



CFA Operating Guideline

SDO - DDO Notifications, Coupling & Decoupling Arrangements

SECTION 1: PREAMBLE

Commensurate with legislative delegations, the ACFO of each District is responsible for all members, brigades and groups within that District. To ensure a 24/7 capability exists to provide operational oversight and establish command integrity commensurate with Chief Officer Standing Orders, the functional role of a District Duty Officer (DDO) is established.

A State Duty Officer (SDO) function has been established to provide a 24/7 state operational oversight capability on behalf of the State Agency Commander (SAC) commensurate with Chief Officer Standing Orders.

Enabled by these guidelines, CFA's operating model provides for the ability of the 24/7 SDO to act as the initial point of contact on behalf of any / all DDO's. In acting as the first point of contact, it is intended that unnecessary disruption to DDO's outside of normal work hours can be minimised. The SDO acting as the first point of contact does not change the ultimate responsibilities of the District ACFO. Business and notification process are established to ensure any issues and actions undertaken by the SDO are effectively communicated and passed onto Districts in a timely fashion.

In circumstances where CFA Districts are "coupled", the SDO will provide a clear level of initial oversight and triage of activities across Districts with a greater emphasis outside of business hours. Actions normally undertaken by the DDO may be executed by the SDO in these circumstances and District DDO's may be activated by the SDO commensurate with operational activity, business needs or other supporting doctrine.

In circumstances where any / all CFA Districts are "decoupled", the SDO is responsible for monitoring and remaining situationally aware of CFA operational activities to ensure the State Agency Commander (SAC) and other senior personnel are informed of incidents and events which may require escalation, reporting or other advice.

Where a District is 'decoupled', the DDO is responsible at all times for acting both as the first point of contact and fulfilling all roles and responsibilities of the DDO functional role statement.

SECTION 2: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

1. The purpose of this procedure is to establish:

- a) Triggers for determining CFA Districts Operationally Coupling and Decoupling with the SDO;
- b) The notification process to be followed when Coupling and Decoupling is undertaken.
- c) Inform the SDO on the triggers for determining the type of notification to be provided to CFA Districts and DDO's when they are coupled to the SDO.
- d) The notification process for SDO's advising and/or activating DDOs.

SECTION 3: SCOPE

2. This procedure applies to all CFA Districts.
3. This procedure applies to all personnel who are performing the roles of SDO and DDO.
4. This procedure applies to all CFA agency business while operating outside of any State Control Arrangements where line of control has been established for either readiness or response. For clarity the reporting lines from DDO-SDO-SAC remain unless line of control is established where the reporting line of CFA DDO-CFA Regional Agency Commander (RAC) (when in place or activated) -CFA SAC will apply. Where this applies the SDO will maintain situational awareness.
5. Note: The line of control may be activated in one or more regions depending on the levels of elevated or forecast risk.

SECTION 4: PROCEDURE

Coupling and Decoupling

6. Coupling refers to the situation where:
 - a. The SDO will be the first point of contact for all emergencies and existing Fire Services Communications Controller (FSCC) for DDO notifications as per Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); and
 - b. The SDO will act as the first line of support to CFA brigades for operational activities within a CFA District/s; and.
 - c. The SDO will be responsible for the notification of, or escalation of CFA District/s operational support outside of normal CAD arrangements (i.e. Notification to the nominated DDO)
7. Decoupling refers to the situation where:
 - a. A CFA District/s is no longer reliant on the SDO as the first point of contact; and
 - b. The DDO will be the first point of contact for all emergency and existing FSCC to DDO notifications as per SOPs; and
 - c. The DDO will act as the first line of support to CFA brigades for operational activities and will be responsible for fulfilling all the roles and responsibilities of the DDO role statement.
8. For clarity, the decoupling of a District from SDO support can be initiated at any time at the request of the relevant DDO, the SDO or SAC.

Decoupling Triggers

Outside of Fire Danger Period (FDP)

9. During periods where the FDP has not been declared within part of a CFA District, a District may remain coupled with the SDO or choose to decouple based on operational activity or local needs.
10. In doing so, a District may choose to decouple during business hours where this does not adversely affect a District's capability and capacity to manage availability of CMDR/ACFO by rostering personnel in a manner which excessively requires these personnel to perform a rostered role.
11. Districts should be coupled with the SDO outside of business hours unless operationally required.

During the Fire Danger Period

12. During periods where the FDP has been declared for some or all of a CFA District, Districts are required to decouple during business hours and at other times based on risk, readiness triggers or operational activity.
13. The District should recouple outside of business hours unless operationally required or when readiness level thresholds are no longer met.

