

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.

Performance development

Context

Performance and development are critical in providing clarity about performance and conduct expectations, developing employee capability and supporting their career development and wellbeing. Alignment of employee performance and development with Victoria Police priorities and values, allows the Performance Development (PD) process to uplift Victoria Police's people management capability and foster a values-led culture.

The PD process is based on a holistic approach to employee performance and development, including acknowledging the importance of an employee's health and wellbeing in relation to their performance.

The PD process aims to:

- support alignment of individual performance with organisational values and priorities
- ensure a mutual understanding between manager and employee of what is required from both employee (outcomes, behaviours and attitudes) and manager (support) to drive and support the employee's performance and career development
- provide a mechanism by which employees are assessed in order to achieve salary progression, Top of Grade or Value Range payment.

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Definitions

Performance and development process (PD process). The PD process is a framework of informal and formal discussions and activities which drive and support employee performance and career development, while aligning individual performance with organisational values, priorities and expected performance standards (outcomes and behaviours).

Performance and development cycle (PD cycle). An employee's PD cycle runs from 1 July to 30 June or from and to the annual anniversary date of commencement in their role, whichever is applicable to the relevant Enterprise Agreement.

Performance progression cycle (PPC). The PPC is the mechanism for recording both performance goals and development activities, feedback and achievements.

Performance goals. Performance goals articulate the outcomes an employee is expected to achieve during their PD cycle.

Development activities. Development activities articulate the capability development an employee needs to deliver their performance goals and meet performance standards during their PD cycle, assisting an employee to develop in line with their relevant grade/rank People Capability Profile and/or career aspirations.

Performance standards. Performance standards establish the criteria (outcomes, measures of success and behaviours) on which 'check-in' conversations should be based and performance should be formally assessed.

Victoria Police values. As outlined in **VPM Professional and ethical standards**, all employees are required to demonstrate the Victoria Police values at all times.

Victorian Public Sector values. Victorian Public Service (VPS) employees are required to demonstrate the VPS values at all times as well as the Victoria Police values.

Continuous Conversations. The Conversations tile in HR Assist used to record frequent 'check-in' conversations and achievements, as well as employee performance and development progress.

Scope and application

This policy applies to all permanent and fixed-term Victoria Police employees, who have been employed for a period greater than eight consecutive weeks.

This policy only applies to Constables, Senior Constables, Leading Senior Constables and equivalent PSO ranks with regards to salary progression, underperformance and the review of actions process.

This policy does not apply to:

- contractors or consultants employed or contracted by Victoria Police
- reservists or recruits (including Constables who are undergoing Foundation Training).

Executives (SES and above, or Assistant Commissioners and above), are only required to be involved in the PD process as a manager.

Performance development principles

The performance development principles, outlined in the **Performance development Practice Guide**, provide a holistic approach to employee performance and development.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Employees required to be involved in the PD process

The table below summarises an employee's requirement to be involved in the PD process.

VPS employees, Forensic Officers, PCOs and Supervising PCOs	Must participate in the PD process.
Constables, Senior Constables, Leading Senior Constables and equivalent PSO ranks	- Do not participate in the PD process unless Acting in a Sergeant capacity (see below). - Policy relating to salary progression, underperformance and the grievance process still applies to these employees.
Sergeants, PSO Sergeants (including Acting for more than 3 consecutive months) and above	- Must participate in the PD process. - For employees in an Acting capacity, participation does not affect eligibility for salary progression at their substantive rank, unless the employee is subject to an underperformance process.

2. Employee responsibilities

2.1 Goal setting

- Employees (in consultation with their managers) must identify and agree to performance goals and development activities at the beginning of their PD cycle in line with the table below:

All VPS employees	- At least two performance goals - At least one development activity
Sergeants/Senior Sergeants and PSO Sergeants/Senior Sergeants (including Acting Sergeant for more than 3 consecutive months)	- Up to two performance goals - At least one development activity
Inspector to Commander	- Up to two performance goals - An additional performance goal for Leadership in Service Delivery Reform - At least one development activity

- Goals identified for VPS Grade 5-7 employees and Sergeants/PSO Sergeants and above ranks, include measures of excellence and skill acquisition commensurate with the level of responsibility. Progression at these levels is considered more challenging and difficult to achieve.
- The employee must record performance goals and development activities in their PPC no later than eight weeks following the commencement of the PD cycle.
- Performance goals should be reviewed and updated, if required, throughout an employee's PD cycle. This may occur for a range of reasons, such as change of role for the employee, including upgrading/higher-duties, or changes to work priorities. Performance goals can be updated up to three months prior to the end cycle date.

