# Guide to developing an Information Security Incident Management Framework (ISIMF)

## Version V2.0

This guide has been developed to assist organisations in addressing Standard 6 of the Victorian Protective Data Security Standards (**VPDSS**).

It’s important to note, that the Information Security Incident Management Framework (**ISIMF**) attributes represented in this guide provide a comprehensive approach to information security incident management, with the expectation that organisations build their own business processes around some of the controls presented below.

Given the wide variety and nature of organisations operating across the Victorian Public Sector (**VPS**), OVIC recognises that governance arrangements can take many forms. As such, organisations should contextualise the ISIMF attributes relative to their size, resources and risk posture.

| **Phase** | | | **Activity** | | **Objective** | **Controls** | | | **Examples/Output** |
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| **A** | **Plan and Prepare** | Organising an effective information security incident management capability requires planning and preparation | A.1 | Definitions | To clearly define the organisational context for an information security event and incident | A.1.1 | Events and incidents | Define and articulate the differences between information security events and incidents | A definition with examples of what constitutes an event and an incident |
| A.1.2 | Thresholds | Define the thresholds for when an information security event becomes an incident | Criteria defining when an event becomes an incident |
| A.1.3 | Categorisation | Define the criteria to categorise information security incidents | Criteria defining the categories for information security incidents |
| A.2 | Requirements | To understand and define the organisational context and requirements | A.2.1 | Obligations register | Register the organisation’s regulatory, legal and administrative obligations | List of all obligations |
| A.2.2 | Third party requirements | Register any contractual requirements and other agreements | List of approved arrangements with third parties to contact/ utilise to manage an incident (e.g. contracts with incident responders/ forensic services, assistance services from other agencies such as Vic Gov CIRS) |
| A.3 | Policy | To state the organisational intent, objective and to provide direction for the effective implementation of an ISIMF | A.3.1 | Policy statement of management commitment | Commitment to the Information Security Incident Management Framework by senior management | Executive sponsorship and buy-in for the establishment of an ISIMF  Embedding policy across the organisation  Management endorsement on policy (e.g. meeting minutes)  Staff communications from senior management in relation to policy |
| A.3.2 | Policy direction and objective | Articulate the purpose and the objectives of the policy | An artefact stating the purpose and objectives |
| A.3.3 | Ownership | Assign the owner for policy | An artefact stating the owner of the policy |
| A.3.4 | Communication | Communicate the policy to all relevant internal and external parties | Specific communications/ messages/ statements/ announcements to internal and external parties about policy |
| A.3.5 | Interdependencies | Document the relationships and dependencies to other policies and procedures | An artefact showing the relationships/ linkages and updates to other related policies to include reference to the ISIMF (e.g. Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery procedures). |
| A.3.6 | Risk alignment | Document the links to the organisational risk management framework | Evidence that the ISIMF has been integrated with the organisational risk management framework |
| A.4 | Implementation plan | To provide the resources and a roadmap for the implementation of the ISIMF | A.4.1 | Roadmap | A roadmap for maturing the incident management capability | An artefact showing the planned activities over time to mature the capability |
| A.4.2 | Performance measures | Define performance measures and monitor the effectiveness of the ISIMF against these | An artefact defining the performance measures and evidence of actual data collection and response to collected data |
| A.4.3 | Executive approval | Executive approval of the plan | Meeting minutes or any other evidence showing direct (not implicit) approval of implementation plan |
| A.5 | Internal processes, procedures and planning | To support the policy objectives | A.5.1 | Internal documentation | Document the supporting processes, procedures and incident management plan that specify the baseline of what must be done | Artefacts detailing how to achieve the policy objectives |
| A.5.2 | Coverage | Internal documentation supports the activities of all the information security incident management phases | An artefact defining and supporting all the information security incident management phases (i.e. plan and prepare, detect and report, assess and decide, respond, lessons learnt)  Processes address coverage across the organisation |
| A.5.3 | Roles and responsibilities | Assign the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders of the processes, procedures, and the incident management plan | Evidence of ‘RACI model’ assigning who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed throughout the incident management processes, procedures and incident management plan including documentation governance (i.e. drafting, approvals and reviews) |
