



Information Management

Acronyms:

IAP	Incident Action Plan
SAVEM	South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management
SitRep	Situation Report

Purpose

After reading these notes you will have developed knowledge of:

1. Processes for information sharing and management during an emergency response
2. The types of information management systems used by SAVEM
3. Understand how to communicate information across the response team

1. Introduction

Timely and accurate information sharing has many benefits and is critical for deciding on actions. These include:

- Supporting decision-making, planning, reporting and monitoring progress
- Supporting communication between response personnel and agencies
- Creating order which reduces frustration and stress
 - mind less cluttered
 - improved ability to focus on your tasks
 - more time for important decisions
- Information continuity and consistency
 - leave the job orderly for the next and subsequent shifts
 - gain similar benefit on your next shift
- Peace of mind
 - the system protects the person
 - leave the job to others, relax, enjoy your time off

Through this session we will explore the tools and standards used by emergency responders. Emergency service personnel will expect to receive information in a particular way and SAVEM will expect you to use these standards and processes.

2. Types and sources of Information

- Log Books
- Field notebooks
- SitRep
- Action Plans (and IAP)
- Electronic correspondence and documents
- Maps
- Invoices
- Media and other agencies (formal and informal),
- Conversations: briefings, phone calls, emails etc.

3. Standards for information management

i. Electronic files

- Always send a copy of all electronic files (this includes emails) to registry. You will be informed how to do this at each incident
- Ensure referencing is good quality so it can be filed and found effectively
- Make sure file and email subject lines make sense and follow the naming standards

ii. Principles

- **Write it down** - as much as possible, create the beginning of the trail
- **Time & date** everything
- Timely **sharing of information** with all interested parties but
- **Limit distribution** to those who need to know
- **All originals are filed** in Registry system
- Always record all exchanges that occur. This includes decisions that are made, phone calls, conversations with external parties, instructions given or received
- Record the names of personnel involved

Time and Date all records.

This is critical

iii. Business Rules

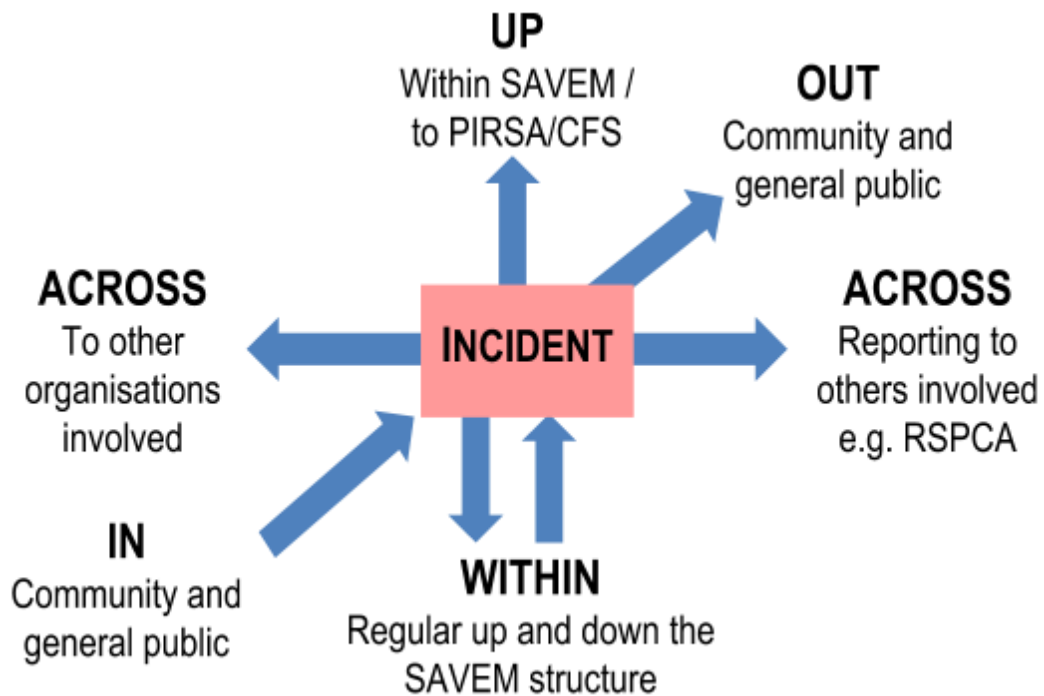
- **All** documents are original source documents
- **Every** original document must be filed at registry
- Amended documents (*a document that is a copy of an original that has been modified in **any** way*) must also be filed at registry
- Documents **cannot be removed** from the operation **without authorisation** of the registry officer

4. Information Flow

The diagram below demonstrates how information is shared during an emergency response.

