



AFP
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

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AFP Investigation Practice Standard

Tactical Planning

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PUBLISHED PURSUANT TO THE

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
(COMMONWEALTH)

INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME (IPS)

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FOREWORD:

This standard has been developed by the Investigation Standards and Practices portfolio, drawing on the experience of a diverse group of Detectives. This instrument has been endorsed by the Commissioner as the AFP standard for tactical planning.

The purpose of this standard is to describe and define the requirements for tactical planning within an investigation, establishing national consistency in practices. This standard provides the essential components of the tactical planning process which either **must** or **should** be undertaken.

If a component **must** be undertaken, the activity is required due to the severity of consequence associated with not undertaking or as a result of judicial expectations and is conducted in line with relevant legislation and governance. Deviation from this is a critical decision that needs to be fully examined, explained and recorded.

If a component **should** be undertaken, the activity is regarded as the recommended course of practice. Deviation from this is a decision and should be recorded.

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INTRODUCTION:

Tactical planning is a cognitive process, not just a document. Tactical planning is a continuous and scalable appreciation process to prepare for investigation-related operational activity. The purpose is to choose the most appropriate course of action and establish a clear understanding of specific activities for all users.

Operational environments are inherently dynamic in nature. Having the opportunity to plan for operational activity will reduce the uncertainty but never completely negate it. Planning assists to evaluate and assess options to inform decision making and produce a plan for proposed actions.

Tactical planning provides a methodical way to think through proposed actions, engage with stakeholders, determine required capabilities and establish a framework for roles and responsibilities.

The result of the tactical planning process is a relevant and concise plan for the undertaking of intended actions, communicating the desired outcome and associated risks.

SCOPE:

The intent of this standard is to describe and define investigational tactical planning, however this standard may assist any member undertaking a tactical planning process.

Tactical planning consists of the application of an investigative mindset to a decision making process, formulating steps in order to achieve an outcome. It can be undertaken by an individual or in consultation and/or collaboration with others.

The process of tactical planning is scalable and may be completed by way of a cognitive or documented appreciation process.

The scale, time, complexity and level of risk associated with the intended activity will prescribe the most suitable person, both to undertake the planning and to review the plan.

DEFINITIONS:

Recorded	Includes written, electronic, radio communications.
Must	An activity that is required due to the severity of consequence associated with not undertaking or as a result of judicial expectations and is conducted in line with relevant legislation and governance. Deviation from this is a critical decision that needs to be fully examined, explained and recorded.

Should	An activity that is regarded as the recommended course of practice. Deviation from this is a decision and should be recorded.
Appreciation process	A logical and systematic process through which a workable plan can be prepared in response to an operational issue or contribute towards an operational goal/outcome.
Predictive risk assessment	An assessment to ascertain whether a risk arising out of a workplace hazard is acceptable or requires further controls to reduce it to an acceptable level.
Dynamic risk assessment	A process of risk assessment being carried out in a changing environment, where what is being assessed is developing as the process itself is being undertaken.

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES:

Tactical planning fundamentally follows the appreciation process.

The appreciation process involves the application of a disciplined & logical method of reasoning, the object of which is to determine the best course of action to adopt in any given circumstance(s).

A mental appreciation is a cognitive process resulting in an executable plan which is not documented prior to the activity. A mental appreciation can be used for operational activity with low complexity or where speed in decision and action is essential.

A written appreciation is a documented approach resulting in a written plan prior to undertaking the activity. A written appreciation is for planning complex operational activity or where time permits.

Tactical planning consists of phases which follow a linear progression but flexible movement between phases may occur as circumstances dictate. Requirements for each of the phases are detailed in the following section.

The phases are;

1. Define the purpose
2. Understand the situation
3. Identify available actions
4. Propose actions
5. Implement plan
 - a. Record the plan
 - b. Communicate the plan

Risk and review are continual considerations throughout the tactical planning process.

Risk

The Investigations Doctrine states that: *Risk is inherent in all investigations. Calculated risk management is an essential part of the investigative mindset. In taking calculated risks, good investigators apply their judgement, experience and professionalism to make decisions that are justifiable and withstand scrutiny.*

Risk management is an integral part of all organisational processes and is dynamic, iterative and responsive to change. Risk management is part of decision making, it helps make informed choices, prioritise actions and distinguish between alternative courses of action. Risk directly related to investigations is articulated in the [Investigation Doctrine](#).