2.2 Check-ins

- 'Check-ins' are frequent and meaningful conversations between managers and employees that provide the opportunity to help support employees, address any wellbeing concerns and assist in performance and development. The **Performance development Practice Guide** provides further guidance around the purpose and structure of these conversations.
- An employee is required to participate in 'check-in' conversations with their manager, including:
 - regularly communicating how they are tracking against their performance goals
 - seeking support when required
 - being open to feedback and support interventions.
- An employee should record their 'check-in' conversations (including progress toward performance goals where applicable) in the 'Continuous Conversations' module, as soon as possible following a 'check-in' conversation.

2.3 Formal Conversations

- For the purposes of salary progression, employees must participate in three formal conversations during their PD cycle. These are to occur at the:
 - commencement of the PD cycle
 - mid-point (no later than six months following the commencement of the PD cycle)
 - end of an employee's PD cycle.
- Mid and end-cycle formal conversations should be an aggregation of the 'check-in' conversations that have occurred between the employee and manager throughout the employee's PD cycle.
- Mid and end-cycle formal conversations should take into consideration the assessment of the employee's adherence to the organisational values and performance and development against all the employee's performance goals and expected performance standards throughout their PD cycle. Feedback should be sought on the employee's performance from previous managers where there has been more than one manager during the PD cycle.
- Employees must advise their manager if they are on track to meet/have met the set performance goals and development activities. Employees must complete the self-assessment prior to the end-cycle formal conversation.

2.4 Salary progression

- An employee may be entitled to salary progression (movement between financial increments) or receive a Top of Grade or Value Range payment based on their performance.
- To be considered for a salary progression or receive a Top of Grade or Value Range payment, the employee must meet the:
 - performance standards as set out against their performance goals
 - eligibility requirements set out in the relevant Enterprise Agreement.

- Employees who refuse to participate in the PD process as required by the relevant Enterprise Agreement and employment conditions are ineligible for salary progression, or Top of Grade or Value Range payments.
- Employees, including those below the rank of Sergeant/PSO Sergeant, may not be eligible for progression if subject to an underperformance process.
- See section 4 for further guidance regarding salary progression for employees.

2.5 *Movement between government departments and deferment of PPCs*

- A PPC may be deferred by a manager in accordance with the relevant Enterprise Agreement.
- A Victoria Police employee who is seconded to an external agency will be subject to the performance process applicable at that agency. The employee's manager may have the employee's PPC deferred. On returning to Victoria Police, all documentation demonstrating satisfactory performance must be submitted to the relevant manager for assessment. If the manager assesses the performance as suitable, they may progress the employee's PPC.
- A VPS employee from another government department will not be able to transfer their performance management record into the Victoria Police PPC process and will be required to participate in the Victoria Police PPC process if they are in the workplace for a three-month continuous period or longer.
- Where a PPC has been deferred, the following circumstances may apply:
 - PPC end date has passed – the member will be assessed for a maximum period of three months
 - PPC end date has not passed – the member may be assessed for a maximum period of three months after the PPC end date.
- Deferral may be applied in the following circumstances for police members:
 - paid leave (including WorkCover) for in excess of three months in the member's PPC cycle, and the manager believes that due to the length of absence, the member's performance is unable to be assessed
 - Return to Work (RTW) plan and is unable to demonstrate satisfactory performance due to illness or injury; the assessment may be deferred until they have completed the RTW plan and returned to full pre-injury duties.

3. Manager responsibilities

3.1 *Goal setting*

The manager should:

- assist the employee in identifying performance goals at the beginning of the employee's PD cycle in line with the table at section 2.1
- ensure that the employee's performance goals are recorded in their PPC within eight weeks of the commencement of the cycle and that those goals are regularly reviewed throughout the cycle to ensure they are consistent with any change of circumstances.

3.2 *Check-ins*

'Check-in' conversations should generally be informal in nature but may also be part of

formal work discussions. They should occur as often as is practical and be structured on three core components:

- employee wellbeing
- performance progress and conduct
- support.

