeing of any person for whom the principal/head teacher is responsible - In accordance with the Protocol, the relevant work unit manager is the police contact person and is responsible for managing the investigation including: - notifying the Local Area Commander, Youth Resource officer, CIU and other areas as required, and - informing the school principal/head teacher that an offence by a student has been alleged/committed and any action taken as a result
Child abuse	Refer to VPM Protecting children
Counter Terrorism	Refer to VPM Counter terrorism

Specific investigation requirements	
Type of investigation	Requirements
Breaches of the <i>Worker Screening Act 2020</i>	- Investigating members must investigate breaches of the <i>Worker Screening Act</i> - Where a breach of the <i>Worker Screening Act</i> is reported to the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Police Information Liaison Office (PILO) will be notified. The PILO must forward the matter to the local police service area (PSA) for investigation. Refer to VPM Protecting children for further information
Joint investigation with other government and law enforcement agencies	- The relevant work unit manager must consult the Assistant Commissioner, Crime Command or the Assistant Commissioner of the relevant Command (i.e., Counter Terrorism Command or Family Violence Command) before engaging in a joint operation with another agency - A joint investigation plan/agreement must be completed before any commitment of resources is made. Refer to VPM Formal arrangements with external organisations and foreign entities for information about preparing and registering MOUs - Comply with VPM Extradition, where applicable
Referring investigations to interstate law enforcement agencies (LEAs)	- Where an investigation is transferred to an interstate LEA: - the investigating member must ensure the investigation file is completed and details the reason for the referral - a supervisor must review the file prior to submission to the work unit manager for approval to release the file to the interstate LEA - the file must be accompanied by the Referral of Investigation to Interstate Law Enforcement Agency [Form 1418] Refer to the interstate LEA contact list on the ICLU intranet site for relevant addresses

7. Recording investigations

The I&R Manager and frontline work unit manager must create and maintain a Centralised Case File System (CCFS) as described by **VPM Crime investigation - case management**.

8. Withdrawal of complaint

8.1 Obtaining a statement of no further police action

When a victim wants to withdraw a complaint, the investigating member must obtain a statement of no further police action and take the action described in the table below. The investigating member must not encourage a victim to request no further police action or sign a statement of no further police action.

Step	Action
1	- Obtain the statement, which should include: - that the victim reported a particular offence to police and desires no further police action - the reasons why the victim does not desire further police action - that the statement has been made in the exercise of the victim's free will and not under any duress or intimidation - the victim's signature, and - in the case of a withdrawal of complaint in a sexual assault, additional requirements are to be complied with in accordance with VPM Sexual offence investigations - Note: If the victim refuses to sign the statement of no further police action, the investigating member must document all circumstances of the refusal in an accompanying report - Inform the victim that the investigation may continue - The accompanying report should include: - circumstances and details of the offence - details of witnesses available - evidence available to identify and prosecute the suspect/s in the absence of assistance from the victim - an assessment as to whether all relevant avenues of inquiry have been exhausted - the likelihood of conviction, including an assessment of any particular issues that may either assist and/or be prejudicial to a successful prosecution - a recommendation from the investigating member as to whether the investigation should be proceeded with, or no further action be taken - whether a case review is required in accordance with VPM Family violence, and - in the case of a withdrawal of complaint in a sexual assault, the accompanying report must include specific additions set out in VPM Sexual offence investigations
2	- Submit the statement and the accompanying report for approval to a member permitted to authorise briefs (see VPMP Briefs of evidence) - For ARM Category 1 or 2 crimes: - attach the statement and the accompanying report to Interpose, and - use Interpose to email the statement and the accompanying report for approval to a member permitted to authorise briefs (see VPMP Briefs of evidence)
3	The authorised member must then decide whether the investigation should continue or cease, considering: - the seriousness and nature of the offence - the public interest in continuing the investigation - whether the offence is one of a series of offences - the solvability of the offence, particularly in view of the attitude of the victim, and - the allocation of investigative resources
4	- Where no further police action will be taken, the investigating member must update the case progress narrative in LEAP with sufficient detail outlining why the complaint has been withdrawn. Complete Form L1 and Form L2A/B marked 'Complaint withdrawn' and submit to a supervisor - The supervisor must review the forms in conjunction with the narrative prior to sending the forms to CDEB

5	Contact the victim to advise them of the outcome of their request and then send them a Complaint Withdrawn [Form 1290H] as a record
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- Retention of relevant files must be managed in accordance with **VPM Crime investigation – case management**.
- Exhibits must be managed in accordance with **VPM Seized property and special property types**.