What this diagram doesn't show – but needs to be remembered – is that the information shared may need to be altered to address specific audience needs because of:

- confidentiality (i.e. as a responder, we have access to large volumes of information about individual properties, those affected, impacts etc. some of which can't be shared)
- political sensitivity



I. Who needs to know

Thinking about the previous diagram to “Within SAVEM”, information is shared across a hierarchy, each time you receive information you should think about the need to share this. The questions you should ask yourself are: Who needs to know and by when?

Who	Example
FEW	Field information received, such as information about injured animals, may only need to be shared with other operations personnel initially as it could impact on what they're doing. The relevance of this information to the wider SAVEM team and the whole of the response in this instance would be overload
SOME	The Planning Officer briefs the planning team after an incident management team meeting on issues that need to be addressed by the group, and in what timeframes. This is specific for that section and would be largely irrelevant to other sections.
ALL	A command centre briefing provides broad based information such as the overall mission and objectives.

Rule of thumb for sharing information – share the information 2 levels up (i.e. commanding officer and above) and 1 level down (i.e. team members)

II. When do they need to know

The time to share information falls into three categories:

- Immediately – something critical to decision making has occurred/been learnt e.g. Unexpected change to the weather
- Scheduled – there will be set times that you are expected to report in
- Ad Hoc – you learn something that you think needs to be shared. This comes back to the analysis of not only thinking about who, but how critical is this information to others.

III. What do we share

This again is dependent on individuals analysing the information they have and passing on anything that may assist with decision-making and planning for the response.

There is no simple rule for this but if you are in any doubt always pass it on.

IV. How do we share that information

- Action Plans (including IAP)
- SitReps

- Log Books
- Messages Forms
- Task Requests
- Phone Calls
- Emails
- Visual aids e.g. Whiteboards, maps

The first two tools mentioned here are critical to sharing Information and we will go into detail on these later. It is critical that you understand action plans and SitReps

5. Situation Reports (SitReps)

What is a Sitrep?

A regular report back that is an update on activities to the relevant audience at a specific time. Activities are broken down by timings and level of response. They are always timeframed.

The purpose of situation reports is to provide accurate information to keep response personnel updated on the situations and taskings in an Area of Operation (AO). Situation Reports may be used for reporting to higher levels, informing involved agencies and as a basis for updating personnel within a centre or in the field. Additionally, it is used as a warning system to alert personnel about developments in an AO.

Situation Reports should be factual and largely without interpretation or conjecture.

When do we give a SitRep?

SitReps can occur as scheduled times or when something changes. You will be told at your briefing when scheduled SitReps (aka Sched. Calls) are expected by your commanding officer. SitReps may be written or verbal. SitReps maybe scheduled or they can be impromptu. For example if something changes that affects planned actions you should report that. You would report this as soon as possible via a SitRep as there may need to be a change to the order of activities for that shift.

'Incident SitReps' are usually issued on a regular basis and are written. SAVEM SitReps will usually be produced once per operational period (normally once daily). Typically they will be written in an email and they are intended to keep all SAVEM responders informed of what has happened throughout the day or shift.

How do we provide SitReps?

SitReps can either be written or verbal. When they are written they may simply be notes in a logbook.

There is a standard format for giving a SitRep. See Attachment A for details.

