

Exercise Network

VCC Protocols – Final draft

8 June 2021





Background

- These protocols are developed to guide the incident management activities conducted in a Virtual Control Centre by NBRT representatives.
- The protocols are based on the learnings identified in various virtual control centre exercises, as well as NBRT consultations with members that have participated in virtual responses.
- The purpose of the protocols is to mitigate the risks of a virtual control centre response, as well as optimise the outcomes.

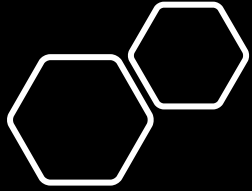
Risks

- Different safety hazards, including increased stress, fatigue, tense shoulders, back/headaches.
- Requires additional concentration to monitor screens and various areas where information is passed.
- The human connection that is made when working together in a physical control centre is disrupted
- Reduced non-verbal and social cues
- It is more difficult to get situational awareness
- Information gets missed more easily
- Version control is more complex
- Processes are different and clarity on 'how to do things' is needed





- These protocols aim to mitigate the risks identified by setting expectations of set up, adding roles and describing processes.
- These protocols should be used in conjunction with AUSVETPLAN, PLANTPLAN, Biosecurity Incident Management System and NBRT Interstate Deployment Arrangements.
- These protocols should be reviewed three-monthly to ensure they reflect the latest capabilities in MS Teams.