The manager should:

- initiate and actively participate in frequent 'check-in' conversations with their employees, including:
 - supporting the employee's wellbeing
 - seeking to understand how an employee is progressing against their performance goals
 - providing feedback on the employee's performance against the agreed employee performance goals and expected performance standards, including conduct
 - identifying and recommending appropriate support interventions.
- record 'check-in' conversations through the Conversations tile in HR Assist
- contribute to the employee's 'check-in' conversations
- refer to the **Performance development Practice Guide** for more information around conducting 'check-in' conversations.

3.3 *Formal Conversations*

- Formal PD conversations must occur between the employee and their manager on the following occasions:
 - commencement of the PD cycle
 - mid-point (no later than six months following the commencement of the PD cycle)
 - end of an employee's PD cycle.
- As part of formal conversations managers and employees must discuss the employee's goals and whether they are on track (mid-cycle) or have met (end-cycle) the set performance goals and development activities.
- Mid and end-cycle formal conversations should be an aggregation of the 'check-in' conversations that have occurred between the employee and manager throughout the employee's PD cycle.
- Mid and end-cycle formal conversations should take into consideration the assessment of the employee's performance and development against all the employee's performance goals and expected performance standards, including adherence to values, throughout their PD cycle. This may involve consultation and collaboration between relevant employee managers over the PD cycle.
- Managers are responsible for recording an employee's progress, including end-cycle ratings, in the employee's PPC.
- If end-cycle ratings are not agreed upon by both parties, both the manager's and employee's comments should be recorded in the employee's PPC. Where this occurs, resolution should be attempted at the local level in the first instance which may require escalation to the Review Officer. If this is unsuccessful then employees are to refer to **VPM Review of actions (grievance)**.

- Once the end-cycle review has been completed the manager is responsible for providing final endorsement of the PPC.
- Where a completed end-cycle review results in an unsatisfactory performance rating or disagreement about final ratings, the PPC must be sent to the Review Officer, who will determine the final rating.

4. Progressing PPCs for specific categories of employees

4.1 *Assessment of employees' subject to discipline or criminal matters*

- Employees subject to discipline, misconduct or criminal proceedings will be assessed in accordance with the relevant Enterprise Agreement and may be deemed ineligible for salary progression.
- Employees suspended from duty are not entitled to salary progression. If the suspension is later rescinded, or the matter is found not proven, progression may be reviewed in accordance with the review of actions (see **VPM Review of actions (grievance)**).
- Employees subject to discipline or criminal investigation and/or proceedings who have not been suspended must be assessed for salary progression having regard to the circumstances and evidence.

4.2 *Meeting progression criteria during higher duties or temporary assignment*

- An employee undertaking higher duties, or a temporary assignment, will not have a separate PPC created for the higher duties of assignment position. Performance goals and development activities should be amended or added to account for the change in activity or role accountability/duties.
- Employees undertaking higher duties at a VPS Grade 5 – STS 7 role must demonstrate they have successfully completed the elevated requirements, including measures of excellence and skill acquisition commensurate with the level of responsibility.
- A VPS employee must have been acting in the higher position for a period of twelve months at the end of the performance cycle to be eligible for consideration of salary progression or a top of grade/value range payment for continued performance of the higher duties' activities beyond twelve months. However, an employee will not be eligible to be considered where they have obtained a promotion to a position at a higher grade/value range or otherwise negotiated a salary increase within the performance cycle. An employee will also not be eligible if they were subject to a formal underperformance process at any time during the performance cycle or were subject to proven misconduct during the performance cycle.

5. Failure to meet performance standards

5.1 *Underperformance*

- Performance concerns must be addressed promptly. Early identification and intervention are key in addressing and preventing the deterioration of performance, conduct and development concerns.
- It is important that initial enquiries are made with the employee to establish if there are any wellbeing concerns that may have contributed to the perceived

underperformance. Where wellbeing concerns are identified appropriate support should be provided. This may include referring the employee to Victoria Police Wellbeing Services (including the external Employee Assistance Program) who are available to support employees and their immediate family members in relation to welfare and wellbeing support.

- Underperformance can present in a variety of ways, and may include an employee:
 - failing to perform the duties of the position as required
 - failing to follow reasonable directions by management
 - expressing cynical views of the work environment and the given tasks
 - behaving in an inappropriate, disruptive, disrespectful or unconstructive way towards others
 - failing to uphold the organisational values and/or, where applicable, the VPS values.
- An employee who is subject to an underperformance process may result in the employee being ineligible for salary progression. This also includes employees below the rank of Sergeant or PSO Sergeant.