6. Action Plans and Incident Action Plans

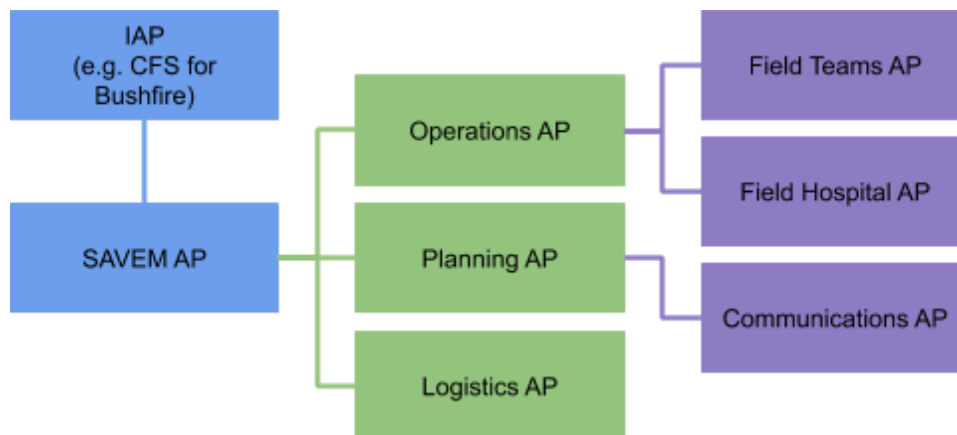
What is an Action Plan (AP)?

The Incident Action Plan (IAP) is a written **plan** that defines the **incident objectives** and reflects the tactics necessary to manage an **incident** for a specified operational period. There is only one IAP for each **incident**, and that IAP is developed at the **incident** level by the **control agency**. The IAP is developed through the **incident action planning** process.

The Action Plan (AP) is the central tool for planning during a response to an emergency incident. Action Plans focus on operational outcomes i.e. it is based on the current situation and facts. An AP will inform the group/team of what we will do in an operational period and what resources we have to do it with.

The IAP is prepared by the Planning Section with input from the appropriate sections and the Incident Management Team (IMT). After consideration of all the factors affecting an incident, an IAP is developed to communicate the objectives and manage the incident.

The Control Agency will develop an IAP. SAVEM then develops their AP. So there will be an overall AP for SAVEM but each SAVEM group/team will have their own action plan which will outline what that group/team will try to achieve. When you give a SitRep you should be reporting back against your team's AP for that shift. (See diagram below). There will be a series of cascading APs that are interrelated which provide the basis for your briefings.



The planning section is responsible for documenting the SAVEM Action Plan for each operational period.

What is the purpose of the Action Plan

The overall purpose of the AP is to effectively communicate information so that everybody understands their tasks and how they are linked to the overall aim of SAVEM activities

The **purpose** of an AP is to:

1. Define the incident objectives and strategies for that group/team and with associated timeframes i.e. what do we want to do by when?
2. Identify key risks (including environmental and community impacts) i.e. what might stop us from achieving our objectives?
3. Ensure efficient operational activities i.e. outline who is doing what and in what order
4. Utilise resources effectively i.e. what do we have to help us with our job and how are they best used (this includes people)

What do we include in an Action Plan

Action plans (APs) are developed and communicated in the SMEACS format.

SMEACS is defined below. See Attachment B for further details.

- **SITUATION**

A brief update on what has happened since the last AP was developed and likely developments over the next operational period

- **MISSION**

Outlines what we want to achieve in the next operational period.

- **EXECUTION**

How we will achieve the mission. Describes strategies and tactics, resources, groups and timings of activities

- **ADMINISTRATION**

Support for the response. Catering, supply, transport and equipment

- **COMMAND and COMMUNICATION**

Reporting relationship and times. Communication Plan – radio channels and phone numbers

- **SAFETY**

Specific hazards for that operational period

Note they are always timeframed. That is, they are relevant to a specific operational period. Once an AP has been produced for a specific operational period they are never re-issued.

How do we produce an Action Plan

The AP should be written/verbalised at the outset of the shift. Incidents vary in their complexity and size, and requirements for plans. In an initial response for an incident that is readily controlled, a written plan may not be necessary. A verbal AP may be sufficient. Larger, more complex incidents will require an AP to coordinate activities. The level of detail in an AP will also vary with the size and complexity of the incident.

An IAP and APs should be accurate, relevant, concise, complete and timely.

The plan must be prepared and distributed prior to the first briefing of the day. A plan must be prepared for each operational period. The operational period will be determined by the IMT.

Why is a SAVEM AP useful to responders?

