

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 the VPM Professional and Ethical Standards to inform the decisions they make to support compliance.

Scene management

Context

The core purpose of investigating crime is to obtain evidence that enables a successful prosecution of the person/s who has committed the crime. The effective initial management and investigation of a crime scene underpins this purpose, by discovering and preserving all available evidence and preventing its contamination.

The principles of managing a crime scene also apply to the management of scenes where there has been a death or serious injury resulting from contact between police and the public.

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Scope and application

These instructions apply to any incident that:

- appears to be a crime scene; or
- is an incident as defined in **VPMP Death and serious injury/illness incidents involving police**.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Initial action

The Police Commander/Controller must:

- apply the requirements of the **Victoria Police Emergencies Handbook**, including establishing a suitable command structure for the circumstances and ensuring the functions under the Incident Command and Control System are resourced appropriately.
- notify relevant investigators and specialist services;

- investigating units or squads – see **VPMP Crime reporting and investigation**
- death or serious injury incidents involving contact between police and the public – see **VPMP Death and serious injury/illness incidents involving police**
- sexual offences – see **VPM Sexual offence investigations**
- separate, search and secure offenders
- isolate, record and, where possible, detain witnesses
- establish the extent of the scene, establish inner and outer cordons
- take steps to preserve evidence
- commence a crime scene log; consider appointing a log keeper
- establish an entry/exit point on the outer cordon; consider appointing a separate log keeper to record persons entering or exiting the scene
- prevent entry to the scene by any person who cannot justify their entry
- consider issuing a restriction notice under the *Coroner's Act*; see section 6
- take contemporaneous notes and sketch a plan of the scene.

2. Scene management

- Police Commander/Controller must advise Police Communications of the location of the Police Command Post.
- Police Commander/Controller must define an entry/exit corridor from the Police Command Post to the inner cordon and incident scene. The entry/exit corridor is the only route to be used for entering or exiting the incident scene.
- Designated investigators and support services must meet the Police Commander/Controller at the Police Command Post to determine their investigative procedures and access to the inner cordon.
- Police Commander must formally handover management of the incident scene when the inner cordon is transferred to the designated investigators or support services. Each formal handover and handback must be recorded.
- Following the handover, designated investigators or support services are responsible for managing the incident scene and their investigation procedures. They must continue reporting to and through the Police Commander/Controller until the management of the incident is completed.

3. Forensic examination of scene

3.1 Use of resources

Apply the following to determine which forensic resources to use:

If the crime or scene is...	use...
Non-complex nature; or Volume crime	local resources
Complex in nature and/or Major crime where specialised assistance is required	Forensic Services Department (FSD) services

See the FSD Forensic Guide '[Scene Processing](#)', which provides guidance to members

who have to process their own crime scene, if FSD are not attending.

3.2 *Call-out of FSD services*

If FSD services are required, the Police Commander/Controller must manage requests as follows:

- Office Hours – investigator to contact FSD directly
- After Hours – investigator makes the request through the Police Shift Manager, Police Communications. The authority required is determined by the Accountability and Resource Model (ARM) categorisation:
 - Category 1 – the Crime Command senior investigating member
 - Category 2 and 3 – the Regional senior investigating member.

See the FSD Forensic Guide '[Scene Attendance](#)' for further information.

3.3 *Scene Manager*

The first FSD employee attending becomes the Scene Manager and is responsible for:

- the forensic examination of the inner cordon; they must report to and through the Police Commander and designated investigator
- the attendance of all FSD technical and scientific services
- managing the scene until these services have completed their examination
- restricting access to the scene to prevent contamination
- reporting on progress and requirements to the Forensic Manager, if appointed.

3.4 *Forensic Manager*

In complex or major incidents the Scene Manager and Police Commander/Controller must consider calling in a senior FSD member to be the Forensic Manager.

The Forensic Manager coordinates the scientific management of the scene. They are responsible for the FSD staff in attendance but not for the scene examination.

4. Seizing and handling exhibits

Before seizing property from a crime scene, the investigating member in consultation with the Police Commander/Controller must conduct a test of essentiality; see **VPM Seized property and special property types**.

If property is seized, it must be handled in accordance with **VPM Seized property and special property types**. Also refer to the FSD Forensic Guide '[Contamination minimisation and exhibit packaging](#)'.

Where forensic examination is required, an exhibit examination request must be submitted via the Forensic Portal; comply with **VPM Forensic services and examinations**.

5. Restricted airspace

If the Police Commander/Controller, in consultation with the investigator, believes that exclusion of aircraft from the scene is required, they must make the request through Police Communications.

6. Restricting access under the Coroner's Act

6.1 *Authority to restrict access*

- Under the *Coroner's Act 2008*, the Coroner or delegates of the Chief Commissioner are authorised to restrict access to certain areas associated with an incident resulting in death or expected death, or a fire.
- Instrument of delegation CI 12, authorises the following members to restrict access:
 - Senior Sergeants and above (including Acting Senior Sergeants)
 - members attached to the Homicide Squad, Arson and Explosives Squad, Major Collision Investigation Unit.
- Only the Coroner is able to restrict access:
 - when a death occurs in police custody
 - when a death results from police contact.

