



VOLUNTEER TRAINING NOTE 2

The Number 5

Why

In much of the activity of Emergency Services, the relevant number to bear in mind is '5', (meaning in the range between three to seven). This is the **span of control**. This 'limit' is relevant to the capacity by most humans to effectively track activity, use time, maintain an effective working team, and keep on top of things. This is why this is such a useful measure in Emergency Management (EM) work.

Emergency Management structures

The structure and hierarchy used within all Emergency Services follows the guide of the Australasian Interservice Incident Management System™ (AIIMS™).

SAVEM is structured in this way, according to the three basic principles of AIIMS: **Functional Management, Span of Control, Management by Objective.**

SAVEM teams ideally comprise **5** persons. Where practicable headed by a veterinarian, or two veterinarians acting together, and accompanied by vet nurses and wildlife carers to build the team. Individuals are available to focus and carry out for the team each of the many diverse tasks needing to run concurrently:

- Lead
- keep written event log
- maintain radio contact at the vehicle
- achieve a coordinated search pattern
- survey an area
- call in support and recovery

and so on, while maintaining safety for all team members.

The SAVEM Jeep is set up to carry this number (**5**) with their gear and the team gear. The veterinarian controls the in-vehicle safe. The lockers provide equipment such as veterinary supplies and medications, water, hi-vis vests and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

A SAVEM Control Centre operates on the same lines as all other Emergency Services and according to AIIMS.

The five (**5**) main areas of **Functional Management** (FM) are:

Control - Planning - Operations - Logistics - Public Information

(count the number of areas of FM) ☺

AIIMS describes the colour codes for each of these respectively:

White - Yellow - Red - Blue - Brown

(These colours are used by each of the Emergency agencies and their control room: you will notice this - you are most likely to be at a CFS control room during a fire when each SAVEM team signs in and out before proceeding to the fireground).

This regular structure used by everyone not only works within the well understood limits of human cognitive and decision making capacity, but also ensures tasks are clearly demarcated within each Functional area, eliminating duplication and mismanagement of time.

Operations teams

“Ops” teams are the field teams, and their roles are described in the SAVEM Plan discussed at Level 1 Workshop.

Each team has a complement of **5** persons, ie in the range between 3 and 7.

The strengths of this number of team members are:

- the leader can be aware of the activities of the whole team
- sufficient members are available to have distinct tasks
- one can be “scribe”, recording all actions and timing in the event log
- one acts as back marker to the team, doing regular head counts
- individuals can be assigned tasks such as spotting for animals and hazards while the veterinarians focus on diagnosis and triage
- an individual can be given a remote task, such as to remain with the vehicle with its radio and resources, while spotters move across the survey area away from the stationary vehicle as base
- an individual can be dispatched without team function being disrupted, such as to be a runner to physically re-establish contact should radio or phone fail, or to guide in a recovery team
- the team’s time management is optimised with this number, operating within fatigue and alertness time limits.

Control, Planning, Logistics and Public Information Functions will be described in later modules.