- Gives responders the clear objectives of SAVEM and the Control Agency
- Responders validate their actions are in support of those objectives and tailor their efforts to support them.
- Shows how individuals fit in the structure of the response
- Provides a road map of operations to help individuals understand how their efforts add to the success of the overall response
- Clearly identifies tasks to be accomplished
- Provides a tool to communicate what SAVEM is doing to ensure it is properly supported
- Ensures we are using our resources efficiently
- Provides a schedule of the key actions for that operational period
- Provides information about safety and phone numbers of key personnel
- Informs partners at other levels(PIRSA, DEW, CFS) of SAVEM objectives for the next operational period and the specific resources and actions that will be applied to achieving those objectives.

In summary:

- There will only be one IAP at any one time
- There is one set of objectives for the incident articulated in the IAP
- Action Plans are always timeframed
- Action Plans should be concise and accurate
- Action Plans are the basis of briefings
- Action plans are never revised and released as different versions
- Every incident must have an AP

- SAVEM APs must be approved by the Incident Commander
- APs are designed to
 - Specify the expected outcome
 - Ensure continuity
 - Ensure effective use of resources
- AP should define the who, where, when, how and why of an incident

7. Log Books

Purpose:

Logbooks will form part of the organisation's record of an individual's duties or role. Logbooks allow us to find information on actions and decisions and help with continuity of operations through sharing knowledge and information.

Normal daily use:

1. Use the logbook to record all messages, meetings, decisions, conversations and telephone calls in and out
2. Ensure all entries are **timed, recorded sequentially**, and make clear **who** has given the information recorded.
3. Begin each entry on a new line and make sure there are no complete line gaps between entries.

Log Books Associated with an Incident

1. The logbook belongs to the role **not** an individual.
2. A logbook must exist for each position and have a unique number.
3. Record your stand down time at the end of the incident and sign the logbook.
4. Ensure all documentation including faxes and emails are safe guarded, and hand these over, with the logbook, to the person taking over your role or the Logistics Officer
5. When you changeover your position with another person, brief your successor, sign off the logbook and hand the logbook to them.
6. Ensure your successor is aware of other documentation that must be retained.

Linking SitReps and Action Plans

SitReps are a snapshot in time that outlines **what has been** achieved in the last reporting period

Action Plans look forward to **what needs to be** achieved for the next operational period

SitReps inform Action Plans

9. Attachment A SitRep Format

From Time: _____ Date: _____	To Time: _____ Date: _____
Prepared by: _____	Date: _____

1. CURRENT SITUATION (What has happened since the last SitRep?)

Brief summary of details – when, what, where, how, who

Summary of overall situation to now

Don't repeat old information, just include new / additional information

2. ACTIONS COMPLETED (What has been done since the last SitRep?)

Brief reporting of actions completed

Table format may be used for repeat actions and/or when progressive totals or similar are given e.g. location, treatment statistics, numbers of animals found

3. ACTIONS TO COMPLETE (What will be done?)

Brief reporting of scheduled/planned actions – typically for the period between this and the next SitRep

As above, table may be used for repeat actions etc.

Where the operation expects to be by the next SitRep

4. ISSUES (What are the barriers and limiting factors; both now and predicted)

Are there any barriers or limitations that you have or can foresee

Are there any potential issues or safety concerns

5. NEXT SITREP

The next SitRep will be issued at: T: _____ D: _____

Distribution:

10. Attachment B Action Plan

Operational Period: [Date & Time]

Team:

<p>1.0 SITUATION What has happened? What might happen? What are the issues?</p>	<p>Current Situation:</p>
<p>2.0 MISSION (or objectives) What do we want to achieve? Include commander intent</p>	<p>Predicted Situation:</p> <p>Current:</p> <p>Alternate: (if applicable):</p>
<p>2.0 EXECUTION General outline How are we going to do it? Prompts: Strategies & tactics; Groupings Tasks Co-ordinating instructions Prompt:: Timings, routes ,assembly areas, staging areas</p>	
<p>4.0 ADMINISTRATION What and where is the equipment and materiel to do the job</p> <p>SUPPLY: Who what where Ground support, Transport, Personnel Supplies, Fuel, Mechanics, Maintenance STAGING Facilities: Security, Waste, Cleaning Catering OHS/ Medical</p>	
<p>5.0 CONTROL & COMMUNICATIONS Control & coordination structure Structure chart relevant to group Coordination & Liaison Communications: How, when and who, what</p>	
<p>6.0 SAFETY What are the relevant issues to the group</p>	