

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.

On duty status

Context

Victoria Police employees regularly participate in police and community events which include attendance at international or national conferences, externally organised professional development programs, playing sport or attending sporting events. Attendance at events can be in an official or unofficial capacity, work related, non-work related, on work time or on personal time.

This policy outlines the principles, accountabilities and key considerations that Victoria Police applies to determining and approval of on duty status for attendance at such events. The policy also includes examples for where Victoria Police can fund associated travel, accommodation costs and other expenses.

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Definitions

Event: includes police and community events such as international or national conferences, externally organised leadership and professional development programs, sporting events, community engagement events, visits to other policing agencies and award ceremonies.

On Duty: refers to the working hours of employment where an employee is required to report for work to perform duties of their role in accordance with the relevant enterprise agreement. This includes any periods of overtime required by the employer.

Off Duty: refers to time outside of working hours of employment where an employee is not rostered on and not required to report or perform duties of their role, this includes any period of leave.

Required to attend: refers to instances where a manager has directed an employee to attend an event as part of their duties.

Voluntary attendance: refers to instances where an employee has elected to attend an event without approval that may broadly relate to their position or duties as an employee of Victoria Police, but it is not a requirement of their position to attend and on duty status has not been

granted. An employee may apply to use their leave entitlements to attend the event.

Scope and Application

This instruction applies to all Victoria Police employees.

This instruction applies to on duty or off duty status for attendance at conferences, events and externally organised professional development programs. This instruction does not apply to the following activities:

- Usual duties – the following are considered part of an employee's usual work duties:
 - travel interstate or overseas for operational purposes, e.g. Special Operations Group training or to provide support for emergencies, which are undertaken in an official capacity and are completed within work time;
 - external or internal professional development programs such as Australian Institute of Police Management (Manly) or those offered at Airlie, administered by the People Development Command, which are undertaken in an official capacity and are completed within work time;
 - attendance at national committees, which are undertaken in an official capacity and are completed within work time; and
 - attendance at internal committees and related work, including Victoria Police supported employee networks such as the LGBTI Employee Network (VP Pride) or the Employee Accessibility Advocacy Network (EAAN), which are completed within work time.
- Leave for participation in sporting events as listed in **VPM Leave**.

The enterprise agreements applying to Victoria Police provide the applicable terms and conditions to an employee's normal hours of work, including travel and accommodation paid for by Victoria Police. See **VPM Travel** for further information on business travel and who can authorise this.

This policy does not cover instances where police members are off duty, but become duty-bound to respond to or intervene in an emergency incident or serious crime to fulfil their obligations as a sworn Constable of Police and under the *Victoria Police Act 2013*.

Policy

- Applications for on duty status can cover a range of events such as attendance at international/domestic conferences, leadership programs, visits to international/domestic policing/justice agencies and other professional development programs. It can also be considered for members that are invited by external agencies/conference organisers to attend/speak at overseas/domestic conferences, or participate in award ceremonies at conferences, e.g. Australasian Council of Women and Police (ACWAP) and for participation in community engagement activities and sporting club activities.
- Victoria Police considers applications for on duty status on a case by case basis in line with this policy.
- An employee will be regarded as on duty and entitled to remuneration if Victoria Police approves a formal request for on duty status or directs an employee to undertake an activity or attend the event, e.g. a work conference or if the community or sporting event has been

identified to have a community engagement benefit (this is a requirement for on duty status to be awarded, approvers must also assess the application against the other eligibility criteria).

- This policy outlines a consistent approach for consideration of applications for on duty status to ensure decisions are made in a fair and reasonable manner.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Accountabilities

- **Divisional Superintendent / Divisional Director:** responsible for assessment of applications for on duty status for local or intrastate events and providing a decision on whether on duty status is granted or not.
- **Assistant Commissioner / Department Head:** responsible for assessment of applications for on duty status where the event requires interstate travel and providing a decision on whether on duty status is granted or not.
- **Deputy Commissioner / Deputy Secretary:** responsible for assessment of applications for on duty status where the event requires international travel and providing a decision on whether on duty status is granted or not, before progression of international travel application to the Chief Commissioner of Police (see **VPM Travel** for more information on the approval process for large events)
- **Workplace Relations Division, HRD:** responsible for providing advice upon request to assist with the assessment of applications for industrial risks.