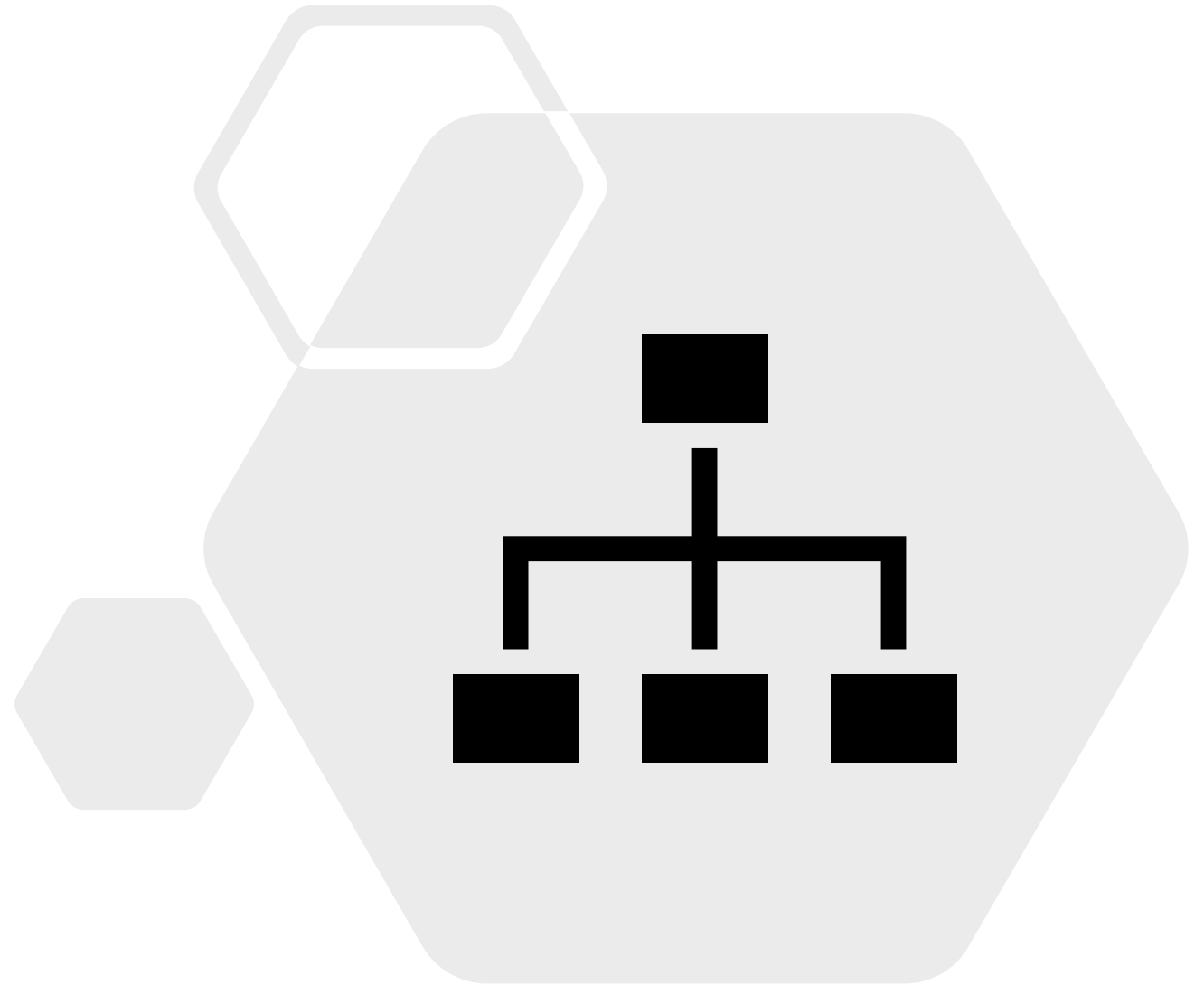


Code of conduct

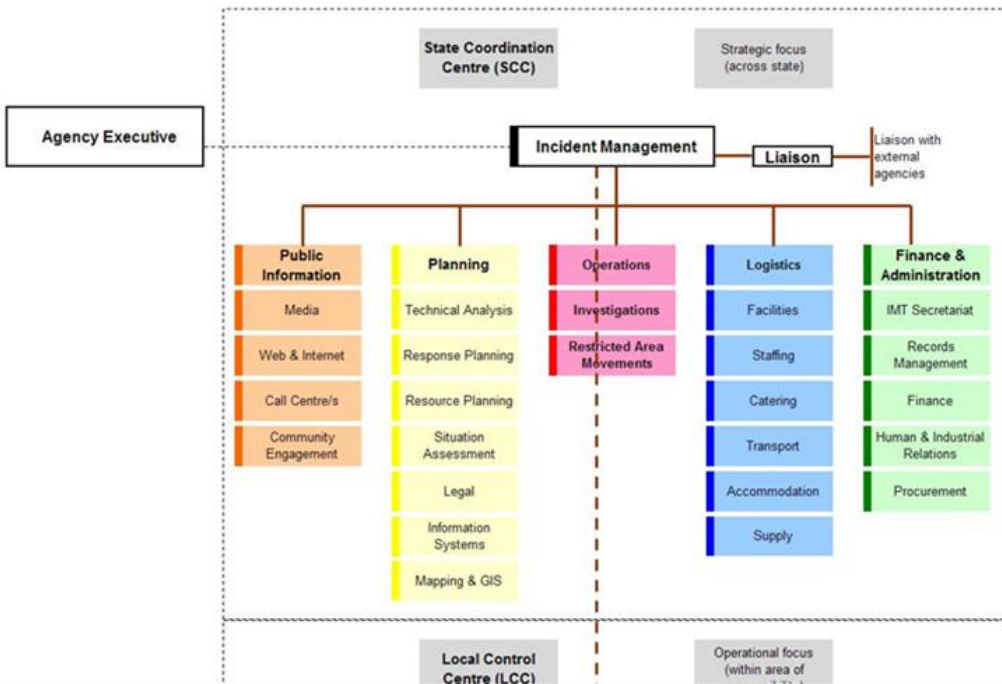
- Where bandwidth permits leave your camera on
- Maintain information security
- Notify absence/break/local disruption to your direct report
- Record all meetings
- Confirm integration requirements with jurisdictional document/information management systems
- Do not store any unapproved documents in the COP
- Do not use any aspect of the VCC for social media posts, unless specific approval is obtained

Set Up

- Provide Induction/training to all staff
 - How to navigate MS Teams – Training document
 - VCC protocols
 - Safety and technical support
- All staff to set their background in the colour of the Function
- Manage your background noise
- IC to allocate the additional roles as required