The AFP has an endorsed [risk framework](#). This conceptual framework **must** be utilised in the assessment and treatment of risk. The AFP risk management policy states that 'appointees must assess and manage risk in the planning, decision-making and conduct of all AFP business activities and operations'.

Risk can never be entirely eliminated from operational activity, however effective risk management can minimise and mitigate risks.

Risk assessment in tactical planning is specific to planned activities and consists of predictive and/or dynamic risk assessments. Broader investigation risk assessments are a component of investigation planning.

Predictive risk assessment

Predictive risk assessments are a tool to aid decision making and determine the suitable application of resources, training and equipment to specific circumstances.

Predictive risk assessments need to be presented in a systematic, logical and coherent manner. They should be balanced and proportionate to the risk, in terms of the level of detail against the type of operation and profile of risk.

The aim is to clearly articulate goals and parameters to guide those undertaking activity and inform decision making in the field.

Predictive assessments are completed prior to the commencement of the activity, without time pressure allowing careful consideration of potential consequences. The purpose of a predictive risk assessment is to identify and assess foreseeable risks.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessment is the continuous assessment of risk in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident/situation. It is a process of intuitive decision making, enabling investigators to carry out contemporaneous assessments of hazards and implement control measures to ensure an appropriate level of safety.

Dynamic risk assessments are used when time constraints restrict the use of predictive risk assessments and/or in dynamic situations. Prior planning and existing predictive risk assessments can be complemented by dynamic risk assessments when an unforeseen change to an operational situation occurs.

Dynamic risk assessments are generally not recorded at the time of completion, although it is strongly recommended that they are recorded post-event.

Decisions arising from dynamic risk assessments **must** be recorded, verbally or written, during incident response or as soon as practicable after the fact.

Decisions

Throughout the planning process, decisions will be made and should be recorded. The decision of action(s) to be undertaken is a significant milestone during the tactical planning process; as such this critical decision must be recorded.

Risk assessment and decision recording are critical aspects of tactical planning. These aspects of investigative activity are significant in achieving outcomes and are most likely to be scrutinised externally, such as through courts or inquests, often a considerable time after the activity has occurred.

Review

Review is an essential and ongoing aspect of investigative mindset and encourages an objective approach and critical thinking. Due to inherent uncertainty in the operational environment, the understanding of available information and decisions made **must** be continually reviewed throughout the process of tactical planning.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Define the purpose

In order to adequately plan for operational activity, the purpose **must** be defined and the desired outcome identified.

The member **must** ensure;

- The purpose is clear, concise, practical and attainable.
- The purpose **must** align to investigation strategies and critical objectives particularly where they are articulated in an investigation plan.

2. Understand the situation

In order for tactical planning to occur, information or an incident requiring some activity **must** exist.

Tactical planning **must** be based on an accurate understanding of all the factors and conditions that exist at the time; in the operational environment relevant to proposed operational activity and achieving the desired outcome.

The member **must** understand the operational environment:

- Information **must** be identified, gathered and prioritised to ensure effective and efficient operational activity.
- Information **must** be examined as it is received and an assessment made of the impact on proposed activities.
- Information **should** be evaluated (without bias) for accuracy and relevance.
- Information **must** be understood, contextualised and interpreted.
- Information sources **should** be assessed and validated.
- Knowledge gaps **must** be identified and any assumptions made should be recognised.

3. Identify available actions

Planning **must** identify and evaluate potential courses of action and decide on the best course of action to achieve the desired outcome.

- The member **must** evaluate available courses of actions;
 - Potential outcomes and consequences **must** be analysed.
 - The dimensions of the action (risk, time, scale, complexity) and the reasonableness, proportionality and necessity in line with the intended outcome **must** be evaluated.
 - Required resources **should** be identified and assessed against cost, availability, alternatives and restrictions.
 - Sound, impartial and unbiased reasoning **must** be applied in order to decide on the best course of action.
- The member **must** decide on the best course of action. The decision on actions to be undertaken **must** be recorded.

At this point, the planning process moves from the identification and assessment of options to the preparation and implementation of actions.

4. Propose actions

Once the best course of action is identified, an assessment **must** be made of the anticipated environment identifying likely realistic developments and contingencies.

