



Transfer of Control to ICC

Local Knowledge

Maintaining operational continuity, local knowledge flow and appropriate CFA advocacy before, during and after Transfer of Control.

Target Group: Operational personnel, District/DCC personnel, Duty Officers, Group Officers, Brigade leadership and CFA members supporting incident management.

To ensure key operational personnel understand how to support a successful, and recorded Transfer of Control.

This includes:

- Maintaining operational continuity in field
- Maximizing CFA local knowledge to inform operational decisions
- District, Group and Brigade connections are maintained
- Clear communications plans, including, field to ICC connection
- Ensuring all parties are briefed and understand when transfer has occurred
- Maintaining visibility on committed resources and welfare
- Appropriate advocacy before, during and after transfer

Transfer of Control is the formal transfer of the incident control function from one Incident Controller to another, or from one control location or arrangement to another.

It may occur:

- From field-based to an ICC
- From one ICC-based IC to another
- From one ICC to another ICC
- From an ICC back to agency arrangements

What Transfer of Control Is Not



Transfer of Control is not always:

- A change of line of control
- A change of control agency
- A change in emergency class
- A transition to recovery
- The end of District, Group or Brigade involvement
- When shift change from one IC to another (Eg. Night Shift)
- Or permission to create a parallel control or tasking structure

Key message: The line of control may remain unchanged, but the person or location exercising incident control may change. Transfer of Control is about who is exercising incident control and from where. It is not automatically a line-of-control change.

Transferring of Control is a risk point in any incident. If it is not managed well.

It is vital that the ICC receives:

- Current operational situation/picture
- Current control objective (SMART)
- Current strategy and tactics
- Local knowledge for operational intelligence
- Resources committed, available or enroute
- Communications arrangements
- Warnings and community consequence information
- CFA fatigue, welfare and capability issues

Key message: The incident cannot pause while control transfers

District/DCC supports the transfer by ensuring the ICC has the information and connections needed to manage the incident safely and effectively.

District/DCC responsibilities include:

- Preparing the incident for transfer
- Coordinating between the field and ICC to ensure seamless transfer
- Supporting the transition of changes to the operational structure
- Capturing current objectives, strategy and risks
- Connecting local knowledge
- Confirming communications arrangements
- Maintaining Group and Brigade connection and situational awareness
- Managing CFA's interest during and post transfer

Before Transfer of Control, District/DCC should:

- Identify early when ICC-based control is likely or beneficial and which location
- Notify and consult through appropriate control and CFA agency arrangements
- Prepare the outgoing IC for handover
- Complete or support the Transfer of Control Checklist
- Identify local knowledge contributors
- Confirm current resources, requests and risks
- Identify CFA fatigue, welfare and capability issues
- Prepare Group and Brigade communication
- Gather intelligence using IMS, CAD Browser, Emap, Fireweb, radio traffic and direct dialogue with the Fireground IC

Escalation triggers: Community impact to life/assets, active fire run >1 hour, control point overwhelmed, multiple sectors/agencies, large resource commitment including aircraft, heavy logistics, significant weather event expected

Reference: SOP 08.04 Transfer of Control (CFA, Dec 2024); Transfer of Control – Points for Consideration (CFA)

During Transfer of Control



The District Duty Officer (DDO) coordinates the Transfer of Control from field-based arrangements to ICC based control, ensuring the outgoing IC is supported, and the incoming IC receives a complete operational handover.

During Transfer of Control, District/DCC should confirm:

- Outgoing Incident Controller
- Incoming Incident Controller
- Effective transfer time
- Control location
- IC intent and suppression strategies/tactics
- Current communications plan
- Resources committed and, available and enroute
- Weather and fire conditions (flame height, rate of spread)
- Current red flag warnings
- Current community warnings and advice issued
- Outstanding decisions and risks
- Who has been notified (FIRECOM, IMT, Regional Control Team)

Use SMEACS-Q format for the handover briefing

Note: Transfer must only occur to a competent and endorsed person. The transfer should be formalised and recorded.

Reference: SOP 08.04 Transfer of Control (CFA, Dec 2024)

After Transfer of Control, District/DCC does not disengage.

District/DCC should continue to:

- Maintain connection with the ICC
- Maintain communication with Groups and Brigades
- Feed local knowledge into ICC functions
- Monitor brigade availability and fatigue
- Raise CFA safety, welfare and capability risks
- Support next-shift planning
- Monitor local response coverage
- Ensure CFA concerns are raised through the correct pathways

ICC-based control can provide additional support for: community warnings, fire behaviour prediction, mapping, Incident Shift Plans, multi-agency coordination, logistics, aircraft coordination and sustained operations

Reference: Transfer of Control: Fireground to ICC (EMV Insight, July 2014); SOP 08.04 Transfer of Control (CFA, Dec 2024)

Its never not your District, and they are never not your people

Use the Transfer of Control Checklist as the primary handover tool.