At all times

14. Coupling/decoupling considerations should at all times consider safety, fatigue management, resource availability and workload of the SDO.
15. In exceptional circumstances, eg: lack of available District command resources, a District may remain coupled to ensure appropriate fatigue management or due to some other operational need. In these circumstances the District ACFO will ensure communication with the SDO to provide an overview of the situation and likely duration the exceptional circumstances are likely to remain.

Coupling/Decoupling Recording

16. The recording and display of District Coupling/Decoupling will be managed by the CFA FSCC
17. District status will be displayed on the Rostered Duty Officer page of CFA Intranet.
18. Nominated DDOs will provide current contact details (current mobile phone and pager numbers) to the FSCC.

Notifications

19. The SDO has responsibility to determine the type and level of notification based upon the information provided and guided by the SDO - DDO Notification Matrix included in **Table 1**.
20. The DDO Notification Matrix identifies the types of activities likely to require notifications to DDO and or SAC and is the primary guidance for SDO's. This does not in any way preclude the SDO from activating or notifying the DDO, SAC or other personnel if required and the decision making of the SDO is not strictly limited to the matrix
21. When the SDO notifies a DDO, the SDO will make contact to convey situational intelligence and other related information with the view that the DDO may need to respond operationally, coordinate operational response or deal with a critical administrative / welfare issue.
22. The SDO - DDO notifications will consist of one of the following 4 x Tiers:

SDO - DDO Notifications Tiers

Tier 1	Notification	Applies to non-urgent notifications to a District for situational awareness and follow up actions, via the District Op's email group to ensure a catch all approach from relevant District operational personnel
Tier 2	Advice	Applies where there is an incident or other event occurring within a District that may escalate, this is an early notification for situational awareness of the DDO/District concerned. The SDO will continue to monitor the incident and advise if a T3 - Activation is required. (Note: Tier 3 Activation to incident can be at the discretion of DDO A/H or District B/H given local knowledge, however the SDO must be advised)
Tier 3	Activation	Applies in situations where the DDO will be activated to provide direct support to an Operational Incident or other event requiring immediate intervention or support. Once activated, the relevant DDO or delegate (local CMDR/ACFO) is now responsible for all requirements of the specific incident or event. The District will remain coupled (unless specifically requested to decouple by the DDO) and the SDO will maintain oversight of the District and BAU support after hours.
Tier 4	Decoupling	Applies when a District/s take responsibility for initiating decoupling based on agreed triggers within the District and or Region, or as initiated due to specific localised intelligence in accordance with the CFA District Coupling/Decoupling SOP.

		Notifications from FSCC and/or FIRECOM will go to the decoupled DDO directly when decoupled. The SDO will maintain situational awareness, regardless of the decoupled status of any District. It's the responsibility of the DDO when decoupled to reply to/acknowledge FSCC contact
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23. In any circumstances where a DDO becomes aware of any incident or issue they consider requires District support, management or coordination they are not required to await notification or authorisation by the SDO. In these circumstances the DDO should however liaise with and inform the SDO of any local actions to ensure each role is aware of actions already undertaken. Any response, coordination or support is to be in accordance with their respective District ACFO's intent.
24. The DDO, if activated or decoupled, is responsible for ensuring the SDO is appropriately briefed on the incident/event in a timely manner ensuring a common operating picture is maintained and enable further reporting or other advice.

SECTION 5: RELATED DOCUMENTS

- CFA Commander/ACFO Availability Arrangements (4/7/2022)
- Joint Communique – FRV-UFU – FRV Officers working in CFA, ACFO CMDR Guidance on Hours of Work (20/7/2023)
- FRV Policy – Special Rosters V1.0 (15/10/2021)

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Attachments: TABLE 1 _ SDO-DDO NOTIFICATION / ACTIVATION MATRIX

