

Victoria Police Manual

The Victoria Police Manual is issued under the authority of the Chief Commissioner of Police 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 VPM Professional and ethical standards to inform the decisions they make to support compliance.

Operational safety and tactics training qualifications

Context

Operational Safety and Tactics Training (OSTT) is delivered to all police, Protective Services Officers (police members) and Police Custody Officers (PCOs) biannually through training programs designed by the Centre for Operational Safety (CfOS), People Development Command (PDC).

PDC reviews data and information collected from the operational environment and through a variety of internal and external areas to ensure:

- evolving environmental issues or changes in offender behaviour that may impact on police member, PCO or community safety are reduced through training
- internal and external reviews that may change operational practice or process (such as Coronial decisions or internal reviews) are understood
- the most contemporary and safest tactics are understood and implemented across the organisation
- police members and PCOs are instructed in and qualified to use operational safety equipment (OSE) in the correct manner
- legislation, including the use of force and human rights, are understood.

Police members and PCOs are responsible for maintaining their OSTT qualification and contemporary knowledge of issues impacting the operational environment.

Policy at a glance

This policy includes:

- information for police members and PCOs on their responsibilities to ensure that their OSTT qualifications are kept current through biannual training programs
- work unit manager responsibilities for ensuring compliance of their police members and PCOs OSTT status
- eligibility criteria and the application process for an OSTT 28-day extension
- the application process for exemptions from maintaining OSTT qualifications
- information and processes about any lapse of qualifications and qualification difficulties because of medical or lack of competency
- criteria to be followed for the suspension of a police member or PCO's OSTT qualification
- process to be followed for promotion or transfer of OSTT unqualified police members and PCOs
- information on Tactical Arrest Options Training (TAOT) and the Semi-Automatic Rifle (SAR) user course.

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Scope and application

The following instruction applies to all employees.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. General

- All police members and PCOs must successfully complete and maintain an OSTT qualification unless certified medically unfit to do so. Refer to section 7 Qualification difficulties for more information.
- As indicated by **VPM Operational safety equipment**, police members and PCOs are required to hold a current OSTT qualification in order to carry OSE that is appropriate for the duties they are performing.
- The CfOS, Operational Safety Division, PDC is responsible for developing OSTT packages that are delivered through allocated OSTT venues.
- Line managers are responsible for ensuring all relevant police members and PCOs hold a current OSTT qualification and are booked in to their correct OSTT course.

2. Obtaining and maintaining qualification

- Police members and PCOs need to be assessed as competent in all assessable components of the course to obtain their OSTT qualification. This includes any pre attendance e-Learning courses. For further details on the course and its competencies, contact the local OSTT venue.
- OSTT may include an operational readiness assessment to determine the employee's operational readiness capacity. Remedial training to meet operational readiness standards may involve operational deployment, but unless agreed to by the police member or PCO, such deployment must not exceed two shifts per OSTT qualifying cycle.
- To maintain an OSTT qualification, police members and PCOs are to successfully complete the OSTT course twice each calendar year within the:
 - January to June and July to December periods, or
 - cycles directed by the Assistant Commissioner, PDC.
- Unless otherwise directed by the Assistant Commissioner, PDC, all police members and PCOs (excluding members with exemptions or OSTT suspension) must be booked onto an OSTT course by the completion of the second month of each cycle as follows:
 - 28 (or 29) February for the January to June cycle
 - 31 August for the July to December cycle.
- The booking must occur in the first two months of a cycle and attendance can occur at any time throughout that six-month cycle.
- Police members and PCOs unable to requalify within the required timeframe should refer to sections 5 and 6 of this policy for more information.