6.2 *Process for restricting access*

To restrict access the authorised member must:

- complete one of the following forms:
 - Notice Restricting Access to Place Where Death Occurred or Caused [Form 1363]
 - Notice Restricting Access to Place Where Incident Occurred [Form 1364]
 - Notice Restricting Access to Fire Area [Form 1365]

Alternatively, authority may be obtained remotely, see section 6.3.

- consult the Coroner if issuing a notice:
 - when the Chief Commissioner declares an Emergency of State Significance, under the *Emergency Management Act*
 - where there is threat to personal safety to the broader community
 - where there is a likelihood of significant loss of, or endangerment to life
 - disaster victim identification incidents i.e. two or more deaths and involving multi-agency participation that is likely to restrict access for an ongoing period of time
 - likely to attract high media attention
 - where there is significant impact to members of the public (eg. ingress and egress, traffic considerations etc).

6.3 *Remote authority*

If the delegate is unable to attend the scene, they may give their authority remotely through Police Communications to the member at the scene and record the authority for the notice on the Patrol Duty Return or official diary. The notice may then be completed at the scene by noting the authorised member's details.

6.4 *Communication of notice*

The authorised member must:

- put up the notice in that place or near as possible to that place to advise of the restriction (s.37(4)). The notice may be copied and displayed at several locations. This notice may include any of the following information:
 - a relevant street address
 - the parameters of the area e.g., defined boundaries
 - road markers
 - landmarks or physical features
 - information on accessing the area
 - traffic and pedestrian movement
- advise local police of the notice through Police Communications or provide them with a copy of notice if they are not already involved in the incident. Provide a likely period of the restriction
- depending on the nature of the incident, consider using the Police Media Unit to communicate the details of the restriction notice
- advise relevant emergency services, government departments, utility providers and local businesses when a restriction notice has been given to ensure minimal disruption to the community.

6.5 *Registering Restriction Notices*

- In the event of an incident occurring across multiple PSAs (i.e. bushfire), verify on the Police Coronial Support Unit's intranet site that a notice has not been issued.
- All restriction notices issued by Victoria Police members must be registered by the following business day with the Police Coronial Support Unit by emailing PBEA: POLICE CORONIAL SUPPORT UNIT-MGR with a scanned copy of the notice or providing the following details:
 - address of restriction area including description
 - reason for notice
 - member who issued notice
 - time notice was issued and when it was rescinded.

6.6 *Rescinding a Notice*

- The notice remains in effect until the investigation at the scene is completed or the member issuing the notice indicates that it is no longer required.
- Immediately after the initial investigation is completed, all displayed notices must be removed and the relevant authorities advised. Additionally, the following must be notified:
 - Local Area Commander
 - Media Liaison Unit
 - Police Coronial Support Unit at PBEA: POLICE CORONIAL SUPPORT UNIT-MGR

6.7 *Offences*

It is an offence for a person without lawful excuse to enter or interfere with any place to which access is restricted. It is a summary offence punishable by imprisonment for 6 months or 60 penalty units.

7. Scene clean up

7.1 *Criteria*

The Police Commander/Controller must consider having the scene cleaned to:

- minimise the trauma for the parties involved, especially, family and friends
- enable family and friends to return to the premises
- prevent a public health risk.

7.2 *Victims Support Agency (VSA)*

- VSA coordinates the crime or suicide scene clean up in private premises or in a Department of Human Services premises.
- Police Commander/Controller should contact the VSA through Police Communications and provide the following information:
 - the address of the premises that requires cleaning
 - the name and contact details of the owner of the premises
 - next of kin name and contact details if home owner dies as a result of the incident.

7.3 *Cost*

- If a DHS premises is cleaned, the Director of Housing meets the clean-up costs.
- The cost of cleaning private premises may be funded by the VSA. Examples where a cleanup will not be funded include:
 - deaths or incidents where there was not a violent crime committed against the person; or
 - where a cleanup has commenced before a formal request is made by the attending members (e.g. a private contractor engaged by attending members).

Related documents

- VPM Emergency management
- VPMP Death and serious injury/illness incidents involving police
- VPM Forensic services and examinations
- Instrument of delegation CI 12
- Forensic Services Department Forensic Guides – refer to the FSD intranet

Further advice and information

For further general advice and assistance, talk to your supervisor. For advice on restricting access under the Coroner's Act, contact Police Coronial Support Unit.

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
21/11/16	Consolidation and reformat of VPMP/VPMG Scene management and VPMG Restriction notices under the Coroner's Act	FF-103527
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 cross reference to VPM Sexual offence investigations .	FF-154475
10/07/24	Consequential amendment to reference VPM Forensic services and examinations when requesting a forensic exhibit examination.	FF-251261