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TABLE 1 _ SDO-DDO NOTIFICATION / ACTIVATION MATRIX

Tier 1	Notification	Applies to non-urgent notifications to a District for situational awareness and follow up actions, via the District Op’s email group to ensure a catch all approach from relevant District operational personnel
Tier 2	Advice	Applies where there is an incident or other event occurring within a District that may escalate, this is an early notification for situational awareness of the DDO/District concerned. The SDO will continue to monitor the incident and advise if a T3 - Activation is required. DDO is to acknowledge receipt of Tier 2 Advice message via phone (SMS or Discussion) (Note: Tier 3 Activation to incident can be at the discretion of DDO A/H or District B/H given local knowledge, however the SDO must be advised)
Tier 3	Activation	Applies in situations where the DDO will be activated to provide direct support to an operational incident or other event requiring immediate intervention or support. Once activated, the relevant DDO or delegate (local CMDR/ACFO) is now responsible for all requirements of the specific incident or event. The District will remain coupled (unless specifically requested to decouple by the DDO) and the SDO will maintain oversight of the District and BAU support after hours.
Tier 4	Decoupled	Applies when a District/s take responsibility for initiating de-coupling based on agreed triggers within the District and or Region, or as initiated due to specific localised intelligence in accordance with the CFA District Coupling/Decoupling procedures. Notifications from FSCC and/or FIRECOM will go to the decoupled DDO directly when decoupled. The SDO will maintain situational awareness, regardless of the decoupled status of any District. It’s the responsibility of the DDO when decoupled to reply to/acknowledge FSCC contact

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Tier 1 - SDO Notification to District (non-urgent)			
NOTIFICATION FOR		NOTIFICATION VIA	RESPONSIBILITY
Operational Notification	Minor Incident no requirement for DDO Response, Incident was monitored and supported remotely by SDO SDO has been in phone contact with IC and determined that T2 Advice or T3 Activation is not required CFA has provided support to an incident at the direction of control agency that has been significant in nature There has been an occurrence at a incident that requires follow up by District during Business Hours For situational awareness of District	email: Operational Notification (Template) District “all Op’s” email DDO nominated Online Logbook: When agreed and implemented for all Districts	District District may have follow up actions assigned that will be the responsibility of the District/DDO to follow up and action during Business Hours
			SDO Notification to District/DDO for situational awareness of Operational Incident that occurred within the District outside of business hours
Fleet Notification	Notification to District & DMO (outside of BAU) for vehicle faults reported to SDO Minor Vehicle fault requiring non urgent DMO action (appliance in service) Significant Vehicle fault requiring urgent DMO action (appliance out of service) page DMO DO	email: Vehicle Notification (Template) District “all Op’s” email DDO nominated Online Logbook: When agreed and implemented for all Districts	District Follow up with brigades to ensure appropriate action has been taken to ensure appliance is in operational condition
			SDO Notification to all Op’s” email group, nominated DDO and assigned DMO workshop of vehicle faults that require urgent or non-urgent action of DMO workshop Where an out of service appliance leaves a major Operational capability gap within a District, SDO to notify DDO via a Teir 2 Advice notification
Infrastructure Notification	Notification to District & CFA Building Maintenance Urgent Works approved SDO out of business hours Non-Urgent works reported to SDO and will require a Building Maintenance Request	email Infrastructure Notification (Template) District “all Op’s” email DDO nominated CFA Building Maintenance Online Logbook: When agreed and implemented for all Districts	District Non-Urgent Works: District will be notified via email/online logbook of any Non-Urgent works that are notified to the SDO outside of Business Hours, District to support Brigade to lodge a Building Maintenance Request via the CFA intranet
			SDO Urgent: The SDO is authorised to undertake urgent “Make Safe or Secure” works, any invoices for these works will be covered by Land & Building Services Building Maintenance Dept. Once works have been issued please notify the Building Maintenance Dept via the below email links Buildingmaintenance@cfa.vic.gov.au m.sheilds@cfa.vic.gov.au
Fire Investigation	Notification to District & CFA Fire Investigation DO when Fire Investigation is initiated by SDO at the request of the Incident Controller CFA Fire investigation requested and allocated by SDO SDO unable to allocate CFA Fire investigation and requested support via FRV FIU	email: Fire Investigation Notification (Template) Online Logbook: When agreed and implemented for all Districts	District Fire Investigation Notification sent via email with CFA Fire Investigator and trainee assigned
			SDO When Fire Investigation is requested by Incident Controller SDO to request further information from IC via phone, to establish if initial investigation into the origin and cause has occurred and if fire has been deemed suspicious. Where requirement for Fire Investigation is confirmed SDO to initiate CFA Fire Investigation process

