

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.

Firearms governance and auditing

Context

Victoria Police has a legislative responsibility to ensure all firearms in its possession are acquired, registered, stored and disposed of in accordance with relevant provisions of the *Firearms Act 1996*. In addition, specific legislative requirements apply to Victoria Police Firearms Dealer licence holders and Governor-in-Council exemption permit holders. This further regulates how Victoria Police employees manage different categories of firearms. This policy has been developed to reflect and implement the requirements of these legislative obligations and ensure Victoria Police employees understand their responsibilities.

This policy applies to a wide range of employees, which is reflective of the variety of circumstances that firearms become the responsibility of Victoria Police. Irrespective of the means by which a firearm becomes the responsibility of Victoria Police, it must be managed in accordance with legislation and the VPM.

This policy also formalises a framework for the overall accountability for firearms within Victoria Police, and stipulates the processes that must be followed to ensure firearms are managed and disposed of as required by legislation. Compliance with these processes will be monitored by a comprehensive audit regime that will report to the Operations Committee.

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Definitions

There are no specific definitions for this policy. Refer to the general VPM Dictionary for definitions and acronyms.

Scope and application

This policy applies to:

- managers with specific responsibilities in relation to firearms as detailed in this policy
- employees handling firearms.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Governance of firearms in Victoria Police

1.1 *Director, Equipment and Fleet Division*

The Director, Equipment and Fleet Division has overall accountability for firearms in the possession of Victoria Police for operational purposes (including firearm training).

This requires ensuring all of the following in relation to this category of firearm:

- Compliance with the requirements of the Victoria Police Firearms Dealer Licence (Class 1) in accordance with the provisions of the *Firearms Act 1996*
- Making recommendations to the Chief Commissioner of Police (CCP) to acquire new firearms
- Acquisition and registration of any firearms intended for use by Victoria Police for operational purposes
- Maintenance of all operational firearms via the Victoria Police Armoury
- Notification of sale, disposal (excluding destruction) or transfer of operational firearms
- Directing audits of firearms, including firearm disposal, in accordance with agreed audit schedules and provision of audit outcomes to the Operations Committee (see section 6 of this policy)
- Maintaining records of operational firearms and reconciling those records with the State Licensing and Registration database
- Retaining records of any transactions made against the Firearms Dealers Licence indefinitely.

1.2 *Assistant Director, Forensic Field Operations and Information Services*

The Assistant Director, Forensic Field Operations and Information Services has overall accountability for firearms in the possession of Victoria Police for scientific/ballistic reference purposes.

This requires ensuring all of the following in relation to this category of firearm:

- Compliance with the requirements of the Victoria Police Firearms Dealer Licence (Class 1) in accordance with the provisions of the *Firearms Act*
- Acquisition, registration and secure storage
- Notification of sale, disposal or transfer
- Completion of audits as required by the Firearm Audit Framework (see section 6 of this policy)

- Maintaining records of reference firearms and reconciling those records with the State Licensing and Registration database
- Retaining records of any transactions made against the Firearms Dealers Licence indefinitely.

In addition, the Assistant Director, Forensic Field Operations and Information Services is responsible for all of the following:

- the destruction of any firearm in the possession of Victoria Police (including seized, confiscated, operational, training, reference or display firearms)
- retaining records of the destruction indefinitely
- completing audits of these firearms in accordance with the Firearm Audit Framework (see section 6 of this policy).

1.3 *Manager, Historical Services Unit*

The Manager, Historical Services Unit is accountable for firearms that are in the custody of Victoria Police solely for display in the Victoria Police Museum or for historic collection purposes.

This requires ensuring all of the following in relation to this category of firearm:

- compliance with the conditions of exemption issued by the Governor-in-Council (s.184, *Firearms Act*)
- acquisition, registration and secure storage
- notification of sale, disposal or transfer
- maintaining and reconciling records with the State Licensing and Registration database
- retaining records of any transactions made against the Governor-in-Council exemption permit indefinitely
- completion of audits as required by the Firearm Audit Framework (see section 6).

2. Management of operational firearms

2.1 *Accountabilities*

VPM Operational safety equipment and **VPM Management of Victoria Police issue firearms** provide instruction for work unit managers and employees on management of operational firearms, however specific managers are responsible for firearms in their line control and must ensure that the firearms listed in the table below are:

- stored securely
- recorded on ETMS or another suitable register if ETMS is not available
- physically audited on a six-monthly basis and information is provided to the Director, Equipment and Fleet Division as required (see section 6 of this policy).