3. Management of qualifications

- Police members and PCOs should advise their work unit manager when they are due to renew their OSTT qualification.
- OSTT course qualification results must be recorded on HR Assist within 48 hours of the training course completion by the OSTT venue manager or delegate responsible for the training at the venue.
- The work unit manager is responsible for ensuring HR Assist (HR39) OSTT unqualified reports are generated within 48 hours of the end of each calendar month with action taken and reported on where necessary. HR Assist (HR39) generates reports on police members and PCOs supervised by the relevant work unit manager only.
- OSTT venues and identified work units can utilise the HR Assist (HR73) Operational Status Report to display the status report of any police member or PCO's OSTT qualification, conducted energy device (CED) qualification, SAR qualification or first aid status.

4. Expiry of qualification

OSTT qualifications expire on the last day of the police member or PCO's next qualifying period. For example, a qualification attained in the January to June period expires on 31 December.

5. Qualification exemptions

5.1 General

- Police members and PCOs who are required to maintain an OSTT qualification, but are not able to requalify, may apply for a temporary or permanent exemption.
- Exemptions may be applied for due to:
 - a medical condition
 - long service leave
 - leave without pay
 - parental leave
 - other long-term absence.
- A temporary or permanent exemption must not be applied for in circumstances where:
 - a police member or PCO has had their OSTT qualification suspended (for more information see section 9)
 - a police member is directed to take leave or is suspended from duty due to an authorised interim action (for more information see **Discipline Action Factsheet - Interim action**)
 - a police recruit undertaking the Foundation Training Program is 'stood down' from duty due to a direction from a relevant commissioned officer (for more information contact the Foundation Training Program)
 - a probationary constable undertaking the Probationary Constable Extended Training (PCET) is suspended or 'stood down' from duty due to an authorised interim action or direction from a relevant commissioned officer (for more information contact the PCET Program)
 - a PCO is suspended from duty due to an authorised interim action. For more information see **VPM Management of misconduct (VPS Employees)**
 - the police member or PCO is expected to return to full duties prior to the expiry of their OSTT qualification
 - a police member or PCO's OSTT qualification has expired and their requalification can be managed locally using the qualification extension process outlined in section 6.2.

5.2 Temporary exemption

- An application for a temporary exemption must be:
 - submitted by a senior sergeant or above or VPS equivalent via HR Assist
 - approved by the relevant superintendent or VPS equivalent

- assigned an expiry date, not exceeding 12 months. That date may be extended on review by submitting an additional temporary exemption application.
- Police members and PCOs must requalify at OSTT when returning to full duties. When that requalification occurs, the OSTT qualification expiry date will return to the biannual date in line with section 4.
- When a probationary constable is granted an exemption, their probation period is extended for up to 12 months with the approval of the Assistant Commissioner, PDC.

5.3 *Permanent exemption*

- An application for permanent exemption must only be submitted after recommendation by the Police Medical Officer (PMO).
- Application for a permanent exemption must be:
 - submitted by a senior sergeant or above or VPS equivalent via HR Assist
 - approved by the relevant superintendent or VPS equivalent
 - assigned an expiry date of 31.12.9999 in HR Assist.

5.4 *Cancellation of permanent exemptions*

- Cancellation or variation of a permanent exemption must be:
 - based on advice of the PMO
 - approved by the relevant superintendent or VPS equivalent
 - emailed to OPERATIONAL SAFETY-OIC PBEA for processing.

6. Lapse of qualification

6.1 *General*

Any police member or PCO required to hold an OSTT qualification and whose qualification expires as a result of absence from work, is required to qualify within 28 days of return to duty.

6.2 *Extending qualification*

- If a police member or PCO does not attend and qualify at OSTT within the qualifying period, they may apply for one 28-day extension from the end date of the qualifying period, if either of the following criteria are met:
 - the police member or PCO was absent, on light/restricted duties, or OSTT suspended for 80% or more of the OSTT qualifying period
 - the police member or PCO was booked onto a course during the cycle but was removed for a critical operational need and unable to re-book within a reasonable time.
- A police member or PCO must apply for the extension on HR assist. The application escalates through the following chain of command for approval:
 - Officer in Charge (OIC)/ manager (or equivalent VPS), and then
 - Local Area Commander/ inspector (or equivalent VPS).