Tier 1 – SDO Notification to District (non-urgent) continued			
NOTIFICATION FOR		NOTIFICATION VIA	RESPONSIBILITY
Wellbeing/Safety	CFA Member / Staff Member: Minor injury treated on scene, reported to SDO for action as per the CFA Health & Safety Incident Reporting & Notification Flowchart or Signal 27 has been activated by SDO/FSCC Member of Public: Injury to member of public requiring treatment/transportation by AV, at incident for which CFA are the incident control agency, or CFA have played a significant role as Support agency	email: OH&S Notification (Template) Online Logbook: When agreed and implemented for all Districts	District/DDO responsible Ensuring CFA Safe is completed by Person (injured / near miss) and local level investigations and actions completed
			SDO Appropriate Notification to CFA SAC and CFA OH&S Duty Officer
Communications & ICT	Duress Notification Where the duress can be actioned by information available to the SDO or through the Communications Duty Officer – notification to District Where contact details cannot be sourced or the user cannot be identified escalation to Tier 2 may be undertaken ICT Equipment Fault Non-Critical ICT infrastructure reported to SDO – Follow Communications Faults flow chart and ICT notifications process	email: District “all Op’s” email DDO nominated Online Logbook: When agreed and implemented for all Districts	SDO will contact radio “owner” to determine nature of duress, this may include requesting the Communications Duty Officer to identify the radio “owner” SDO will provide notification to District Where SDO/Communications Duty Officer cannot identify the radio “owner” the issue may be escalated to a Tier 2 notification if a location or other information regarding the radio “owner” provides a specific District for notification Equipment faults reported to SDO; notify ICT Helpdesk

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Tier 2 – SDO Advice to DDO			
Discussion between DDO-SDO regarding incident support requirements			
ADVICE FOR		ADVICE VIA	RESPONSIBILITY
Operational Incident CFA (Control Agency)	Operational Incident CFA District: CFA as control agency, potential to escalate with risk and consequence to District Operational Incident CFA District: CFA as control agency and interagency mutual aid response is escalated by either CFA or supporting agency This predominantly refers to the formal CAD response of Support Agency Command personnel. Where a FRV 10/14 Commander is responded to an incident, for which CFA is the control agency	Business Hours: 08:30-17:00 Primary: Phone DDO Secondary: Pager DDO Redundancy: District Ops all Pager group After Hours: Primary: Pager DDO Secondary: Phone DDO Redundancy: District Ops all Pager group	District – DDO/ACFO or nominated operational officer Responsible for: SDO Support – provided any local knowledge to SDO via phone that will support incident Incident Support – where appropriate DDO initiate contact with CFA Incident controller to establish any support or operational issues, this should be done in consultation with SDO to ensure communication efficiency with the incident controller T3 Activation escalation - where DDO/District ACFO determines based on local knowledge a requirement for a District Commander to be activated in support of incident During BH – Respond to Incident/DCC on radio via Firecom After BH – Via discussion with SDO via phone 53309147 (Respond to Incident/DCC on radio via Firecom) Appropriate notification to District ACFO and Regional Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) DDOs will ensure implementation of default communications arrangements DDO is to acknowledge receipt of Tier 2 Advice message via phone (SMS or Discussion)
Incident CFA (Support Agency)	Operational Incident: CFA Support agency significant commitment of CFA resources, advice message for situational awareness of DDO/District Significant incident is defined as five CFA Firefighting Appliances committed to incident in support of control agency.		
Specialist Response	Specialist Response (SO10.00) where CFA are the control agency or providing a significant contribution as a support agency, for complex Incidents		
Urgent District Information	Where the SDO determines that a T1 Notification to District is not sufficient and information is of a more urgent nature, for the situational awareness of the district. SDO generate a T1 Notification email to d##-ops account and follow up with either pager message to DDO to monitor Ops email account Phone call in relation to the T2 Advice Urgent District Information could include but not limited to urgent OH&S, Fleet, HR, infrastructure, ICT, Brigade Step-Up/Standby or Communications issues Change to current or predicted weather conditions within the District footprint with potential to impact District		SDO Responsible for Maintain Operational oversight and responsibility for District Making Notifications to Internal and external parties (e.g. SAC, OH&S Duty Officer) as Required Incident Command and Control support via phone Fire Investigation requirements- support IC initial investigation & activation of CFA FI procedure SDO will notify Communications Duty Officer and DDO/s of affected Districts
Wellbeing/Safety	CFA Member / Staff Member: Serious injury treated on scene, reported to SDO for action as per the CFA Health & Safety Incident Reporting & Notification Flowchart or Signal 27 has been activated by SDO/FSCC Member of Public: Signal 83, serious Injury to a member of public requiring treatment/transportation by AV, at incident for which CFA are the incident control agency, or CFA have played a significant role as Support agency Signal 27 is activated by Incident Controller or SDO		