2. Eligibility and considerations

2.1 *Eligibility criteria*

- The relevant approver must consider the following criteria (all or most of the criteria must be met) prior to an application being awarded on duty status:
 - Victoria Police has deemed that the employee attending this event will assist the employee to fulfil their duties at Victoria Police.
 - The purpose for attendance relates to Victoria Police business or for an employee's professional development or in their capacity as a subject matter expert.
 - Victoria Police has deemed that there will be an organisational benefit for the employee to attend and/or it is an organisational priority.
 - The impact on service delivery has been considered and is deemed manageable.
 - Victoria Police considers it necessary to have a representative in an official capacity at the event.
 - There is no potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest.
- Based on the above, attendance may be granted as:
 - on duty, with travel and accommodation costs funded by Victoria Police; and/or
 - as a combination of on duty and off duty with the attendance combined with personal travel and/or leave and with the member meeting their own off duty

costs such as travel and accommodation, where applicable (refer to **VPM Travel**).

- Examples of applying this policy can be found at Appendix 1.
- As part of the application process, consideration should be given to how an employee will disseminate the knowledge and experience gained from attendance at an event.

2.2 *Further considerations*

- The relevant approver must also consider the following five points when assessing on duty status applications:
 - Community policing – whether the nominated event meets the objectives of community policing. While community engagement is important to Victoria Police, this needs to be balanced with the criticality of the event. Where it is determined by the approver that participation in the event is critical, employees may be rostered 'on duty'. Community engagement benefit must be balanced against rostering requirements to deliver front line policing.
 - Operational cost – the impact on rostering. This may involve assessing the number of shifts an employee may miss or existing projects or tasks which may be delayed.
 - Financial cost – potential claims for travel, incidental and shift allowances. If 'on duty' status is awarded for an event, employees may be entitled to claim allowances and entitlements in accordance with the relevant enterprise agreements, for example costs associated with travel and accommodation and other expenses. Management cannot request an employee to forfeit these allowances in exchange for approval as this would be a breach of the enterprise agreements.
 - Risk – consider the risk of injury to the employee from undertaking the activity, where it is possible to assess any risks and consider the potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest.
 - Strategic operational issues – whether the application is consistent with the priorities and resourcing concerns of the work area.
- A clear distinction must be made between requiring an employee to attend (directed by management) and/or where an application from an employee has been awarded on duty status compared to where an employee voluntarily attends an event in their own time. An employee voluntarily attending an event without on duty status (using own leave entitlements to do so) has no entitlement to payment of allowances from the enterprise agreements.

2.3 *Considerations – sporting events*

- Some types of leave for non-operational activities is specifically outlined in **VPM Leave** (Other Leave section) e.g. sport/competitor leave. If a request is not covered in this policy, then it is unlikely that requests for such leave will be approved. For example, sporting event leave covers competitors but not coaches. Coaches are therefore not covered by that particular leave entitlement.
- An employee must be able to demonstrate that the sporting event, for which they are seeking approval to be on duty, has a community engagement benefit and is

consistent with divisional community engagement plans. Applications should be made in accordance with section 3.1 of this policy.

- Notwithstanding this policy, the obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013* still apply. Any injuries or illness sustained at an event that has been deemed on duty by the relevant approver will still go through the usual WorkCover claim assessment process.