5.2 *Informal management of underperformance*

- Informal management of underperformance is the initial local action taken to address unsatisfactory performance or conduct issues and involves the day-to-day support and oversight of development strategies in line with **VPMG Management of underperformance**, with the support of the Business Partnering and Workplace Relations Division (BPWRD).
- If informal management of underperformance has been implemented, the manager must document the developmental conversations and strategies in a timely manner by recording the information within the Conversations tile in HR Assist.

5.3 *Formal management of underperformance*

- Where informal attempts to address the employee's unsatisfactory work performance or conduct have been unsuccessful, the formal process commences. BPWRD must be engaged to support managers and employees in conducting this process.
- This process involves the manager following the formal processes outlined in the relevant Enterprise Agreement and/or legislation with formal engagement of BPWRD.
- **For police members**, a staged process is to be implemented commencing with a clear Local Performance Intervention (LPI), followed by a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), and potentially an extension of the PIP in preparation of a Notice of Incapacity. See **VPMG Management of underperformance** for further direction regarding this process.
- **For VPS employees**, in accordance with the relevant enterprise agreement, the staged process involves the implementation of 'Formal Counselling', followed by a 'Formal Written Warning' and then a 'Final Warning' in preparation of a Final Determination. See **VPMG Management of underperformance** for further direction regarding this process.
- At all stages of managing underperformance, developmental conversations, strategies and plans must be recorded and documented by the manager.

- Where performance has not improved to the required level after the staged process has been implemented, a final outcome may result in:
 - reassignment to a role at a lower classification or value range (VPS)
 - reduction in rank or seniority (police members)
 - termination/dismissal (VPS and police members).
- For further detailed information, refer to the **VPMG Management of underperformance**.

6. Dispute resolution and review of actions (grievance) process

- If issues arise during the PD process, employees should seek resolution at the earliest opportunity. Issues may include; disputes about performance goal setting and/or completion, overall ratings of performance goals, feedback, or other content in the PPC. In the first instance, the employee and manager should attempt to resolve the matter informally at the local level.
- Where a dispute has been initiated by the employee, no further material may be added to the PPC relevant to the issue under review.
- If the matter cannot be resolved with the manager in the first instance, the matter may need to be escalated to the Review Officer. The Review Officer must consider the merit of the dispute, the content of the PPC at the time of the initial dispute and whether fair process has been applied in determining an outcome. The Review Officer will return the PPC to the manager either endorsing the PPC or directing further action.
- If the matter cannot be successfully resolved, the employee may pursue avenues of redress relevant to their employment as outlined in the **VPM Review of actions (grievance)**.
- An employee denied progression may seek review as per the relevant Enterprise Agreement.
- BPWRD can provide advice and guidance on the application of the dispute resolution and review of actions (grievance) process for performance management issues.

7. PPC information management

- Any personal information collected during the PPC process must be collected in accordance with Information Privacy Principles (IPP) from the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. The use and disclosure of personal information during the PPC process must also be pursuant to the IPP.
- Any health information collected during the PD process must be collected in accordance with Health Privacy Principle (HPP) 1.1 to 1.6 of the *Health Records Act 2001*.
- Access to stored electronic PPC assessments will only be released to authorised personnel in accordance with **VPMP Appropriate use of information** and **VPMP Information sharing**.
- Requests for documentation associated with the PPC must be handled in strict accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. If doubt exists, contact the Freedom of Information Office in relation to the release of documentation.

Related documents

- VPM Review of actions (grievance)
- VPMG Management of underperformance (*under review*)
- Performance development Practice Guide
- Victoria Police (Police Officers, Protective Services Officers, Police Reservists and Police Recruits) Force Enterprise Agreement 2019
- Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2020

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this policy, contact Workplace Relations on WRD-GENERAL-MGR@police.vic.gov.au or the relevant [Human Resources Business Partner](#).

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
20/08/20	Review and replacement of VPMG Performance Development and Assessment system to incorporate the introduction of a new PD process and system. Relevant content from VPMP Performance and professional management also incorporated	FF-177097
30/11/20	Updates to reflect the new Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2020 and inclusion of the requirement that additional information cannot be added to an employee's PDA after a request for 'review of action (grievance)' has been lodged	D20/080188
09/03/23	Updates to reflect the new terminology for the PD cycle name and consistent administrative processes, contact information and administrative updates for clarity.	FF-219497
22/08/2025	Minor administrative update to refer to VPM Professional and ethical standards in document header	NA