- The OIC, Research and Continuous Improvement (RCI) performs a governance check as the final step.
- Where a police member or PCO qualifies under a 28-day OSTT extension, their qualification will be backdated to the original qualifying period dates.
- No further extensions can be granted.
- See section 7.2 of this policy regarding circumstances where an OSTT course has been commenced but not completed, separate from the extension process in this section.

7. Qualification difficulties

7.1 *Physical or medical restrictions*

- Police members or PCOs must not attend OSTT when:
 - their OSST qualification is suspended
 - they have a physical limitation which would prevent them from performing normal operational duties
 - they are on modified duties (full or partial) under WorkCover arrangements that would impact their ability to perform OSTT.
- Where a police member or PCO has been certified medically fit, having previously been certified medically unfit, that police member or PCO must successfully complete OSTT at the earliest opportunity. If the OSTT qualification has expired, the police member or PCO should contact the OSTT venue to identify what courses and mandatory learning are required to complete OSTT.

7.2 *Inability to complete OSTT course*

If a police member or PCO commences an OSTT course but is unable to complete it due to court commitments, injury or illness, etc., they may re-attend within 28 days and complete outstanding components. Deferment in such cases is not considered non-qualification.

7.3 *Participating in training courses*

Where completion of OSTT is deferred, as outlined in section 7.2 a police member or PCO may be unable to participate in a training course that requires an OSTT qualification. In exceptional circumstances, the relevant department head may authorise the police member or PCO to participate in the training course subject to the following conditions:

- the course convenor is consulted to ensure that the police member or PCO can fully participate in the course
- appropriate medical advice from the PMO or private medical practitioner supports the application.

7.4 *Remedial training*

Police members and PCOs assessed as not yet competent in any component will, where practicable, receive remedial instruction to develop their skills to the required assessment standard.

7.5 Competency assessment standards not met

- A police member or PCO assessed as not yet competent after receiving remedial instruction is deemed to have not qualified. To regain the qualification, they will have to re-attend and complete the course.
- The OSTT venue manager or delegate responsible for the assessment is to:
 - explain to the police member or PCO the reasons for not qualifying
 - complete an OSTT Developmental Advice Form.

8. Failure to demonstrate competency at Operational Safety and Tactics Training

If a police member or PCO is deemed not yet competent at OSTT the following applies:

Non-qualification at OSTT	
<i>Note: the policy for re-attendance or re-assessment at training courses does not apply to OSTT</i>	
Police members or PCOs	• Are not permitted to carry OSE or perform duties requiring the carriage of OSE regardless of previous expiry date
Police members	• If police members do not qualify after remedial training and one re-attendance, they will be managed according to VPM Mobility (members) and VPM Redeployment (members) • A probationary constable who is deemed not yet competent at the completion of their probationary period will be managed under the provisions of s.28, <i>Victoria Police Act 2013</i>
	• Local Area Commanders should initiate proceedings for the police member to be managed in line with VPM Mobility (members) and VPM Redeployment (members) if they believe the member has been provided all reasonable opportunities and they: - do not qualify after remedial training and one re-attendance, or - claim permanent medical or physical impairment

9. Suspending a police member or police custody officer's Operational Safety and Tactics Training qualification

9.1 General – statement of commitment

- Victoria Police is committed to the health and safety of all employees and providing and maintaining, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.
- To minimise the harm associated with the use of OSE, an active approach is undertaken by monitoring a police member or PCO's OSTT training needs and all employee's access to firearms.
- In some circumstances, a police member or PCO's OSTT qualification may be suspended to provide a time limited opportunity to review their welfare needs, initiate an assessment by a PMO or an appropriately qualified Victoria Police mental health clinician, and to provide initial support. A timely and informed approach

must be undertaken when a decision to suspend a police member or PCO's OSTT qualification is considered.