2.4 Other considerations

- Letters of introduction –
 - Letters of introduction are provided (from the Office of the Chief Commissioner) (OCCP) to facilitate an employee's visit to other law enforcement agencies (internationally) where the visit is demonstrably related to work, study or research and the employee does not have a current professional contact or relationship within that organisation.
 - Receiving a Chief Commissioner of Police Letter of Introduction does not imply that the employee is required to visit the agency in an official capacity and entitled to remuneration; letters can also be provided where employees travel overseas in a private capacity as well as professional capacity.
- Depending on the request, the relevant approver may need to consider the suitability of the employee voluntarily attending.

3. Applications

3.1 Application process

- Applications for on duty status must be submitted as a briefing that addresses all or most of the eligibility criteria above via the work unit manager to the relevant approver (see section 1).
- Applications should be submitted as far in advance of the event as, and where, possible.
- One application should be submitted annually to cover attendance at the same event on multiple occasions throughout the year.
- The work unit manager must assess and comment on whether the application is supported and consider the suitability of the employee voluntarily attending. Their recommendation, and the application, is then submitted to the relevant approver for decision.
- The above process does not apply where there is an alternative selection and approval process for a particular conference or event (e.g. the Angela Taylor Memorial Scholarship).
- Workplace Relations Division will provide advice on any industrial risks upon request.

3.2 Approval

- Approvers, as per section 1, may direct attendance or approve applications for on duty status for attendance at international or national conferences, externally organised professional development programs, participation in or attendance at

sporting or community engagement events, where they are satisfied the requirements of this policy and **VPM Travel** are met (see Appendix 1 for examples).

- The approver is responsible for determining the most appropriate person/s to represent Victoria Police at an event. If it is appropriate to send more than one representative, they will determine who that should be (e.g. the relevant role/roles in the organisation), for what reasons and what the potential return on investment is.
- Once approved, existing policies must be followed for related arrangements, for example, the business travel section in **VPM Travel**.
- If attendance at the event requires travel, the approver must consider and determine what period of travel time will also be considered on duty.
- If the event is determined by the OCCP to be a large event, approvers must follow the approval process for large events outlined in **VPM Travel**.

3.3 *Voluntary attendance*

Employees whose applications for on duty status have not been approved may still elect to attend the event, provided the reason for rejection of the application was not due to a conflict of interest (see **VPM Conflict of interest**) and provided their leave request has been approved and rostered accordingly or they are on rest days.

3.4 *Review of actions*

Should an employee disagree with a decision to reject their application for on duty status, they should seek local resolution.

Failing that, the employee may lodge a general review of actions according to the process set out in **VPM Review of actions (grievance)**.

Related documents

- VPM Remuneration
- VPM Leave
- VPM Travel
- VPM Conflict of Interest
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013
- Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2024
- Victoria Police (Police Officers, Protective Service Officers, Police Reservists and Police Recruits) Enterprise Agreement 2025

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this Policy, contact Workplace Relations Division, HRD via the WRD-GENERAL-MGR PBEA.

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
10/01/20	First issued. This policy replaces CCI 03/19 On duty status.	FF-142119
20/10/2020	Minor updates to incorporate changes to enterprise agreement titles.	Nil.
28/08/2025	Consequential amendment to reflect new approval process for attendance at large events, outlined in VPM Travel	FF-217038