The brief should cover:

- Control and contact details
- Current incident situation/picture
- Operational structure
- Communication plan
- Resources committed, available and enroute
- Community warnings
- Planning and forward look (Now/Soon/Later)
- CFA interests requiring visibility

Checklist fields include IC details, Div Comm or Ops Point, incident objective, strategy, communications, resources, warnings, assets at risk, AIMS functions, vulnerable people, critical infrastructure, logistics, incident predictions and future resource needs.

Reference: Transfer of Control Checklist handout / checklist slide

Local knowledge should be treated as a key way to gather operational intelligence.

It may include:

- Terrain, water supplies and access constraints
- Locked gates and seasonal track damage
- Bridge limits and dead-end roads
- Radio and phone black spots
- Local fire behaviour history
- Vulnerable communities
- Community concerns
- Brigade capability and fatigue
- Local response coverage
- Community infrastructure

Key message: Local knowledge must be captured regularly, validated where possible and connected into ICC decision-making.

Reference: JSOP 02.04 Local Knowledge (EMV, v5.0, July 2024)

District should help move local knowledge into the right ICC functions.

Possible pathways include:

- CFA Agency Commander
- CFA Emergency Management Liaison Officer
- CFA liaison or District representative
- Planning
- Situation
- Intelligence
- Operations
- Warnings and Public Information
- Logistics
- Local Knowledge Advisor
- Group Officer or Brigade Captain input through agreed channels

Reference: JSOP 02.04 Local Knowledge (EMV, v5.0, July 2024)

Purpose

The Local Knowledge Advisor helps the Incident Controller and Incident Management Team (IMT) understand local people, places, risks, and community issues.

The role provides advice and information to support decision-making. The role does not have command, control, or supervisory responsibilities.

Key Principles

- Local knowledge helps the IMT make safer and better decisions.
- The role provides advice, not direction.
- The role supports existing IMT functions and does not replace them.
- Local knowledge should be considered during planning, operations, and community information activities.
- Strong connections with local CFA members, community leaders, and stakeholders improve incident management.
- Local knowledge helps the IMT understand local risks, impacts, and community needs.

What the Role May Do

- Provide information about local roads, access routes, hazards, infrastructure, fuel, weather, and terrain.
- Help identify impacts on communities, vulnerable people, businesses, and critical infrastructure.
- Share knowledge of local resources, equipment, and capabilities.
- Connect the IMT with local CFA leaders, community networks, and key contacts.
- Support planning, intelligence, and public information by providing local context.
- Identify emerging local issues or risks.

Suitable People

The role is best suited to people who:

- Know the local area well.
- Have strong relationships across CFA and the community.
- Understand local risks, infrastructure, and community issues.
- Can communicate clearly and work effectively within an IMT.
- Have operational experience, or a good understanding of emergency management.

Desired Outcome: Local knowledge is built into incident management, so decision makers are better informed, community impacts are better understood, and response activities better reflect local conditions and needs.

Maintaining Group and Brigade Connection



After transfer, DDO's should ensure that Groups and Brigades need to know:

- Control has transferred
- Who the ICC based Incident Controller is and what the field-based operations structure is
- How tasking will occur
- Where situation reports go
- What communications plan applies
- Any channel or COMMS plan changes
- How local concerns are escalated
- What relief and welfare arrangements are planned
- How local knowledge should be provided

Key message: District remains a support, intelligence and connection point after control transfers.

Its never not your District, and they are never not your people

CFA advocacy means ensuring the ICC has accurate advice about CFA capability, constraints and risks.

CFA interests may include, but not limited to:

- Crew safety
- Fatigue and welfare
- Volunteer sustainability
- Brigade availability
- Appliance and Brigade coverage
- CFA infrastructure at risk
- Local access constraints
- Communications limitations
- Community relationships
- Impacts on District readiness

Note: Advocacy is not parallel control. CFA personnel provide advice, risk information and capability impacts through the correct pathway so the IC and IMT can make informed decisions.

Transfer of Control is the process to handover incident control from one locations/person/s exercising incident control to another who commences exercising incident control at a different location.

It is not automatically a line-of-control change.

District/DCC, Groups and Brigades remain critical to local knowledge, communication, welfare, capability and CFA advocacy after control transfers.