9.2 *Criteria - must or should consider suspension OSTT qualification*

Must suspend OSTT qualification	• Is personally involved in a family violence incident as the respondent and there are grounds for an Intervention Order application or the incident results in an alleged breach of an existing order • Is a prohibited person in accordance with the <i>Firearms Act 1996</i> • Is suspended from duty or directed to take leave as a result of interim action • Has recently self-harmed or threatened harm to themselves or another • Commits a breach of safety regarding a Victoria Police issue firearm or CED unless the breach occurs during a Victoria Police training course and the breach can be managed by an authorised instructor • At the conclusion of an incident where the police member has discharged a firearm at another person
Should consider suspension of OSTT qualification	• The police member or PCO self-reports serious concerns about their psychological wellbeing • A third party (including Victoria Police employees) reports serious concerns about a police member or PCO's psychological wellbeing and these concerns can be reasonably substantiated • The police member or PCO is charged with or under investigation for a criminal offence or breach of discipline and there are significant concerns about the suitability of their OSTT qualification status; however, they have not been subject to interim action • At the conclusion of an incident where a police member or PCO was in close proximity to a police member who discharged a firearm at another person

Where a police member or PCO is currently unqualified at OSTT, all of the suspension criteria listed above (both must and should) must be applied.

9.3 *Risk assessment – should consider suspension of OSTT qualification*

- The suspension of any member or PCO's OSTT qualification can only be completed by an inspector or above or VPS equivalent.
- Where the "should consider suspension" criteria is met, a risk assessment must be undertaken by the work unit manager or their delegate, in accordance with Risk Assessment Procedures – unplanned incidents but should also include:
 - communication and consultation with the police member or PCO and their line managers
 - communication and consultation with Welfare Services

- establishing context of the incident and the impact on the police member or PCO
- identifying risk to the police member PCO or another person
- analysing the risk based on the overall circumstances
- evaluating the risk.
- Any action taken should be monitored to ensure the police member or PCO's OSTT qualification status is correctly recorded.

9.4 *Supervisor and manager's role - OSTT qualification suspension*

Step	Action
1	The supervisor must immediately inform the relevant inspector or above or VPS equivalent where a police member or PCO meets the criteria for must or should consider a suspension of their OSTT qualification
2	The inspector or above or VPS equivalent must assess all available information and make a determination on the should or must suspend status of the police member or PCO's OSTT qualification
3	Where a police member or PCO's OSTT qualification is to be suspended, the supervisor must: • ensure that OSE is not issued to, or retained by the police member or PCO • inform the police member or PCO that their OSTT qualification has been suspended for up to 72 hours to provide an opportunity for: – an assessment by a suitably qualified Victoria Police mental health clinician or PMO – suitable welfare support within that period – an OSTT Suspension Review Panel (OSRP) to be convened • provide the contact details of the Victoria Police Welfare Services (Welfare Services) to the police member or PCO and advise them that Victoria Police Welfare Services will arrange for a Victoria Police mental health clinician to contact them • contact Welfare Services by phone and advise them of: – the circumstances of the suspension – who the police member or PCO's line manager is – the need to arrange a Wellbeing Management Plan • contact the police member or PCO's line manager to advise of the OSTT suspension • record all actions in an official diary, or other official document ensuring that the police member or PCO's circumstances and privacy are protected as far as practicable • ensure any personal issue Semi-Automatic Pistol (SAP) is managed as per VPM Management of Victoria Police issue firearms

4	The inspector or above or VPS equivalent is to: • where appropriate or where there are significant concerns for the police member or PCO's health and wellbeing, remove or restrict their access to: – equipment issue areas – high risk areas of the police complex and/or police work unit e.g. property offices that store firearms • submit an OSTT Qualification Suspension form via HR Assist to notify: – Welfare Services – Police Psychology Unit – OSTT RCI – OSRP • record all details of decision making regarding the OSTT qualification suspension in an official diary or other official document
5	• Where a police member or PCO is suspended or is directed to take leave from duty as a result of interim action, the police member serving the interim action notice is required to submit an OSTT Qualification Suspension form via HR Assist. This should be submitted as soon as practicable and prior to issuing the interim action notice • Any employee can submit this form; however, it must be endorsed with the details of an authorising inspector or above or VPS equivalent