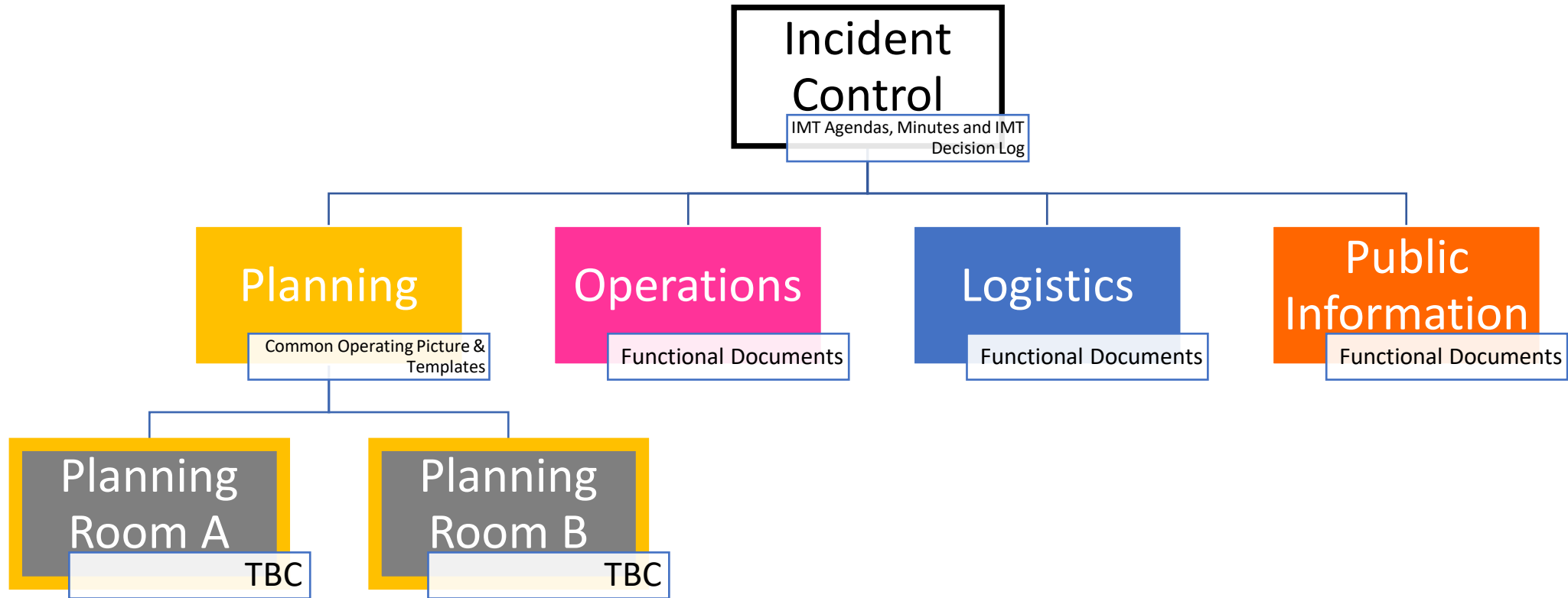
Additional roles



Function	Role	Responsibilities
Safety	Virtual Safety Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly check in with all members Conduct a safety check when a camera is switched off Facilitate the safety induction at the start of the shift Facilitate a safety debrief at the end of the shift
Planning	Information Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and maintain version control Monitor, maintain and improve Information security Ensure consent to record meetings is received from all responders and all agencies Check that information is time-stamped
All Functions	Additional responsibility for existing role	Appoint one person in each function to be responsible for monitoring information in 'chat', 'activity' and 'files' and checking in with other channels to ensure no new information is missed.
Planning	COP Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set Up and Maintain the virtual Common Operating Picture Ensure situational awareness is maintained across all Functions by regularly checking in and extracting any data that should be kept centrally. Manage use of the regulatory system used
Logistics	Technical Support Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct the MS Teams induction/training Provide Technical Support Manage the Channels and File Folders Implement technical improvement initiatives
Area to be confirmed: Logs, Executive support or Admin?	Meeting moderator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all participants receive the meeting agenda when available Ensure meetings are recorded and recordings are filed Monitor raising of hands and comments made in 'meeting chat' and ensure the meeting chair is notified

Fig. BIMS structure

VCC Structure



Note: Liaison and Finance and Admin are part of the BIMS structure and can be included when there is a need to scale up.