Divisional commanders	Firearms deployed to OSTT Units and Divisional Firearms Officers/Regional Firearms Officers
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Superintendent, Security Services Division	Firearms deployed to Security Services Division
Superintendent, Operational Safety Division	Firearms (including red guns) deployed to Operational Safety Division
Assistant Commissioner, Crime	Firearms issued to members performing temporary duties/assignment to a federal/interstate jurisdiction

2.2 Responsibilities

The Armoury and Warehouse and Distribution Unit have responsibility for the management of firearms in their work units as follows:

- The Manager, Victoria Police Armoury is responsible for all of the following:
 - safe and secure storage of all operational firearms in accordance with the provisions of the *Firearms Act*
 - maintaining accurate records for the movement of operational firearms (in ETMS where available)
 - maintenance of operational and training firearms (where applicable) in line with approved maintenance regimes
 - management of operational firearms acquired for loan, evaluation or testing purposes
 - disposal of operational firearms at the directions of the Director, Equipment and Fleet Division, by preparing a monthly Firearms Return [Form 313] and conveying applicable operational firearms to Forensic Services Department.
- The Manager, Warehouse and Distribution Unit is responsible for both the:
 - safe and secure storage of firearms in the custody of Victoria Police in accordance with the provisions of the *Firearms Act*
 - disposal of firearms as directed by the Director, Equipment and Fleet Division.

3. Management of firearms in police custody

Divisional commanders are responsible for both:

- ensuring firearms in the custody of Victoria Police (for example, seized/unclaimed property) are disposed of in accordance with the instructions of the court, direction of the Director, Equipment and Fleet Division, or *Victoria Police Act 2013*
- complying with audits initiated by the Director, Equipment and Fleet Division as required by section 6 of this policy.

VPM Managing special property types – Firearms provides the requirements for disposing of firearms in the custody of Victoria Police.

4. Acquisition of firearms

4.1 Approval

Only the following employees are permitted to approve the acquisition (including purchase, loan or evaluation) of firearms:

- Director, Equipment and Fleet Division - operational/training

- Assistant Director, Forensic Field Operations and Information Services -reference or scientific purposes
- Manager, Historical Services Unit - items for the Victoria Police Museum or for historic collection purposes.

The acquisition (including purchase, loan or evaluation) of firearms under any other circumstances is not permitted.

4.2 *Process*

- Applications to purchase or loan firearms must be:
 - endorsed by the applicant's department head
 - forwarded for consideration by the relevant approver as listed above.
- Where the application is for the purchase/loan of a firearm system that is not current issue, in addition to the above requirements endorsement must also be given by both the:
 - Uniform, Appearance and Equipment Committee
 - CCP.

5. **Lost, faulty or stolen Victoria Police issue firearms**

Lost, faulty or stolen Victoria Police issue firearms are to be managed in accordance with **VPM Management of Police Issue Firearms**.

6. **Firearms audits**

6.1 *Firearms audit governance*

Operations Committee has governance responsibility for the Firearms Audit Framework.

6.2 *Audit schedule*

Firearm audits will be initiated by the relevant category owner as stated below and results will be provided to Operations Committee:

Category of firearm	Category Owner	Frequency
Operational firearms, including training firearms	Director, Equipment and Fleet Division	Six-monthly
Reference firearms	Assistant Director, Forensic Field Operations and Information Services	Yearly
Museum collection/historical firearms	Manager, Historical Services Unit	Yearly
Firearms as property in the custody of Victoria Police	Director, Equipment and Fleet Division	Six-monthly

6.3 *Licensing and Regulation Division*

LRD is responsible for auditing the Victoria Police Firearms Dealers and holders of Governor-in-Council exemption permits to ensure compliance with licences/permits and the *Firearms Act*. Audit findings are reported to Operations Committee.

LRD is responsible for confirming that all firearms registered to the Victoria Police Firearms Dealer and Governor-in-Council exemption holders are:

- appropriately recorded on the Licensing and Registration System (LARS)
- recorded in ETMS or a ledger if ETMS is not available in compliance with the *Firearms Act*
- inspected on the premises at which they are registered or recorded, or in the case of operational firearms, ETMS at the Armoury is inspected.

Once notified by Forensic Services Department of the destruction/disposal of a firearm (see section 3.5 of **VPM Managing special property types – Firearms**) LRD is responsible for ensuring accurate records are made on LARS.

7. Firearm amnesties

- The Superintendent, LRD is responsible for all of the following:
 - developing plans associated with a firearms amnesty
 - issuing instructions to operational members for responding to a firearm amnesty
 - auditing the disposal process for firearms surrendered during an amnesty.
- Where firearms are surrendered to Victoria Police, comply with the process in section 3.5 of **VPM Managing special property types – Firearms**.

8. Firearms Safety Course

Operations Committee is responsible for prescribing the content of the firearms kit used to deliver the Firearms Safety Course.

For the purpose of audit requirements, these firearms are operational firearms and must be audited in accordance with the schedule at 6.2 of this policy.

Related documents

- VPM Managing special property types - Firearms
- VPM Operational safety equipment
- VPM Management of Victoria Police issue firearms
- *Firearms Act 1996*

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this policy, contact the relevant category owner; Director, Equipment and Fleet Division, Assistant Director, Forensic Field Operations and Information Services, Manager, Historical Services Unit.

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
09/06/20	Published to replace VPMP Firearms governance and auditing and to support the deployment of semi-automatic rifles.	FF-173057
18/03/22	Updated to reflect the roll out of ETMS	FF – 193603 1

16/06/2025	Minor amendments to reflect updated division/work units in line with the OID organisational restructure.	N/A
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