| A.5.4 | Prioritisation | Define how to prioritise specific information security incident categories and the processes to support the consistent application of these categories | An artefact articulating how incidents are prioritised |
| A.5.6 | Communication | Define how and when to communicate with internal and external parties (e.g. oversight bodies, regulators, media, service providers, and other organisations) | An artefact detailing communication protocols showing who can say what and when |
| A.5.7 | Testing | Regularly test the incident management plan | Evidence of testing (e.g. calendar invites, test plan, outcomes of exercises) |
| A.6 | Resources | To provide the required tools throughout the information security incident management phases | A.6.1 | Templates | Develop templates | Templates such as notification forms, post incident reports, etc. |
| A.6.2 | Toolkits | Identify the required tools to manage the incident (e.g. facilities, systems, and people) | Evidence of tools to support the information security incident management processes |
| A.6.3 | Contact lists | Compilation of contact lists of all relevant internal and external stakeholders | Contact lists showing details of every key stakeholder and secondary contact allowing 24/7 access to personnel/ services |
| A.7 | Roles and responsibilities | To ensure that all internal and external parties understand their roles and responsibilities | A.7.1 | Team model | Define the information security incident management team model (e.g. centralised or distributed) addressing both oversight/ management and response | Details of the information security incident management team model(s), including security incident management and response |
| A.7.2 | Roles and functions | Define the role and function of each participant taking into account both internal and external parties | An artefact defining the role and function (e.g. RACI model of internal and external stakeholders including law enforcement, regulators, and other third parties) |
| A.7.3 | Authority | Define the authorities for decision making | An artefact stating the authority for decision making for any financial, reputational, operational, legal and regulatory implications |
| A.7.4 | Consumers | Define the needs of consumers in the context of incident management | An artefact showing the information/ data needs for consumers/ customers during an information security incident (including both suppliers and recipients) |
| A.7.5 | Dependencies | Define the dependencies on services and resources both within and beyond the organisation (e.g. legal, IT support, regulatory, and facilities) | An artefact showing the dependencies on and by other parties/ services |
| A.8 | Skills, training and awareness | To ensure that all relevant parties are aware, well prepared and skilled in information security incident management | A.8.1 | Skills and competencies | Select stakeholders with suitable skills, matching their roles and responsibilities in the ISIMF and bring a cross-section of business knowledge to the team | Composition of the security incident management team reflects key workgroups across the organisation (e.g. corporate communications, HR, finance, facilities, executives, records management, and ICT)  Staff have completed relevant security incident training |
| A.8.2 | Training | Document a training plan addressing the ongoing training needs of the information security incident management team(s) | A training plan detailing the actions, activities and focus areas of those involved in information security incident management |
| A.8.3 | Awareness | Define and implement an information security incident awareness program ensuring all internal and external stakeholders are aware of the ISMF | Evidence of communications to internal and external stakeholders  Spot-check of staff awareness of the ISMF |
| **B** | **Detect and Report** | The capability to identify security events | B.1 | Threat intelligence | To proactively detect and report any threats and vulnerabilities | B.1.1 | Threat analysis | Perform external/ internal threat analysis to establish an understanding of the threat environment and in turn detect changes | Evidence of threat analysis (e.g. threat reports, and threat & risk workshops) |
| B.1.2 | Frequency | Perform frequent threat analysis where the frequency is defined by the business based on the organisational context as well as the criteria for unscheduled analysis activities | An artefact detailing the frequency of threat analysis including criteria for unscheduled reviews based on changes to the threat environment |
| B.1.3 | Quality/ reliability | Determine and include the reliability and quality of the information being analysed of the threat assessments | Threat report includes a quality/ reliability statement of the threat intelligence |
| B.2 | Vulnerability analysis / attack vectors | To ensure vulnerabilities and attack vectors are understood in the context of existing and potential threats | B.2.1 | Vulnerability scans | Perform regular analysis for vulnerabilities and attack vectors, based on the existing and potential threats | Vulnerability assessment reports |
| B.3 | Security monitoring | To provide timely detection of events and information security incidents | B.3.1 | Indicators | Define information security incident indicators and precursors | An artefact stating the precursors and information security incident indicators |