Appendix 1: Examples

	Request	Decision
1	An employee has been successful with an application for a Churchill Fellowship (externally organised program) or the Tynan-Eyre Memorial Scholarship (VP organised program). The employee seeks 'on duty' status prior to or after the completion of the program.	Both programs are advertised that employees must take recreational leave to study and travel. While there are some fortuitous benefits for the organisation from participation in the programs, Victoria Police does not require the employee to attend either program. Approver must consider the employees to be off duty.
2	An employee is travelling overseas or interstate for personal reasons but seeks approval to visit a police station while away. The employee has requested a Letter of Introduction from the Chief Commissioner of Police (CCP).	Victoria Police does not require the employee to visit an overseas or interstate police station or justice agency in an official capacity. They may still receive a CCP Letter of Introduction however this does not imply that the employee is required to visit the agency in an official capacity. Approver must consider the employee to be off duty.
3	Victoria Police is to host and organise an international conference next year. A number of employees have requested they attend the same conference this year as part of their own professional development and for which they have a personal interest in the subject matter of the conference, which may broadly align to their role.	Approver considers that it is appropriate to send two employees to represent Victoria Police. Those employees are endorsed as required to attend in an official capacity due to the conference subject matter and logistical arrangements in event organisation. Approver considers the employees to be on duty with travel, accommodation and other expenses funded by Victoria Police. Other employees may wish to attend on recreation leave and would be considered 'off duty' and fund their own travel, accommodation and other costs. VPM Travel outlines the approval process for travel to large events. The CCP will assess the applications for travel and attendance at the conference, as the final approver.
4	Five employees have submitted proposals for awards and abstracts (to speak) at the Policing Conference and request they attend in an official capacity. Other employees are seeking endorsement to attend the conference but have not	4.1 Three employees' are shortlisted as finalists for the conference awards. These three employees will be expected to share their learning from the conference. The approver considers that those three employees are attending in an official capacity; similarly, employees selected to attend

	submitted proposals to the conference organisers.	through an EOI process, would be on duty with travel and accommodation funded by Victoria Police. See VPM Travel for the approval process for travel to large events. 4.2 The employees who were not shortlisted as finalists or were not selected as speakers and other employees may wish to attend on recreation leave and would be considered off duty and fund their own travel and accommodation.
5	An employee has been asked to speak by a commercial, government or Non-Government Organisation conference interstate or overseas.	5.1 The approver considers it is appropriate to send one employee to represent Victoria Police. The employee is a subject matter expert and the conference covers issues currently being considered by Victoria Police. They consider that the employee is the most appropriate officer. The external organiser has funded the employee's travel and accommodation. There is no conflict of interest. The approver considers the employee is on duty. 5.2 The employee has a personal interest in attending and speaking at the conference. The employee has not been requested by Victoria Police to attend or speak to the conference in any official capacity. The topics covered by the conference are relevant to all organisations. The approver considers the employee is off duty and may attend on recreation leave and fund their own travel/accommodation and other costs.
6	An employee is a Health and Safety Representative (HSR) and has requested to attend the Victorian Trades Hall Conference which is a WorkSafe Victoria approved training course and is open to all HSRs, Deputy HSRs and Union officials across Victoria.	Elected HSRs and Deputy HSRs are entitled to attend the Conference on paid leave under Section 69 of the OHS Act 2004. Attendance should be considered as being on duty (no application needed) and as hours worked at Victoria Police. Relevant notice should be given to work unit managers.
7.	An employee is a member of a Victoria Police employee network such as the LGBTI Employee Network (VP Pride) or the Employee Accessibility Advocacy Network (EAAN) and is required to attend a council meeting.	Attendance at these meetings, and any hours worked for network related activities, will be recorded and considered as being on duty (no application needed) and as hours worked at Victoria Police. This directly benefits Victoria Police work on safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces. It is recommended that employees notify work unit managers of the attendance requirements for these council meetings at least six weeks in advance in line with roster requirements.
8.	The Victoria Police Hockey Club are participating in their annual South East	The approver determines that the event has community engagement benefit by enabling

	Special Sports Association Carnival Day. This event provides an opportunity for children with special needs and disability to engage with police and other emergency services include Melbourne Fire Brigade, Country Fire Authority and Ambulance Victoria.	employees to positively engage with the public and strengthens the relationship of Victoria Police with the community and other emergency services. The impact on service delivery has been deemed manageable and there is no conflict of interest. The approver considers the hockey club employees are on duty.
9.	Twelve employees are to participate in a T20 cricket match in support of the Luke Batty Foundation. Members of Victoria Police Command, including the Chief Commissioner of Police, will attend the match.	The approver determines that the event has community engagement benefit and raises awareness of family violence, the impact on service delivery has been deemed manageable and there is no conflict of interest. The approver considers that the 12 employees are on duty.