

Overview

This standard is about responding to emergencies in a structured, coordinated, and adaptive manner. It applies to those involved in managing and supporting incidents at operational, tactical, and strategic levels across public, private, and voluntary sector organisations.

It includes demonstrating effective leadership, command, control, and coordination, ensuring a proportionate response. The standard supports responders in maintaining shared situational awareness, making decisions under uncertainty, and coordinating efforts while managing risks, consequences, and evolving needs.

The standard highlights the importance of supporting the care and welfare of responders and affected individuals and ensuring actions minimise impacts on individuals, infrastructure, the environment, and the economy. It emphasises stabilising affected systems, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes to inform decision-making and continuous improvement.

Finally, it reinforces the need to initiate recovery planning early and support a structured transition from response to recovery and business-as-usual.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. establish and maintain trust and productive relationships when working under pressure
2. operate within role and incident tier, while taking action to address critical gaps as necessary
3. demonstrate crisis leadership appropriate to role and incident tier
4. support the activation and maintenance of an appropriately scaled and structured incident management system
5. enable information flow and the creation of products that ensure shared situational awareness in dynamic and uncertain situations
6. support an operational rhythm of meetings, briefings and reporting aligned to the pace of the emergency
7. engage relevant expertise, specialists, and those with local knowledge to inform decision-making
8. anticipate, assess and monitor the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal impacts and interdependent consequences during response and recovery
9. make defensible decisions under time constraints and uncertainty
10. adapt prepared plans and arrangements, including business continuity, communication and media, and recovery plans, to develop and implement incident-specific plans
11. take early action to manage risks and minimise impacts and consequences
12. prioritise and manage resourcing and budgets in line with role responsibilities and incident requirements
13. review and adapt priorities, structures, plans and resources to meet the dynamic needs and demands of response and recovery
14. provide care and welfare support for affected individuals and responders, while managing your own well-being
15. record decisions, actions, and context in an auditable manner, ensuring compliance with legal and organisational requirements
16. coordinate activities across teams, functions, and organisations to align efforts, resolve issues, and prevent gaps or duplication
17. monitor and review the suitability, progress and impact of response actions against objectives, ensuring reporting supports decision-making

- 18. support the stabilisation of damaged assets, facilities, functions, and services
- 19. support early planning for and structured transition to recovery and business-as-usual.
- 20. engage proactively in post-incident evaluation, contributing to learning, improvement, and accountability

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. impacts of emergencies on individuals, communities, infrastructure, the environment, and organisations
2. political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors influencing emergency response contexts
3. common response and recovery priorities and intended outcomes for identified risks
4. application of emergency, continuity, and recovery plans during an incident
5. leadership approaches for crisis and incident response
6. roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of your organisation, partners, and key stakeholders in response and recovery
7. legal, ethical, and compliance considerations, including duty of care, in response and recovery
8. command, control, and coordination principles and structures and how they support cross organisational response
9. information and intelligence needs for effective decision-making in response
10. risks that have the potential for readiness and early action
11. criteria for escalating and de-escalating response levels
12. methods for assessing impacts, risks, consequences and needs
13. cultural competences for inclusive and effective engagement
14. principles and processes for challenge, review, and accountability in emergency response, including how to engage stakeholders in oversight and decision-making
15. decision-making approaches in high stakes, time constrained, dynamic and uncertain contexts
16. health, safety, and welfare considerations for responders and affected individuals during response
17. principles of resource management for effective emergency response
18. effective communication strategies to engage and inform responders, affected individuals, the public, and the media
19. technology and digital tools for emergency response
20. processes for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on response progress and impact
21. strategies for maintaining operational continuity in evolving conditions

22. record-keeping and document management for audit, accountability and learning

23. continuous improvement through debriefs, after-action reviews, and lessons implementation

Glossary

Command, Control and Coordination (C3)

Command, Control, and Coordination: A hierarchical system for managing emergencies, structured across three ascending levels—Operational, Tactical, and Strategic. This framework ensures that authority is exercised at the lowest practical level (subsidiarity), with higher-level coordination as necessary. Effective coordination extends beyond responder agencies to include voluntary and community-based organizations, leveraging their local knowledge and networks.

Operational Rhythm

The structured cycle of briefings, updates, and decision-making processes also known as battle rhythm, that maintains situational awareness and ensure response activities align with the evolving pace of an emergency.

Situational Awareness

The state of individual and collective knowledge relating to past and current events, their implications and potential future developments. The process of building situational awareness involves perception and comprehension of available information, its evaluation and future projection. Achieving a common position within groups necessitates transparency around, for example, the concepts, assumptions, language and frameworks used to build individual situational awareness.

Protocols

Defined instructions or procedures that standardise tasks and actions involving coordination between multiple entities. Protocols ensure consistency, interoperability, and effective joint working, especially during complex or emergency situations.

Links to other NOS

SFJCCAG2

SFJCCAG3

Respond to emergencies

Developed by	Skills for Justice
Version Number	3
Date Approved	31 Mar 2025
Indicative Review Date	31 Mar 2030
Validity	Current
Status	Original
Originating Organisation	Skills for Justice
Original URN	SFJCCAG1, SFJCCAG2, SFJCCAG3
Relevant Occupations	Health Professionals, Police Officers, Public Service and other Associate Professionals, Public Services, Public Services and Care, Resilience and Emergencies Professional: Fire Officer
Suite	Resilience and Emergencies
Keywords	co-operate; develop; maintain; evaluate; emergency plans; emergency; emergencies; emergency management
