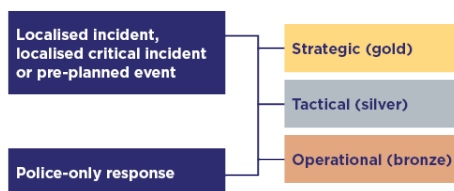


# Command structure

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

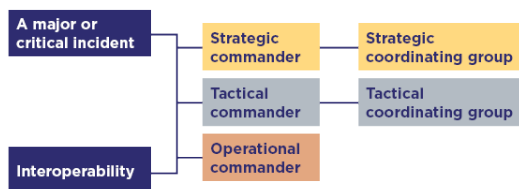
First published 2 September 2026

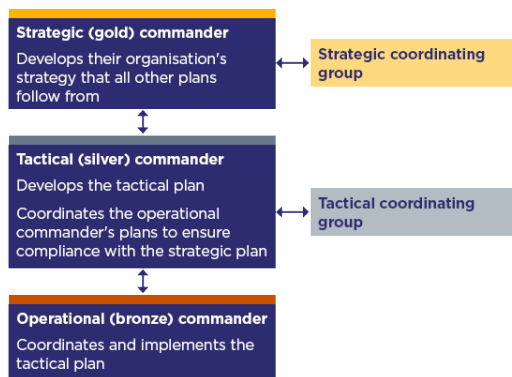
The strategic (gold), tactical (silver), operational (bronze) command structure should be applied for all relevant incidents and events. A localised incident requiring a force-only response, for example, would use this setup.



In police-only command structures, a gold and/or silver group may be added where an incident or investigation requires specialist advice pertinent to that incident.

Where interoperability is involved, a strategic coordinating group (SCG) and a [tactical coordinating group](#) (TCG) can be set up to support the command structure. Illustrations of this command structure follow. This is consistent with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).





The [command structure for public order public safety \(POPS\)](#) events is explained in the POPS APP.

The [command structure for firearms commanders](#) is detailed in the Armed policing APP.

## Strategic (gold) commander

The strategic (gold) commander should establish and manage policy, strategy and the overall response framework. They should take responsibility and authority for the gold strategy and any tactical parameters that tactical (silver) or operational (bronze) commanders need to follow. The strategic (gold) commander should communicate strategy clearly.

A strategic (gold) commander should maintain and update their knowledge of relevant policies and processes that they may need to use – for example, in relation to major and/or critical incidents.

The role of a [gold POPS commander](#) is explained in the POPS APP.

The role of a [strategic firearms commander](#) is explained in the Armed policing APP.

The force incident manager (FIM) may act as strategic commander in the initial phase of an incident.

## Tactical (silver) commander

First responders are responsible for tactics in the initial stages of an incident. The tactical (silver) commander:

- is likely to be in place before the [strategic \(gold\) commander](#)
- is likely to be the first senior officer taking command of the incident
- should set priorities before the strategic (gold) commander has set a strategy

In the event of the incident involving fatalities, at an early stage, the tactical (silver) commander should consider appointing a scene evidence recovery manager (SERM) to act as the scene coordinator. The SERM should be responsible to the [senior investigating officer](#) (SIO) and [senior identification manager](#) (SIM).

The resources section includes a [list of prompts](#) that could be used by an initial tactical (silver) commander to understand their role.

The role of a [silver POPS commander](#) can be found in the POPS APP.

The role of a [tactical firearms commander](#) is explained in the Armed policing APP.

The FIM may act as tactical commander in the initial phase of an incident.

## Operational (bronze) commander

The operational (bronze) commander should control and implement resources in a functional or geographical area. They should fulfil the directions of the tactical (silver) commander.

The operational (bronze) commander should continuously evaluate the scene for dynamic changes and keep the tactical (silver) commander updated on those changes.

For the [role of a bronze POPS commander](#), refer to the POPS APP.

For the [role of an operational firearms commander](#), refer to the Armed policing APP.

## Tags

APP   Critical incidents   Major incidents