

Communication

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The initial response must ensure effective multi-agency communication and coordination under the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles \(JESIP\)](#), with clear command structures established at the earliest opportunity to support a safe, proportionate and effective response. Access to timely and accurate information is critical to effective decision-making.

Officers and staff should follow force policies relating to communications and contact during an incident or event. This should include person-to-person, group and multi-agency communication technology.

Airwave

Airwave is a secure digital radio network used by emergency services for talking to each other and exchanging of data, using shared talkgroups.

Role	Action
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Commanders	Commanders should enhance their decision making by accessing support from trained tactical advisers. These include Airwave communications tactical advisers (CTAs) and internal Airwave teams. Strategic (gold) commanders should set up an Airwave communications interoperability plan. They should also take responsibility for the media and communications strategy, accessing professional advice from force media and communications teams. The strategy should detail the amount and style of information to be released. External communications in the Investigations APP has relevant guidance to help with this planning. As does, the Media and communications APP.
Airwave CTAs	Airwave CTAs should work with in-force Airwave teams. They may have broader experience and knowledge of the specific coverage, configuration and capacity of their force.
Police control room staff	Go to the police control room section of this APP.

Communications (media) plan

Strategic (gold) commanders' [communications plans](#) should stipulate:

- the assigned communications lead and standing up of the multi-agency information group, where this is required
- main audiences, always considering both internal and external, including workforce, stakeholders and media
- the level of seniority and approval process for any statements before release, using considered delegation for agility

They should also stipulate the approach to channel management, including the process for:

- resourcing a surge in media enquiries, ensuring this is moved away from the force incident manager (FIM)
- social media contact and engagement, including responsibilities for:
 - monitoring, assessment and triage between contact, intelligence and corporate communication
 - the identification and risk assessment of linked information disorder

In most cases, a consistent spokesperson should be appointed, considering escalation points and contingency for 24/7 requirements.

Gold commanders should ensure provision of timely and accurate information to assist in keeping communities safe. In consultation with the communications lead, they should regularly review and evaluate the [communications plan](#) to determine if it needs to be reassessed.

Media briefing centre (MBC)

The strategic (gold) commander determines the requirement for, and sets up, the media briefing centre for a major incident and should decide whether it is required for all other incident types or operations. They should establish a clear and reliable communications link between the strategic coordinating group (SCG) and the MBC.

The strategic (gold) commander agrees with other agency commanders, where relevant, on the location of the MBC. It can be established adjacent to the strategic coordination centre (SCC) but should not interfere with the work of the force control room. If located at or near the scene, it can be used to control media attendance and provide a single point of contact. It should have communications and conference facilities.

The MBC provides the media with regular briefings. A nominated media spokesperson should be appointed to represent all agencies, where relevant, conveying the agreed messages of the SCG. The MBC should be staffed by trained communication specialists from all organisations. Partner agencies' media liaison officers should also be briefed here.

Warning and informing the public

Guidance on [warning and informing the public](#), including the [national emergency alert system](#), is included in the civil contingencies APP.

Major Incident Public Portal (MIPP)

The police service is the lead agency for the [MIPP](#).

The tactical (silver) commander should decide early on whether to use the MIPP to obtain information from both public and police sources. The portal can be used for a wider variety of incidents and operations, as well as major incidents. Examples include murder or missing persons' investigations, where information from the public is expected to exceed normal call-handling resources.

If a Casualty Bureau has been activated, the media should be asked to communicate details of the MIPP to the public. The public can use this to report helpful information, such as family or friends they think may be affected by the incident. These details are received by the Casualty Bureau.

The strategic commander has the option to use the MIPP to collect required information, such as survivors' first accounts and investigative triage forms at hospitals or survivor reception centres.

It does not have to be a police officer that assists members of the public in completing these forms. Members of other agencies can be requested at the SCG to offer this support.

Further information on the use of MIPP by the Casualty Bureau is provided in the [Disaster victim identification APP](#). Also refer to local force mass fatality plans.

Tags

APP Critical incidents Major incidents