Incident Action Plan

STEP 1:

The IC is to select the team to work on the IAP from all the Functions and allocate them to a Planning Room.

STEP 2:

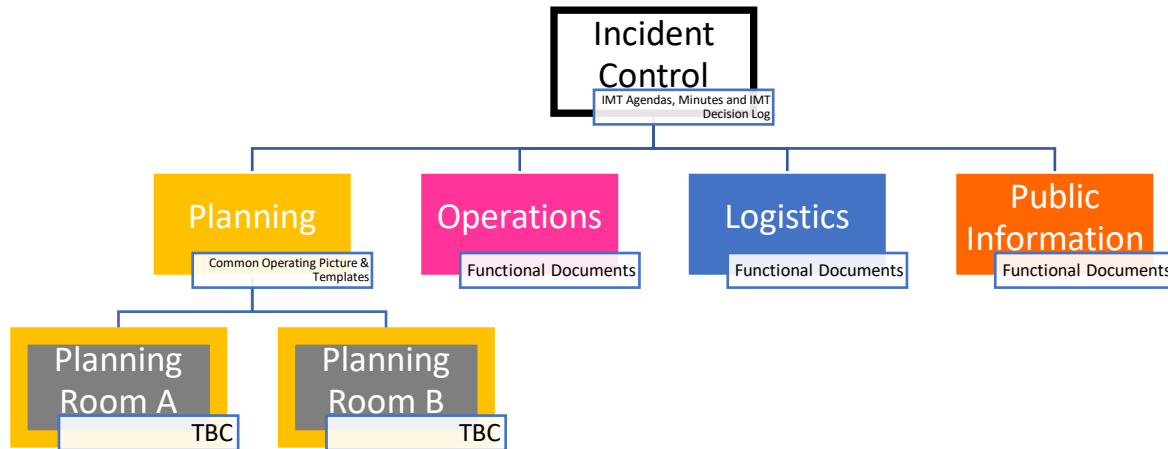
The selected staff attend the allocated Planning Room and open the Incident Action Plan template located in the 'Files' section of Planning.

STEP 3:

The team is to complete the IAP and once completed and approved by the Planning Manager move it to the 'for approval' folder in the Incident Control Channel. The Planning Manager is to send an @message to the IC that the IAP is ready for approval

Step 4:

The IC is to review the IAP and once approved relocate to the folder COP in Planning and issue a broadcast to inform all that the updated IAP is available.



Sitrep

STEP 1:

The IC is to select the team to work on the Sitrep from all the Functions and allocate them to a Planning Room.

STEP 2:

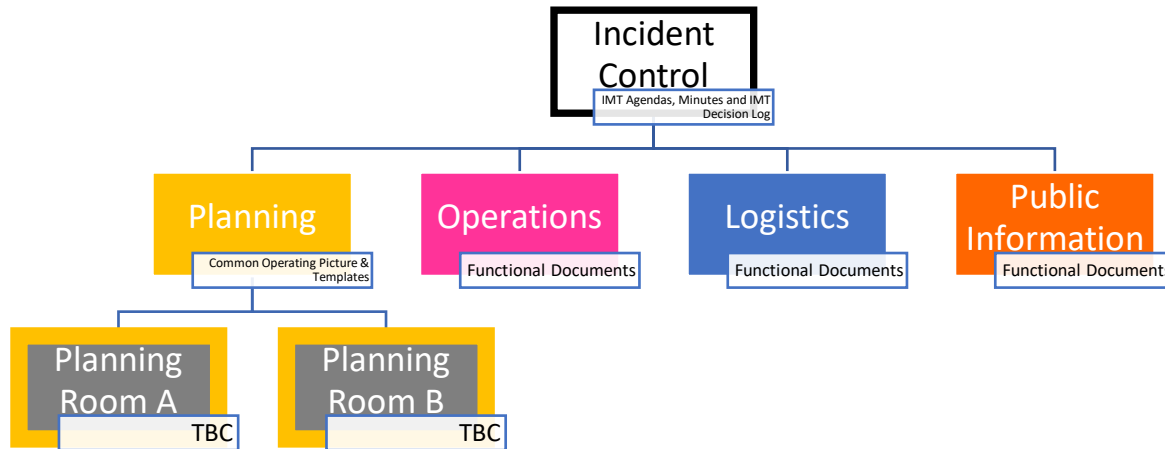
The selected staff attend the allocated Planning Room and open the Sitrep template located in the 'Files' section of Planning.

STEP 3:

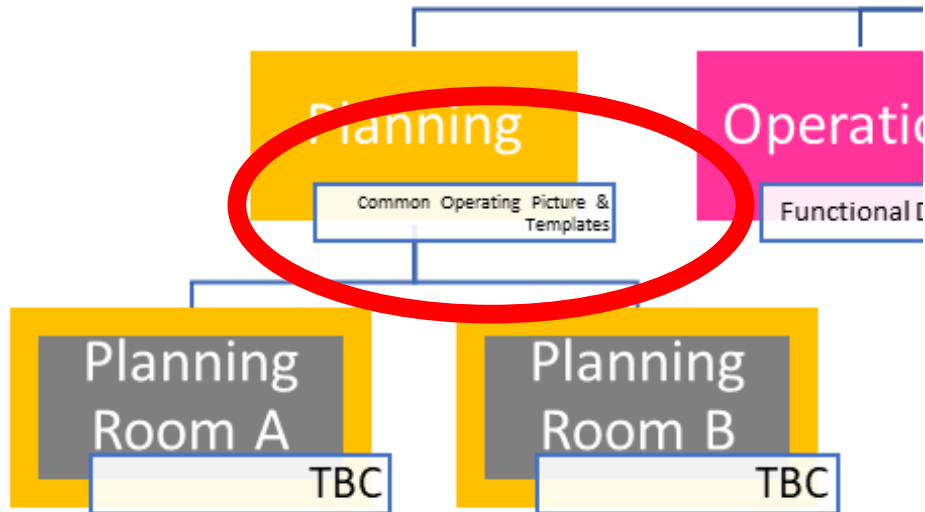
The team is to complete the Sitrep and once completed and approved by the Planning Manager to move it to the 'for approval' folder in the Incident Control Channel. The Planning Manager is to send an @message to the IC that the Sitrep is ready for approval

Step 4:

The IC is to review the Sitrep and once approved relocate to the folder COP in Planning and issue a broadcast to inform all that the updated Sitrep is available.



Common Operating Picture



STEP:

The COP Officer from Planning is to collect and collate the verified and approved information for the COP and insert it into the COP folder.

The COP Officer is to regularly check that all information in the COP is verified, approved and up-to-date (most recent version).

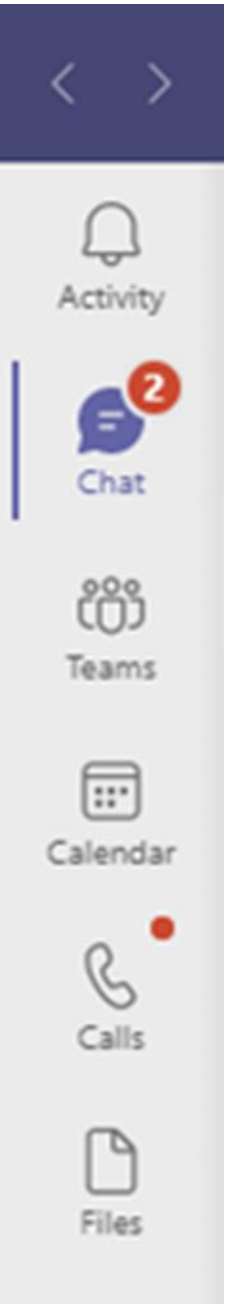
Situation	Direction	Coordination
Description of the event. Overview of impacts through registers, lists, graphs, maps. Consider: Sitrep and Intel Report	Daily Schedule Mission, Objectives and Strategies (can be included in the latest Incident Action Plan) Event specific response procedure if available.	Org structure for the VCC and relevant contacts Multi agency coordination structure and contacts Consider: Org structure for that shift Communication Plan Roster