- Any communication on the circumstances of the suspension must consider the privacy of the police member or PCO against the need to share information for management or safety purposes. Privacy legislation and policy may apply. Refer to the OSTT Qualification Suspension form on HR Assist.
- Supervisors and managers, where applicable, are encouraged to use safe-T-net when any employee's health, safety and wellbeing are being considered. The five step principles will assist supervisors and managers who are conducting an assessment of the impact of an incident on their employees.
- Supervisors and managers must review police member and PCOs future OSTT bookings and cancel any bookings during periods of OSTT qualification suspension.

9.5 *Phase One - OSTT suspension*

- The initial OSTT suspension should not exceed 48 hours Monday to Friday or 72 hours on weekends.
- During this period, the police member or PCO is to be provided:
 - an assessment by a suitably qualified Victoria Police mental health clinician
 - suitable welfare support.
- The circumstances of the suspension should be discussed with the police member or PCO and their line manager.
- Appropriate local support must be managed at the direction of the relevant inspector or above or VPS equivalent.
- At, or before the 48-hour period lapses, Monday to Friday, or a 72-hour period on the weekend, the suspension must be assessed by an OSRP as outlined in section 9.6.

9.6 Phase Two - OSTT reinstated or suspension continued

- At, or before the 48-hour period lapses Monday to Friday, or a 72-hour period on the weekend, the suspension must be assessed by an OSRP who should consist of, but is not limited to, relevant representatives from:
 - the police member or PCO's line management
 - Human Resource Command (HRC)
 - OSTT (PDC) where the circumstances involve a safety breach.
- Suspended OSTT qualifications can only be reinstated by an OSRP.
- The OSRP must consider all available information, including any assessment by a Victoria Police mental health clinician to determine the reinstatement or continued suspension of the police member or PCO's OSTT qualification.
- Where mental health concerns are the cause of the initial OSTT suspension, advice from the Victoria Police mental health clinician should be taken into consideration as well as that of the PMO in any decision on reinstating or extending the suspension of the police member or PCO's OSTT qualification.
- Where the OSTT qualification is reinstated refer to section 9.7.
- Where the OSTT qualification suspension is continued, the OSRP must review this decision within seven days of the issue / event to determine if any circumstance has changed.
- In the event of continued suspension, the timeframe for review will be determined and monitored by the OSRP but should not exceed three months.
- The police member or PCO's divisional head must be advised in writing of any review outcome.
- A police member or PCO whose OSTT qualification has been suspended beyond the 48-period, may seek a review at any time following a significant change in circumstances. This request should be made through line management to the OSRP.

9.7 Reinstatement of a police member or PCO's OSTT qualification

Where the OSRP determines the police member or PCO's OSTT qualification should be reinstated, the OSRP coordinator must submit an OSTT Qualification Suspension form via HR Assist to reinstate the OSTT qualification as soon as practicable. The police member or PCO's line manager with knowledge of the suspension must:

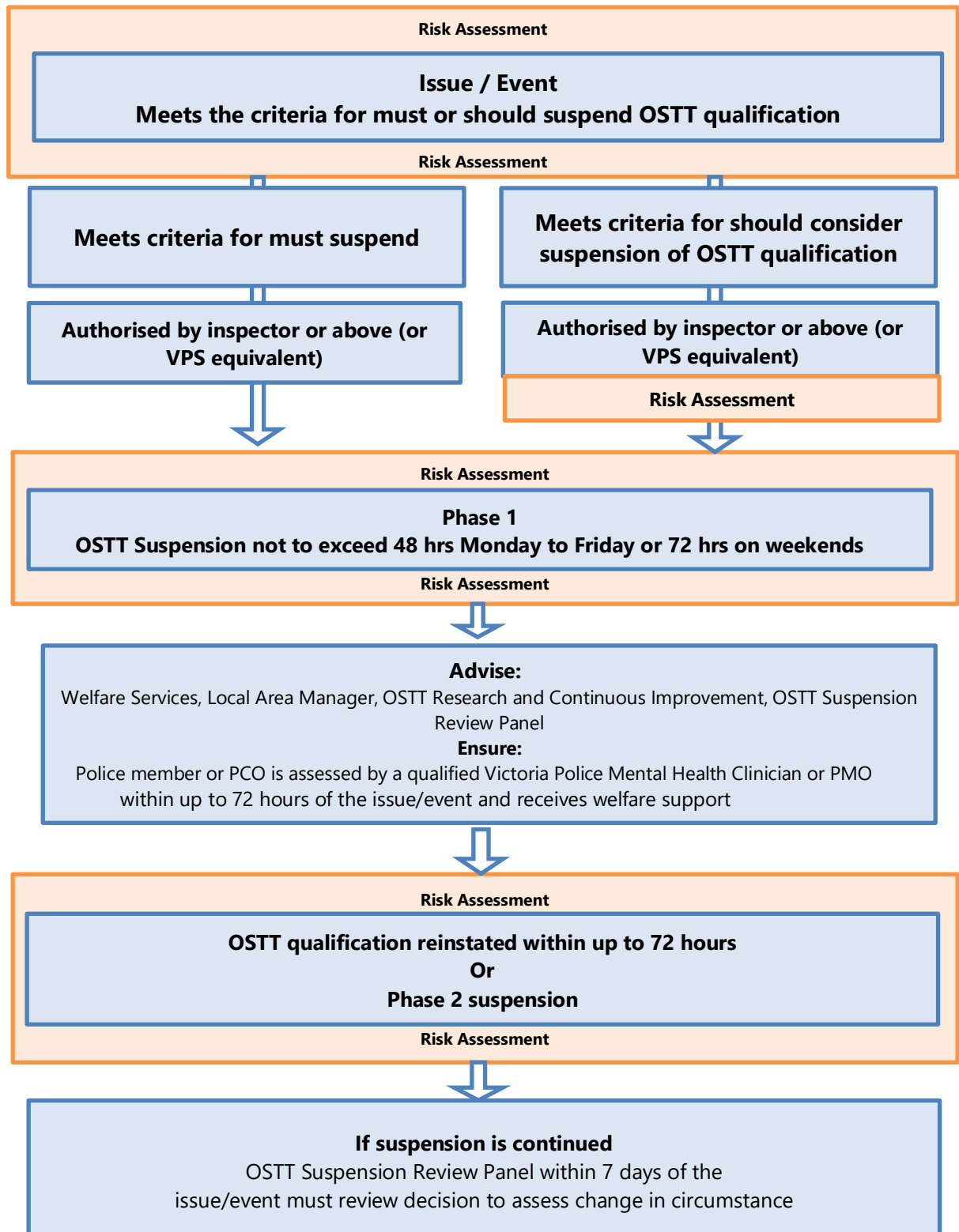
Step	Action
1	Ensure that the police member or PCO and the direct manager have been notified of the reinstatement. Where the police member or PCO's OSTT qualification has not lapsed, the relevant manager of the police member or PCO must ensure: • access to OSE is reinstated including the reissuing of a personal issue SAP where applicable • any restriction on access to relevant buildings, work complex or unit is removed
2	Advise the relevant divisional head of the outcome in writing
3	Document the decision in an official diary or other official document outlining the reasons for the finding

If during the suspension period the police member or PCO's biannual OSTT qualification has expired, the police member or PCO is required to attend and successfully complete OSTT at the earliest opportunity prior to being issued OSE.

9.8 Notification of the Licensing and Regulation Division

Where a Victoria Police employee may be the holder of a firearms licence and their OSTT has been suspended or access limited to firearms due to concerns against the criterion outlined in section 9.2, the Licensing and Regulation Division must be notified by the OSRP.

