



SINGLE INDUSTRY SPOKESPERSON PROTOCOL FOR GAS IN VICTORIA

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1 Introduction

This document contains relevant procedures, policies, roles, responsibilities, contact details and draft media materials for the Victorian gas industry, in the event that the Single Industry Spokesperson (SIS) Protocol is invoked during a Victorian gas network emergency.

2 Background

Victorian gas distribution network service providers (DNSPs) directly manage the majority of media relations for their individual day-to-day business and network-related issues in Victoria.

However the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has a specified leadership media relations role when a Level 5 gas network emergency has been declared.

The definition of a Level 5 gas network emergency is an event that has escalated to the extent that:

- Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) or AEMO reasonably believes that there is a situation which requires them to declare an emergency;
- The Governor of Victoria acting in Council declares an emergency under Part 9 of the Gas Industry Act 2001; or,
- Or ESV or the Director of ESV issues a direction under section 106 of the Gas Safety Act 1997.

Where AEMO, the Director of ESV or the Victorian Government believe a Level 5 emergency is likely to exist for a substantial span of time, involve resources beyond the supply capacity of the industry, and have widespread impact on the community, AEMO will recommend that the Governor proclaim an emergency under Part 9 of the Gas Industry Act 2001.

All gas emergency level definitions can be found in Attachment 1.

The Victorian Government and the gas industry have also requested that, in addition to this circumstance, an agreement be established whereby AEMO is authorised to speak publicly on behalf of the Victorian gas supply industry in the event of widespread and prolonged multijurisdictional gas shortages affecting the state. This will ensure that a single, consistent description of any state-wide event is readily available to the media.

In response to this request, AEMO has developed an emergency response protocol which covers:

- The process and triggers for the deployment and de-escalation of the SIS Protocol for Gas in Victoria.
- The basis of key messaging to be communicated by the SIS Protocol for Gas in Victoria.
- The processes for information exchange and decision-making to apply in the event of a gas network emergency.

3 Objective

The SIS Protocol for Gas in Victoria is designed to ensure media, customers, and the general public receive a coordinated and timely responses that communicate the agreed key messages and give clear advice about the status of a widespread gas emergency.

4 Criteria for activating the SIS Protocol for Gas in Victoria

This protocol only applies to major, widespread distribution-level gas supply shortages in Victoria, as detailed in the criteria and response process below. Activation of the SIS Protocol for Gas in Victoria will be immediately considered if one or more of the following circumstances have occurred:

- Two or more separate DNSPs are affected.

- The gas supply of more than 300 customers across the Melbourne metropolitan area is affected.
- The likely prospect that lengthy gas supply restoration times will occur.
- Significant levels of media interest, requiring a coordinated response.

5 Process for assessing activation of the SIS Protocol for Gas in Victoria

The decision to activate the SIS Protocol will be the responsibility of AEMO's Media and Corporate Affairs (MCA) department and ESV, in consultation with DNSP corporate affairs managers and representatives of the Victorian Government.

Activation of the SIS Protocol will be considered at the AEMO-led communications teleconference which should be attended by all of the aforementioned stakeholders. The purpose of the communications teleconference is to discuss key messages, media strategies and actions as part of an agreed and coordinated communications approach between AEMO, industry and government.

The communications teleconference will normally follow the AEMO-led operational teleconference briefing. The AEMO operational teleconference briefing seeks to clarify the extent of likely or actual gas supply shortages, the number of customers and/or regions affected, and operational strategies by the affected DNSPs.

While the operational teleconference briefing serves a different function and stands distinct from the communications teleconference, it provides the context, critical information, and likely outcomes of a gas network emergency, which should be relayed and discussed during the communications teleconference to assess the need to activate the SIS Protocol.

The SIS Protocol response process can only be activated if one or more of the above circumstances have occurred as a result of a gas network incident, and if there is universal agreement among DNSPs, ESV, the Victorian Government and AEMO MCA that activation of the SIS Protocol is in the best interests of Victorian gas consumers.

If extreme weather increases the likelihood of widespread gas supply shortages, the SIS Protocol can be activated before any shortages occur. In such cases, DNSPs, ESV and AEMO MCA, in liaison with the Victorian Government, will review the situation on an ongoing basis and ensure stakeholders are kept informed. If there are significant community concerns arising from the event, all parties will promote the industry safety messages led by ESV.

6 Process for activating the SIS Protocol for Gas in Victoria

If representatives (as outlined in Section 9 of this protocol) of the DNSPs, ESV, AEMO, and the Victorian Government agree the SIS Protocol criteria have been met, the following will occur:

- Formally activate the SIS Protocol following universal agreement by all parties.
- AEMO to notify all relevant parties that the SIS Protocol has been activated.
- In its role as the SIS, AEMO to develop a holding / proactive media statement, and gain alignment/approval from all industry and government representatives. A template media statement for this purpose can be found in Attachment 2.
- Establish a coordinated process and timeframe for ongoing consultations under the SIS Protocol.