District Security	Where the SDO becomes aware of an area security or service deliver gap within a District, including requests for CFA Brigade Step Ups/Standbys DDO to be notified via Teir 2 Advice message		SDO/DDO Discuss local capability solutions to identified gap
Public Information and Warnings	Issuing of Public Information and Warnings above Advice level is the responsibility of the DDO to ensure Tailored and Relevant messaging to the local Community Advice Message- Actioned by DDO or SDO on behalf Incident Controller Watch and Act- Actioned by DDO on behalf of Incident Controller, if action by DDO where not practicable support can be provided by the SDO Emergency Warning - Actioned by DDO on behalf of Incident Controller, if action by DDO where not practicable support can be provided by the SDO		SDO/DDO Public Information and Warnings should only be issued for Fires and Incident for which the CFA are the Control agency in the country area of Victoria

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Tier 3 - SDO Activation of a DDO for an Incident or Event			
Agreed Transfer of Responsibility for an Incident between SDO -DDO			
ACTIVATION FOR		ACTIVATION VIA	
DDO Activation CFA (Control Agency)	Operational Incident: CFA as Control Agency Significant Incident has escalated beyond initial response complexities associated with IAP or Emergency Management Priorities Significant Incident Risk and Consequence for Community, CFA and Brigade Members Activation of DCC required to support operational requirements of the incident. Attendance of CFA DDO/Commander will add value to incident management. Request of CFA Incident Controller.	Activation By: SDO Business Hours: 08:30-17:00 Primary: Phone DDO Secondary: Pager DDO Redundancy: District Ops all Pager group After Hours: Primary: Phone DDO Secondary: Pager DDO Redundancy: District Ops all Pager group Activation By: DDO/ACFO Via FireComm (Response message)	District Responsible for - On activation ensure appropriate district level command and control arrangements are in place - Ensure support to the Incident Controller and incident and may require a response to the incident to fulfill a defined role in the IMT or IEMT structure or to mentor an identified member/s within the IMS or provide support from another location Making Notifications to Internal and external parties (e.g. SAC, ACFO (if not the DDO) OH&S Duty Officer, WorkSafe) as required Any other DDO Responsibilities as required
DDO Activation CFA (Support Agency)	Operational Incident: CFA Support Agency Significant Incident requiring CFA Commander representation on EMT. Significant commitment of CFA resources to support Control agency requiring CFA liaison.		
DDO Activation Volunteer Support	Significant Incident impacting welfare of CFA Members or Operational capability that requires local action from District Leadership. Significant Injury or Death of CFA members or external ESO whilst undertaking operational incidents. Collisions involving CFA vehicles determined to be “Major Collisions” SOP12.01. Any event where the SDO, based on available intelligence, decides the DDO activation is an appropriate course of action to be taken Any member transported (private or ambulance) and/or admitted to a medical facility.		
Aircraft Activation	Activation of aircraft beyond PDD - or outside of PDD response Where fire becomes beyond initial control and the establishment of Air Operations Unit is required (Aircraft Officer, Air Base Manager etc) Where an airbase is to be activated to support operations - or closer support airbase FFMV/CFA locally etc	Notification SDO via phone 0353309147	SDO Responsible for Maintain Operational and BAU oversight within the District Provide support to Activated DDO on request of DDO (eg initial Advice message when enroute)
Sourcing Supplementary Resources	Request from IC for welfare provisions to incident (meals) that require activation of local arrangements. Any request for heavy plant, DEECA Panel of Providers Council resources/plant that requires activation via District procedure		T3 Activation of Officer will initiate recall to work overtime when response to incident or DCC is activated outside of business hours or other protracted action is required

Tier 4 District Decoupled			
Transfer responsibility all events from SDO to District			
District FDP District Decoupled from SDO DCC Activated	District has decoupled from SDO During District FDP The expectation from the CFA Chief is that DDO are decoupled from the SDO during Business Hours: 08:30-17:00 or Via Risk Based decoupling process (in development)	District Activation: to advise of decoupling -Via phone to FSCC SAC/SDO Activation of District: to request decoupling Primary Pager: District Ops Secondary: Phone DDO	District Responsible for DDO/ District ACFO has Operational Responsibility of District including: - All Operational activity within District - Readiness arrangements District Region & State - Recovery (Fire Investigation requests, welfare, OH&S reporting) - Respond via FireCom notification SDO/DDO/ACFO - Notifications requirements Internal and external - State Air Desk requirements
District Outside FDP	District has decoupled from SDO District Readiness Arrangements: on request District ACFO/DDO to support Operational Response via DCC Request of SAC/DSAC/SDO/RAC: Support State Readiness and Response arrangements Request of SDO due to state workload requirements (Strategic de-coupling)		SDO Responsible for Making Notifications to Internal and external parties (e.g. SAC, OH&S Duty Officer) as Required

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