9.9 OSTT suspension process overview



**If suspension is continued**

Police member or PCO seek a review at any point where circumstance change
Review Panel will determine and monitor review timeframes

10. Access to Operational Safety Equipment by Victorian Public Service employees

- As part of their roles, Victorian Public Service (VPS) employees may come into contact with firearms and other OSE to perform their duties or issue equipment.
- Where there are concerns for any VPS employees that are consistent with section 9.2, assessment and management must be consistent with the suspension, review and reinstatement of a member or PCO's OSTT qualification. This must include consideration of alternative duties and the removal of access to equipment issue areas and property storage areas.

11. Operational Safety and Tactics Training instructors – operational duty requirement

- Police members occupying an OSTT instructor position must perform operational police duties at a general duties station for three months every two years. These duties must be performed for a continuous period of one month or more.
- Local Area Commanders with OSTT instructor positions under their control must ensure that the required operational duty occurs.

12. Tactical Arrest Options Training

- As stated in the **VPM Searches of property**, police members conducting a Level 2 search must hold a TAOT course qualification.
- The TAOT qualification is valid for one year after which police members need to requalify by completing a two-day re-accreditation course.
- Regional Training Officers (RTOs), in conjunction with the Local Area Commander will determine eligibility and necessity for requalification within the region/command/department.
- All inquiries relating to available dates and eligibility for requalification should be directed to RTOs who will liaise with the TAOT OIC, Academy Operational Safety Unit. Police members seeking requalification should familiarise themselves with the TAOT re-accreditation process available at the OSTT intranet site.

13. Semi-Automatic Rifle User Course

- All Victoria Police employees who are required to handle and/or issue SARs must either have a SAR User qualification or complete the SAR Safe Handling Course.
- Police must hold a current OSTT qualification to be SAR User qualified.
- All general duties police members below the rank of inspector gazetted to a SAR location must successfully obtain and maintain a SAR User qualification by

completing each component of the course concurrently within a single course. Police members must repeat the course until successfully qualified.

- The SAR qualification is valid for 12 months, after which police members must requalify by completing a two-day requalification course.
- A SAR User qualification may be suspended, either with or without impacting OSTT qualification status depending on the seriousness of the breach. Processes and criteria for the suspension of a SAR User qualification, for both training and operational safety breaches can be found on the SAR Training intranet page. SAR qualification expiry information is also located on this intranet page. If the suspension of OSTT is being considered, refer to section 9.2 of this policy.
- SAR training can only be delivered by instructors who have completed the SAR Instructor Course.

14. Conducted energy devices courses

- Members must hold current OSTT and CED user qualifications to be CED user qualified.
- All Victoria Police employees who are required to perform administrative duties with a CED must be qualified in the Victoria Police Learning Hub CED Awareness course and other mandatory CED training. Refer to **VPM Conducted energy devices**.

Related documents

- VPM Operational safety equipment
- VPM Management of Victoria Police issue firearms
- VPM OHS Hazard and risk management
- VPM Conducted energy devices

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this policy, contact your supervisor or the CfOS.

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
16/09/16	Transition to new format. Alignment to Oakton Review (OSTT unqualified who have access to a firearm) and internal review of suspension process and members access to firearms	FF-094141 FF-099298
01/03/18	Updated as part of the VPM review Project	FF-110329
09/06/20	Updated to support the introduction of Semi-Automatic Rifles (SAR)	FF-173057
27/07/20	Updated to introduce OSTT exemption and amend OSTT suspension processes	FF-124387

24/01/22	Updated to reflect VPM Searches of property	FF-187958 3
3/10/23	Updated to reflect changes to eligibility to access 28-day OSTT extension and current practice	FF-216094
17/11/23	Updated to include section regarding CEDs	FF-214607
12/06/24	Updated to reflect the mandatory booking requirement of an OSTT course by the second month of the OSTT cycle. Reinstatement of Tactical Arrest Options Training (TAOT) course name after incorrect name change to Tactical Arrest Teams Training in 10/23 update. Update to the course duration and frequency of requalification for members undertaking TAOT training	FF-247666 D23/110817 FF-247989