Information monitoring

Each Person is responsible for monitoring the various areas where information is passed. One person per Function per shift must be specifically allocated to confirm every 15 minutes that no information has been missed. Areas that should be monitored are:

- Chat
- Activity
- @message
- COP

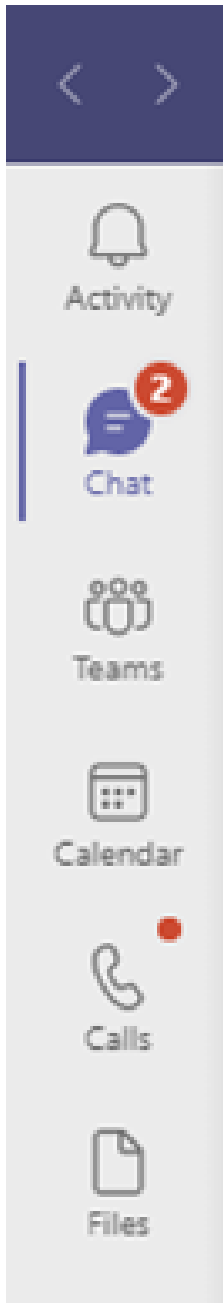
When detecting information that has been missed immediately inform your team and confirm with the IC that the information is known.

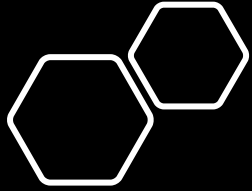


Communication options in Teams

- *Chat* – In Microsoft Teams you can send a message to one or more people using chat. The message can contain text, images, GIFs, a recorded voice message, a video clip – pretty much any type of media. The chat message is exclusive to the people in that chat.
- *Channel posts* – The other way to send a message is to write it in a channel post. It can be used for group communication in the Function.
- *The @mention* is the universal way to get someone's attention in Teams. You should use an @mention in a channel post every time you want to make sure the receiver is made aware that there is a message for them. The @message is mandatory to relay new important or 'hot' information.
- *Banner* – This is the little pop-up window that appears on the screen of your computer. This is the most noticeable (and disruptive) way to be notified.
- *Feed* – This is the list of activities that you can see by clicking "Activity" in the top left corner in Teams.
- *Email* – This is an email sent by Teams to your inbox informing you about the activity in Teams. An email can be sent directly to a channel post. *Email out of scope for this exercise.*

Note: The phone is always a good alternative too.





New important information

Communicating new information that is critical to the response is different in a virtual control centre. The two recommended methods are:

- @message to all
- 'Heads Up' meeting in the Incident Management Channel

Set your status

- *Available* – This is your green status, where you show others that you are online and available for calls, chats and so on.
- *Busy* – This is your red status which indicates to others that you are busy with something – either you have something booked in your calendar, or you are in a meeting or call. Even when your presence is set to Busy, you will receive pop-up notifications or so-called banners on your screen. You don't have to change the presence status to busy yourself, Teams will automatically do it for you if you have something scheduled in your calendar, or if you are in a meeting or a call.
- *Be right back* – This is your orange status which shows to others that you are not available at the moment but that you will be soon. This status is only set by you manually.
- *Away /Appear away* – This is another version of orange status which just shows you are away (without communicating that you will be right back). This status is set automatically by Teams if you haven't used your computer for ten minutes or more. You can also set this manually by selecting the "Appear away" status. This might be useful if you don't want to show others that you can't respond right away but you still want to get pop-up notifications.
- **NOT RECOMMENDED FOR USE IN INCIDENT MANAGEMENT:** Do not disturb – This is your "Do not enter" status, which indicates that you don't want to be interrupted. When your status is set to "Do not disturb" you don't get pop-up notifications at all – instead they are reverted to your activity feed. You should use this status when you want to focus and not be interrupted, or if you are presenting your screen and you don't want others to see pop-ups on your screen.