| B.3.2 | Event monitoring | Monitor and assess events utilising the defined indicators and precursors | Evidence that events are monitored/ assessed using the defined indicators/ precursors |
| B.3.3 | Testing | Test any new defined information security incident indicators or precursors against the existing security events | Evidence that retrospective review of security events was performed when information security incident indicators or precursors have changed |
| B.3.4 | Alerting | Document the alert thresholds for information security events (both automated and through user reporting) | A system which could include an automated tool that has a built in alert function  Significant changes to a ‘factor area’ for a security clearance holder |
| **C** | **Assess and Decide** | The capability to assess information security events, decide on whether they are information security incidents and perform analysis activities | C.1 | Triage | To assess information security events and when deemed an incident, determine how to best manage them | C.1.1 | An event is declared as an incident | Assessments are undertaken to determine whether to categorise an event as an information security incident | Internal report or briefing |
| C.1.2 | Process | Consider the characteristics of the information security incident and follow pre-defined response and management processes | Evidence of following the process |
| C.1.3 | Timeliness | Assess information security incidents in a timely manner (ensuring 24/7 response where required) | Process review showing that reported information security incidents are assessed and addressed within a reasonable timeframe |
| C.1.4 | Parameters/ scope | Establish a terms of reference for the information security incident including response parameters (where required) | Terms of reference artefact for a particular information security incident |
| C.1.5 | Register | Record all reported information security incidents | A register showing recorded incidents and accompanying assessment outcomes |
| C.1.6 | Prioritisation | Prioritise all information security incidents according to relevant internal documentation | A record of the priority assessment is captured in the information security incident register |
| C.1.7 | Categorisation | Categorise all recorded information security incidents | A record of the category is captured in the information security incident register |
| C.1.8 | Asset owners | Identify asset owners during the triage assessment (if applicable) | A record of the asset owner(s) is captured |
| C.2 | Analysis | To analyse information security incidents as information becomes available | C.2.1 | Subject Matter Expert (**SME**) engagement | Engage suitable SMEs from relevant areas and bring these SMEs into the information security incident response process | An artefact showing how SMEs are engaged |
| C.2.2 | Business impacts | Business impacts resulting from the information security incident are assessed | An artefact showing that business impacts are assessed |
| C.2.3 | Ongoing analysis | As additional information becomes available, the original assessment is re-considered to identify whether the information security incident needs to be re-prioritised or response activities adjusted | Evidence from past incidents showing risks considerations of new information (e.g. risk assessments throughout the incident lifecycle)  Requests for information to support analysis |
| C.2.4 | Process | Follow pre-defined communication protocols according to the information security incident characteristics | Evidence that information flows are controlled and pre-defined (who can talk to whom and when) during the response phase |
| **D** | **Respond** | The capability to respond to information security incidents | D.1 | Investigation decision and handover | To ensure appropriate incident response activities | D.1.1 | Investigation handover | Determine whether the incident needs specific investigation response and where required, handover to the appropriate authorities to undertake their duties | Referrals to law enforcement  Decisions to change an administrative incident to criminal incident |
| D.2 | Containment | To prevent further damage from the information security incident in a controlled fashion | D.2.1 | Containment strategies | Follow pre-defined containment strategies set out under internal processes | Evidence that documented containment strategies have been followed (e.g. wipe and restore, and monitor and observe)  Evidence that consideration has been given to the broader information security issues such as forensics, personnel security, disaster recovery, business continuity management, etc. |
| D.2.2 | Authority | Follow pre-defined decision authorities for the containment of the information security incident | Evidence that the documented decision authorities for the containment strategy have been followed |
| D.3 | Gather evidence | To provide assurance of no tampering with evidence | D.3.1 | Evidence collection | Gather, record and maintain a chain of custody of evidence related to the incident | Log/ activity book  Tagged and sealed artefacts |
| D.4 | Eradicate | To address issues leading to the information security incident | D.4.1 | Controls | Define a process and implement supporting controls to rectify any issues and control(s) that failed to prevent the information security incident | Implementing and mitigating control(s) |