The District's role is to ensure the ICC receives:

- Current common operational picture
- Current objectives and strategy
- Local knowledge
- Resource status
- Communications arrangements
- Warnings and community consequence information
- CFA capability, welfare and fatigue issues
- Group and Brigade connection

Final message: A good Transfer of Control keeps the incident moving, keeps CFA connected and gives the ICC the local intelligence needed to make safe and effective decisions.

Transfer of Control Checklist



Incident Name: _____



Date: _____



Time: _____



ACTIONS

☐ Who is the Control Agency?	
☐ Fire Name?	
☐ Who is the Current Incident Controller?	
☐ How to contact them?	
☐ Where is the Div Comm or Ops Point?	
☐ How to contact Div Comm or Ops Point?	
☐ What is the current Incident Objective?	
☐ What is the current control strategy?	
☐ What is the likelihood of success?	
☐ Size of fire & fuel type?	
☐ Grid Ref for POO and Head Fire	
☐ Is it POO secure? Cause it known?	
☐ Has it been sectorised? Describe	
☐ What is the communications Plan?	
☐ Resources on Scene & En-route?	
☐ Aircraft & Plant (on-scene / requested)	
☐ TMP's or Road Closures?	
☐ Warnings Issued?	
☐ Assets at Risk List	



CONSIDERATIONS

Where are all AIMS Functions being managed from?	
Is the Span of Control Adequate?	
Do I have good awareness? Frequency of situation reporting?	
Is the communication plan suitable?	
Likely Impacts & Consequence Management	
Critical Infrastructure	
Vulnerable People	
Are warnings current & appropriate?	
Evacuation Planning / Relief Centres	
Community engagement & messaging	
Logistics / Catering / Consumables	
Airbase / aircraft management	
Relevant pre-incident plans / guides	
Incident Predictions	
Development of IAP / ISP	
Traffic Management Plans	
Likely resource needs for next shift(s)	
EMT needs	
SMEACS/Q Briefings (who, when, where, how, what)	

Transfer of Control Checklist



ACTIONS

- ☐ Who is the Control Agency?
- ☐ Fire Name?
- ☐ Who is the Current Incident Controller?
- ☐ How to contact them?
- ☐ Division Command Point / Operations Point?
- ☐ Where is the Div Comm or Ops Point?
- ☐ How to contact Div Comm or Ops Point?
- ☐ What is the current Incident Objective?
- ☐ What is the current control strategy?
- ☐ What is the likelihood of achieving the current objective?
- ☐ Size of fire & fuel type?
- ☐ Grid Ref for POO and Head Fire
- ☐ Is POO secure? Cause if known?
- ☐ Has it been sectorised? Describe
- ☐ What is the communications Plan?
- ☐ Resources on Scene & En-route?
- ☐ Aircraft & Plant (on-scene / requested)
- ☐ TMPs or Road Closures?
- ☐ Warnings Issued?
- ☐ Assets at Risk? List

CONSIDERATIONS

- ☐ Where are all AIMS Functions being managed from?
- ☐ Is the Span of Control Adequate?
- ☐ Do I have good situational awareness? Frequency of situation reporting?
- ☐ Is the communication plan suitable?
- ☐ Likely Impacts & Consequence Management
- ☐ Critical Infrastructure
- ☐ Vulnerable People
- ☐ Are warnings current & appropriate?
- ☐ Evacuation Planning / Relief Centres
- ☐ Community engagement & messaging
- ☐ Logistics / Catering / Consumables
- ☐ Airbase / aircraft management
- ☐ Relevant pre-incident plans / guides
- ☐ Incident Predictions
- ☐ Development of IAP / ISP
- ☐ Traffic Management Plans
- ☐ Likely resource needs for next shift(s)
- ☐ EMT needs
- ☐ Briefings (who, when, where, how, what)

Transfer of Control is a gradual process. Decision making needs to be enabled at the most appropriate level of an incident having regard to the situation at hand.

1. Does the IC/IMT understand what is happening?
2. Can they predict progression over 4-24 hours?
3. Is extreme fire behaviour or significant community impact likely over 48 hours?
4. Are warnings relevant, timely and tailored?
5. Is there a plan for the current and next work period?
6. Does the structure support prioritisation, allocation and tasking of resources?
7. Are partner agencies and stakeholders appropriately engaged?
8. Are there unresolved health, safety, welfare or morale issues?
9. Are there unresolved social, political, media or environmental matters?
10. Are media being proactively managed with an appropriate spokesperson?
11. Do resource numbers or duration require increased logistics planning?
12. Is the Incident Controller confident in their role?

Reference: Transfer of Control – Points for Consideration (CFA)

What Can You Do?



- Include regular Transfer of Control training and exercises in your Brigade/Group
- Discuss examples with people who have transferred control
- Use trigger points to identify local conditions where transfer should be considered