The member **must** plan for the decided actions relevant to:

- **Risk**
 - Risk directly associated with the intended actions **must** be identified, analysed, evaluated and if necessary, treated.
 - Risk associated with foreseeable outcomes and consequences of the intended actions **must** be identified.
 - **Time**
 - The time available and the time required to achieve outcomes **must** be identified to ensure appropriate resources and optimise sequencing and achievement of outcomes.
 - Time constraints **must** be identified to mitigate any risk of personal safety.
 - Time constraints **must** be identified to mitigate the loss or destruction of evidence and maximise admissibility.
 - **Scale**
 - The scale of the actions **must** be identified to mitigate possible loss of evidence.
 - The geographical/physical size of actions **must** be identified to ensure the availability of adequate resources, appropriately skilled personal and access to any specialised equipment required.
 - **Complexity**
 - Risk, time and scale as outlined above inform the complexity of the proposed actions. Unique aspects of the intended activity **must** be identified, recognising that increasing complexity requires more detailed planning.
 - **Capability**
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FACTORS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE
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- Geographical isolation leading to potential resourcing issues.
 - Legal requirements in respective jurisdictions including judicial expectations.
 - Public and media interest in proposed actions.

- Planning **must** identify and ensure sufficient resources are available to complete proposed actions.
- If sufficient resources are not available you **must** develop contingencies and/or reassess the viability of continuing with the intended actions.
- Planning **must** source and allocate required resources.
- If support services or external agency capabilities are to be utilised, they **must** be suitably engaged, via the consultancy or integrated model. Investigators are not responsible for planning support service actions but **should** incorporate foreseeable requirements for support service actions.
- Consideration **should** be given to notifying support services that may not be directly required for the proposed actions, but which may become involved in the event of any identified contingencies.
- The member **must** reference powers anticipated to be required during the action in order to prevent the conduct of any unlawful activity and/or minimise the loss of evidence.
- **Command/control/communication**
The member **must** develop a command/control/communications framework which is proportionate to the proposed actions.
 - A command structure **must** be established and communicated providing a framework for communication and accountability of decisions.
 - Tasks **must** be prioritised and allocated, ensuring roles and responsibilities are understood. In the allocation of tasks to members, experience, skill level, powers, jurisdiction, and specific resources **should** be considered.
 - Risk **must** be communicated to those tasked with actions.
 - Communication channels **must** be established and contact details outlined to ensure that ongoing communication can be maintained during the conduct of activity.

5. Implement the plan

Those responsible for planning **must** be able to adapt to changes that are likely during implementation by considering the current and predicted environments and adapting the plan accordingly.

The member **must** review decisions to ensure continued relevance and validity. The plan **should** be amended as required to reflect the outcome of decision review.

Record the plan

The recording of a plan is not intended to capture the entire appreciation process, rather the output of the process which is a record of the decisions arising and a plan for the

undertaking of actions. The plan can then be communicated verbally or documented as appropriate.

Communicate the plan

Communication of a plan **must** be reasonable and proportionate to risk, scale, time, complexity and capability of the proposed actions. A plan **must** be communicated, either verbally or in writing.

Verbal communication of the plan to relevant members **must** be provided in a briefing prior to any activity. The purpose is to provide a thorough understanding and appreciation of the operational environment that will lead to the successful execution of planned actions.

A briefing **should** convey the following details;

- Why the activity is being conducted
- What the desired outcome is
- Actions to be completed and associated risks
- Contingencies
- Police powers expected to be utilised
- Allocation of resources
- Roles and responsibilities
- The command structure
- Supporting arrangements

The purpose of a written plan is to provide an executable plan focused on achieving the intended outcome and describing all actions relating to that end. Written plans **should** be concise, accurate, timely, structured and flexible.

The form of the written plan is dependent on the risk, scale, time, complexity and capability of the proposed actions and **must** be reasonable and proportionate.

A written plan **should** clearly outline;

- Current situation
- Purpose of activity
- Proposed actions
 - Risk associated and any risk treatments required
 - Allocation of resources
 - Roles and responsibilities
- Contingencies
- Command/control/communication arrangements
- Supporting arrangements

UNCLASSIFIED

The Tactical Planning Assessment (TPA) is a mechanism to assist the appreciation process, providing a structured consideration of risk associated with proposed actions and threats presented by persons of interest. The TPA also serves as a written plan for the proposed operational activity.

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