Related documents

- VPM Crime investigation – case management
- Accountability and Resource Model (ARM)
- Intergovernmental Agreement – Crimes at Sea 2000.

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding these instructions, contact a supervisor or the local I&R Manager.

Update history

DATE OF FIRST ISSUE	14/08/17 FF-109569	
DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
12/04/18	Minor amendments to update terminology as a consequence of the relaunched VPID	FF-119664
16/07/18	Added category 'explosive investigation' and requirement to notify Arson and Explosives Squad in instances where explosive or incendiary materials are identified or suspected	FF-119774
01/07/19	Instrument names amended to reflect updated DNA/forensic policies and conflict of interest policy	FF-143085 & FF-135496
29/07/19	Cross reference to VPMG Family violence for specific investigation requirements	FF-138872
21/10/19	Instrument names amended to reflect updated property management policies	FF-116667
30/12/20	Updated in response to Royal Commission into the Institutional Response into Child Sexual Abuse recommendations. Includes: victim contact when withdrawing charges, requirements for child abuse and sexual offence investigations in Crime Screening Principles.	FF-154475
19/02/21	Policy references updated to reflect review of family violence policies including removal of reference to the Family Violence Code of Practice	FF-189857
13/10/22	Cross reference updated to new VPM Road policing – general	FF-190724 2

05/05/25	Amendments implementing recommendations from the Investigative Practice Review VPM renamed from VPM Crime attendance and investigation to VPM Crime attendance – initial action. Inclusion of category 'Reportable assaults under the <i>Aged Care Act 1997</i> '	FF- 254456 1 FF-143399
04/09/25	Updated instrument names, VPMG Resource management and patrol supervision renamed VPM Operational supervision and incident attendance	FF-219784
23/02/2026	Updated investigation requirements for petrol theft	FF-249793

Appendix 1 – Crime Screening Principles

Crime Screening Principles		
Incident	Responsibility for Investigation	Exceptions / Conditions
Crimes against the person, including family violence (see VPM Family violence)	I&R unit	Except: - minor assault(s) where both: - an offender is identified and not present but resides within the PSA - the investigation is of a non-complex nature where no significant follow-up is required - where a frontline unit is able to arrest and process the offender(s) within the shift or where there is no significant follow-up
Sexual offences	I&R unit	Except: Image-based sexual offences (Excluding CAM) can be investigated by frontline units with Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) oversight when appropriate
Child abuse	I&R unit	Except: - family violence incidents where both the child and an adult family member have been assaulted - minor assaults - where the investigation is of a non-complex nature and there is no significant follow-up required - where frontline members are able to arrest and process the offender(s) within the shift
Deaths that are suspicious or non-routine, including: - deaths where a person was under the control, care or custody of a government department or organisation - drug overdoses - workplace deaths - Sudden and Unexplained Death of an Infant - murder-suicides	I&R unit	
Deaths that are non-suspicious or routine	Frontline unit	- Investigations managed by patrol supervisors - an I&R unit must attend and oversight incidents of suicide

Crime Screening Principles		
Incident	Responsibility for Investigation	Exceptions / Conditions
Explosions and major arson incidents, including bushfires	I&R unit	
Fraud	I&R unit - following the packaged handover by a frontline unit	Except where either: - frontline members are able to arrest and process the offender(s) within the shift - the investigation is of a non-complex nature and there is no significant follow-up required Contact the relevant I&R unit if guidance/advice is needed or if the fraud relates to a high value or unusual crime
Missing persons investigations	- I&R unit (where suspicious) - Frontline members (routine missing person investigation)	- Frontline members' investigation may continue for a maximum of 30 days after which the investigation must be transferred to an I&R unit - Human remains which remain unidentified after three days must be investigated by an I&R unit (or earlier if required)
Motor vehicle collisions resulting in fatal or serious injury	Frontline unit	- Comply with MCIU call out criteria; see VPM Road Policing - general - I&R unit must be notified where there is evidence of criminal negligence by a driver. The I&R unit must provide support and oversight, and in some circumstances undertake any subsequent investigation where there is no MCIU oversight
Property offences – ongoing investigation	I&R unit - following packaged handover by a frontline unit	Frontline members may require the attendance and/or advice of an I&R unit in certain circumstances