

Emergency Management Planning Reform

Municipal level planning Councils and alpine resort management boards

Throughout the second half of 2020, EMV's Emergency Management Planning Reform team will provide existing municipal emergency management planning committees (MEMPCs) with advice to prepare committees for the municipal level amendments which take effect on 1 December 2020.

Changes for councils

When the municipal level amendments take effect on 1 December 2020:

- Responsibility for municipal level planning is transferred from councils to new multi-agency municipal emergency management planning committees (MEMPCs).
- From 1 December 2020, the municipal emergency resource officer (MERO) will no longer have legislative backing. Instead there will be a new role of municipal emergency management officer (MEMO) and the role of municipal recovery manager (MRM) will be formalised. Until this point, the functions of the MERO continue.
- The role of the municipal fire prevention officer (MFPO) will continue under the planning reform but will no longer include a legislated planning function. Instead, fire planning will fall under the new integrated planning arrangements.
- VICSES audits will be replaced with a new assurance framework that applies at all planning levels.
- Municipal emergency management plans (MEMPs) will be required to cover mitigation, response and recovery, and address the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management. Plans are also intended to be integrated and comprehensive.
- The roll out of the new arrangements is beginning first at the state level, and then the regional and municipal levels. Once all three levels are in place, the arrangements promote a top-down and bottom-up approach so that information from the municipal level informs planning at the regional and state level, and vice versa.

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Changes for alpine resort management boards

- As with the current arrangements, alpine resort management boards will have the same emergency management planning responsibilities as councils. This means an alpine resort management board is required to facilitate emergency management planning for its alpine resort/s.
- However, an alpine resort management board will be able to appoint a council or another alpine resort board to undertake its planning functions on its behalf. This arrangement recognises the smaller size and capacity of some alpine resort boards.

Municipal emergency management planning committee (MEMPC)

- The *Emergency Management Act 2013* (as amended by the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (EMLA Act)) transfers responsibility for municipal level planning from councils to new MEMPCs. This reflects significant feedback from councils that councils should not own the plans, but they should be multi-agency plans.
- Importantly, it is the responsibility of the committee as a whole to deliver the emergency management plan and not that of the chair. Councils will convene and chair the committees which recognises their expertise, networks, and ability to coordinate across agencies at this level. However, planning is a shared responsibility of the MEMPC.
- Core membership for MEMPCs includes the council or alpine resort management board, Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority and/or Fire Rescue Victoria (to be established by the 1 July 2020), Ambulance Victoria, Victoria State Emergency Service, Australian Red Cross and the Department of Health and Human Services. The MEMPCs also require at least one additional recovery representative, one community representative, and one other representative (for example, industry).
- The new MEMPCs will be responsible for integrated EM planning for its municipal district or alpine resort, including mitigation for fires and other emergencies.

Guidelines for preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans

- The Minister for Police and Emergency Services can issue guidelines to facilitate and support the planning process. A set of planning guidelines for the preparation of emergency management plans will be updated in phases to provide further detail and practical guidance on the planning process, supported by a [Resource Library](#) on the EMV website. Guidelines for preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans will be formally released after 1 December 2020.

Municipal emergency management plans (MEMPs)

- Each municipal district or alpine resort management board is required to have a MEMP that is consistent with the relevant regional emergency management plan (REMP) and the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). Municipal plans should not replicate the regional plan. Rather, they should provide specific information tailored to the municipality's context and risk.
- MEMPs are required to be developed by the MEMPCs and approved by the relevant regional emergency management planning committee (REMPC).

Timing

- The new municipal emergency management planning arrangements will take effect on 1 December 2020. Until then, existing arrangements continue to apply. In particular, VICSES audits continue.
- Once the municipal planning arrangements take effect, each current municipal plan will continue as a transitional measure until its next natural review period, at which point the plan will be prepared under the new framework. A rolling schedule to prepare and undertake assurance of new MEMPs will be established based on the current three-year schedule.
- A selection of councils have been included in a proof of concept phase to test the development and assurance of municipal plans throughout 2020.

Collaboration

- The new arrangements establish an enabling environment that supports collaborative planning and gives flexibility to accommodate the different approaches across Victoria.
- MEMPCs may work jointly or in municipal cluster groups to develop common elements of their plans, however, each MEMPC is required to produce an individual plan which addresses their particular circumstances, needs and risks. It is expected that MEMPs prepared under the new planning arrangements do not replicate the state, regional or other municipal plans.

Consultation

- Consultation is required for emergency management plans produced at state, regional and municipal levels. MEMPCs are required to consult the community in developing their MEMPs.

Assurance of municipal emergency management plans

- EMV has developed an assurance framework for state, regional and municipal levels under the changes made through the EMLA Act.
- The municipal planning and audit process will continue as normal until the municipal phase of the EMLA Act commences on 1 December 2020. EMV will work with VICSES to transition from the current audit requirements to the new assurance framework.
- Once the municipal phase commences, the relevant REMPC will be responsible for providing assurance and approving the MEMP.
- Refer to the [Assurance of Emergency Management Plans](#) fact sheet for more information.

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