

Briefing and debriefing

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Major and/or critical incidents require consistency in briefing and debriefing. Consider appointing a dedicated briefing officer to achieve this.

The factors that need to be considered when preparing for briefings are listed in the [internal communications](#) section of Investigations APP and in other specialist APP, such as armed policing. These factors also influence the methods you choose to employ. For example, the timings or location could make in-person briefings less practical than online or written ones.

Briefing

The purpose of a briefing is to:

- provide teams with relevant and up-to-date information
- check team members' knowledge of this information
- confirm team members' knowledge of strategic intentions and tactical objectives
- highlight threats and risks
- consider staff welfare for all involved agencies
- allocate tasks to team members
- confirm there are sufficient resources to conduct tasks

Producing a briefing prompt sheet can be useful.

An audit trail or log of the briefing should be made, to include instructions given and any questions asked. Consider the use of body-worn video (BWV) in addition to these written records.

Briefing models

Briefing models can be used by commanders to plan the content of briefings. This aids consistency, even if conducted by different people.

Two models are widely used:

- **SAFCOM** (situation, aim, factors, choice, options, monitoring)
- **IIMARCH** (information, intent, method, administration, risk assessment, communications and humanitarian issues)

The IIMARCH model

I Information	Operation timeline, location details, brief history (if applicable) evaluated intelligence, partner and community issues, results of community impact assessment/equality impact assessment.
I Intention	Gold strategy, tactical plan, available powers and policy.
M Method	Tactical plan, available powers and policy, contingency plans.
A Administration	Identity of commanding officers, specific officer duties, operational policies (eg, protocols, arrest, media) partner responsibilities, duty times and locations, briefing times and locations, health and safety, policing style and dress code.
R Risk assessment	Individual assessment of all relevant risks.
C Communications	Mutual aid command protocols, communications plan, radio equipment and channels, call signs, information for public dissemination, contact information.
H Human rights and other legal issues	Relevant European Convention on Human Rights Articles, rationale for justification of operation, disclosure details.

- Information – operation timeline, location details, brief history (if applicable) evaluated intelligence, partner and community issues, results of community impact assessment/quality impact assessment.
- Intention – gold strategy, tactical plan, available powers and policy.
- Method – tactical plan, available powers and policy, contingency plans.
- Administration – identity of commanding officers, specific officer duties, operational policies (for example, protocols, arrest, media) partner responsibilities, duty times and locations, briefing times and locations, health and safety, policing style and dress code.
- Risk assessment – individual assessment of all relevant risks.
- Communications – mutual aid command protocols, communications plan, radio equipment and channels, call signs, information for public dissemination, contact information.

- Human rights and other legal issues – relevant European Convention on Human Rights Articles, rationale for justification of operation, disclosure details.

Further advice and guidance for components of this model can be found as follows:

- [Community impact assessments](#)
- [Strategic \(gold\) commander section of this APP](#)
- [Tactical \(silver\) commander section of this APP](#)
- [Operational \(bronze\) commander section of this APP](#)
- [Use of force section of Armed policing APP](#)
- [Legal framework section of Armed policing APP](#)
- [Airwave section of this APP](#)
- [Communications \(media\) plan section of this APP](#)
- [Warning and informing the public section of the Civil contingencies APP](#)
- [Disclosure details](#)

This [briefing model](#) is also explained on the JESIP website.

Debriefing

Debriefing supports continuous learning and development. The potential outcomes of debriefing are provided in the [professional development](#) section of the vulnerability-related risk guidelines.

Gold (strategic), silver (tactical) and bronze (operational) commanders should establish what debriefing arrangements are required at the initial stages of an incident or operation. Commencing debriefing early on allows information from initial phases to feed into decisions at later phases of response. Before any debrief, where possible and relevant, consult the senior investigating officer (SIO) for an up-to-date overview of the investigation.

There are different types of debriefing depending on the purpose and timing. This includes the following:

Structured (trained debriefers) debriefs

- formal debrief
- single-agency debrief

- multi-agency debrief

Unstructured debriefs

- hot debrief
- cold debrief

These can be conducted by single or multi-agencies.

A hot debrief should always be conducted immediately after an incident, including for 'near misses', unless formal [post-incident procedures](#) (PIPs) are in place. A cold debrief takes place after sufficient time for all relevant information to be included in the review.

If a force considers there to be exceptional circumstances that justify carrying out their own debrief during formal PIPs, they must obtain prior approval from the investigative authorities involved.

Debriefing should have a clear structure that is used consistently. This should be done by:

- producing and following an agenda
- following a chronological order – for example, pre-event, during event, post-event
- using a structured debriefing tool

For auditing purposes, a record should be kept of the:

- date and time
- location
- attendees
- debrief purpose (a clear statement clarifying the goal of the specific debrief)

Debriefers should consider how to capture the discussions involved in advance. Options for record-keeping include:

- recording the audio and having this transcribed securely afterwards
- using allocated notetakers
- an evaluation form for pre-planned events or exercising

All records are subject to disclosure laws. The [Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996](#) and the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#) apply.

The documents and material produced by debriefing should be compiled and analysed. This responsibility should be allocated to a named team member or members. After analysis, an action plan should be created for the implementation of learning.

Lessons identified from multi-agency debriefing should be shared on [Joint Organisational Learning \(JOL\) Online](#) (you will need to log in). The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) website provides a process and resources to support [JOL](#).

Debriefing tools

Commanders should employ a model to guide the debriefing process.

Recommended models include:

- the national structured debrief
- [CIAPOAR](#) from the national decision model (NDM) or joint decision model (JDM) (a template to guide a [multi-agency debrief](#) can be downloaded from the JESIP website)
- any force local debrief procedures

National structured debrief

The national structured debrief is the standard model used across policing. It can be used in a broad range of situations, such as for exercising, operations, incidents, investigations and processes.

Where possible, personnel expected to lead debriefs should attend the College of Policing one-day training course for the [national structured debrief](#).

The debrief for a police-only incident will produce a single report. Where there are multiple agencies involved in debriefing, a joint report of the recommendations and learning produced may be written. The [SCG](#) should determine how this is to be compiled and circulated.

The terms of reference for the debrief should set out an action plan for how the SCG intends to apply the learning generated. For joint reports, this action plan should have been agreed by all

participating organisations.

Access the [Specialist Operations National Structured Debrief community](#) on Knowledge Hub (you will need to log in) for further good practice in using this tool.

Mutual aid and mobilisation

If the resources required by an incident or emergency exceed local mutual aid agreements or where specialist services are required, the strategic (gold) commander should declare a mobilisation event. The strategic (gold) commander should document the decision, including its rationale, and then request mobilisation from within the region via the Regional Information Coordination Centre (RICC). If resources are required from outside of the region, the RICC will contact the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC). The NPoCC coordinates the provision of all police mutual aid (except counter terrorism assets) in response to requests from forces.

Further information is available in the following:

- [Mobilisation APP for information about supporting mutual aid](#)
- [National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Police Services: Mutual Aid Cost Recovery](#)
- [Mobilisation Operational Guidance Version 1.0](#)

Tags

APP Critical incidents Major incidents