| D.4.2 | Scope of rectification | Rectification has considered areas that are not impacted but rely on the same controls | A process showing that after control failures, similar controls or controls in other areas are reviewed  Evidence from past events showing that such review is performed |
| D.5 | Recover | To recover from the information security incident and resume normal business operations | D.5.1 | Business continuity | Initiate Business Continuity Plan (**BCP**) | Evidence of linkage to business continuity management |
| D.5.2 | Recovery strategies | Follow pre-defined restore strategies outlined in internal processes | Evidence of following the recovery strategies |
| D.6 | Communication/ engagement | To provide accurate, factual and timely information to stakeholders | D.6.1 | Communication/ engagement plan | Follow pre-defined communications and/ or an engagement plan that identifies who has the authority to communicate to different stakeholders | An engagement/ communication plan  Communication to relevant stakeholders/ affected parties  Notification to regulator(s)  A statement of authority covering all identified receivers of communication |
| D.6.2 | Frequency | Provide frequent status updates to key stakeholders | Evidence that key stakeholders have been updated on the status of information security incidents |
| D.7 | Resolution and closure | To ensure timely closure of incidents and maintain complete and accurate records | D.7.1 | Incident closure | Confirmation that the incident has been satisfactorily addressed and no further action required | Report or briefing to relevant stakeholders |
| D.7.2 | Recordkeeping | Update the incident register with incident closure details | Incident register |
| **E** | **Lessons Learnt** | The capability to reduce the business impact of an information security incident, prevent incidents from re-occurring and improve information security incident management | E.1 | Post incident review | To provide direct feedback on the effectiveness of information security incident management | E.1.1 | Review | Perform a subjective and objective assessment of the ISIMF | Evidence that a review has occurred after an information security incident |
| E.2 | Record incident insights | To support the ongoing improvement of the information security incident response capability | E.2.1 | Outcomes and recommendations | Record the outcomes and recommendations of the information security incident | An information security incident register containing performance metrics such as categorisation, business impact, time per incident, review outcomes, recommendations, links to risk register, etc. |
| E.3 | Awareness | To ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aware of any updates to the ISIMF | E.3.1 | Response resources | All stakeholders with an identified role in the ISIMF have been made aware of the framework and any changes to it | Evidence of communications to staff about changes to the incident management processes, roles/ responsibilities or response resources |
| E.4 | Information sharing | To ensure that all relevant stakeholders are provided relevant information about the information security incident | E.4.1 | Information exchange | Follow the pre-defined process that identifies the stakeholders not directly involved during the response phase | Evidence of information sharing (e.g. engagement with ACSC, AFP, AusCERT, idcare, other linked agencies, and regulators) |
| E.5 | Evidence retention | To ensure evidence relating to the information security incident is retained in a suitable manner (if required) | E.5.1 | Retention and preservation | Define any retention and preservation of evidence relating to the information security incident including any legal and regulatory requirements | An artefact defining retention/ preservation requirements of evidence |
| E.6 | Audit and reviews | To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the ISIMF | E.6.1 | Scope | Define the scope for audits and reviews of the ISIMF | A definition of audit scope |
| E.6.2 | Coverage | Audit and reviews cover all aspects of the ISIMF | Evidence of audit activities across components of the ISIMF |
| E.6.3 | Linkage to threats/ risks | Audit and reviews of the ISMF take into account existing risks and threats | Audit planning considers incidents, threats and risks |
| E.6.4 | Frequency | Define the frequency for audit and reviews of the ISIMF (i.e. conducted on a regular basis or if significant events have occurred) | An artefact stating the frequency for audit/ reviews, taking into account the need for unscheduled reviews to respond to significant incidents |
| E.7 | Continuous improvement | To ensure the ISIMF is continuously reviewed, validated and updated | E.7.1 | Framework review | Review the effectiveness of the ISIMF and the Incident Response Team (**IRT**) | Review activities since the last recorded information security incident |
| E.7.2 | Policy review | Review the policy in line with the organisation’s policy governance framework  In absence of such a framework, the review is done at least annually | An audit trail for policy review (e.g. email, agenda items, and versioning records) |
| E.7.3 | Process, procedures and plan review | Review the processes, procedures and incident management plan on a regular basis or if significant events have occurred (e.g. incidents or changes to the organisation) | Evidence of review activities (e.g. email trails, and revision history) |