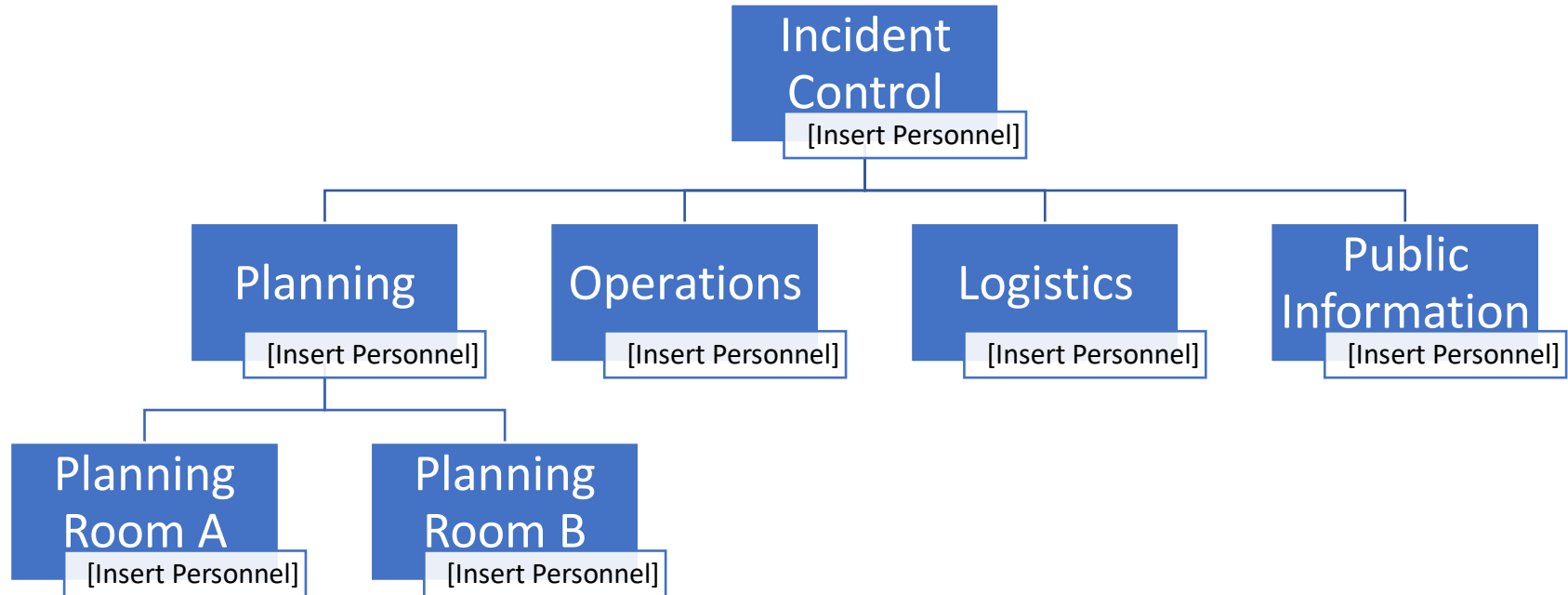
Safety management

- Take a regular exercise break
- Maintain access to water and food
- Function Leads to remind teams to regularly walk around and eat/drink.
- Check in on each other regularly
- Do debriefs after every shift and ensure safety and wellbeing is a separate agenda item

Business continuity

What to do if MS Teams is not working..

VCC Staffing



The Function Manager is responsible for managing their Channel.