7 Process for providing the content of SIS messages

The SIS Protocol ensures all media messages and information are aligned. When required, media releases will be supported by DNSPs information (i.e. outage numbers / key regions impacted). The key communications messages and responsibilities are outlined below.

When invoked, AEMO will provide the media with:

- Aggregated numbers of affected customers.
- Overview of areas / regions most affected.
- Cause/s of incident.
- Broad expectations regarding restoration.
- General description regarding the event (e.g. 1-in-100-year event).
- Safety messages.
- Referrals to individual DNSPs for more specific information about individual events and responses. It is preferred that AEMO does not mention individual DNSPs, however some leeway is appropriate in the context of live media interviews.

DNSPs will provide media with any or all of the following:

- Detail in relation to local network-specific information.
- Detail about the local regions affected, including numbers of affected customers.
- Cause of individual, localised incidents or supply shortages.
- Expectations regarding restoration of supply.
- Safety messages.

8 Process for coordinating media responses while the SIS Protocol is activated

During a major event, AEMO MCA will liaise with industry and government (as required) to ensure consistency of messages and information flow to the public. AEMO and DNSPs have specific responsibilities under the SIS Protocol:

- AEMO MCA will manage major state-wide media. DNSPs should continue to manage local and regional media communications.
- AEMO MCA will have the power to refer media enquiries back to DNSPs if the subject or volume of media enquiries requires their assistance. The DNSPs must be informed of such action by AEMO.
- Activation of the SIS Protocol does not preclude DNSPs from engaging with major media outlets about the event, if and when asked to do so.
- AEMO will ensure DNSPs corporate affairs managers are kept informed about the number, source and status of major media enquiries, and will seek prior agreement if there is a need to hold any media conferences.
- AEMO will provide DNSPs copies of media releases prior to them being distributed to the media.
- In addition to the communications teleconferences, the DNSPs corporate affairs managers will keep AEMO MCA informed of any significant developments or changes in the situation, on an hourly basis, unless otherwise agreed.

9 Process for deactivating the SIS Protocol

DNSPs and AEMO MCA should agree to deactivate the SIS Protocol when the event reaches a point where any one of the following criteria is satisfied:

- Only one DNSP remains significantly affected.
- The number of customers off supply has greatly reduced.
- The likelihood of large numbers of customers remaining off supply for a prolonged period has decreased.
- Media interest has greatly reduced.

This decision will be promptly communicated to all key stakeholders.

10 Nominated representatives

Nominated representatives include the authorised corporate affairs managers of the following organisations:

- AEMO
- ESV
- Multinet Gas
- Australian Gas Networks
- AusNet Services
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning DELWP (observer status)

The parties will ensure that current contact details are known to all others at all times.

11 SIS Protocol review

The parties and DELWP will convene within a week of deactivating the SIS Protocol to review all aspects of the process and outcomes of the event. The parties and DELWP will meet annually to review the operation of the process and the terms of the protocol.

Attachment 1: Gas emergency response level definitions

LEVEL	DEFINITION	IMPACT	OPERATIONAL / DESCRIPTIVE GUIDELINE
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be dealt with by the site resources without any additional assistance. There is no injury, environmental impacts, or involvement of the Emergency Services beyond routine response, there is minimal customer impact, and no adverse publicity. A Site Manager manages this level of emergency. This level of emergency does not need to be declared, it exists as part of normal operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed by Incident Response Team. Dealt with by site resources without additional assistance. No adverse publicity, injury, environmental impacts or involvement or emergency services. Minimal customer and public impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Maintenance requiring routine repair methods, e.g. broken service or loss of supply to a small number of customers.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May involve minor injury, have environmental impacts, result in minor loss of supply, and may have minor business continuity or Information Technology impacts, and may attract some adverse publicity. This level of emergency requires the mobilisation of an operational Emergency Controller, normally a Senior Manager and will require direct notification of a Duty Manager who may elect to manage the emergency as the Emergency Controller. During normal working hours an Operations Manager or Emergency Controller is responsible for declaring a Level 2. For an emergency outside normal working hours an Operations Duty Officer or Emergency Controller is responsible for declaring a Level 2 event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse publicity, environmental impact, result in minor loss of supply, may have minor business continuity impacts. Directly notify the Duty Manager. Managed by Emergency Response Team or Incident Response Team. Emergency Response Team is led by the Senior Manager Gas Real Time Operations or Gas Duty Manager, and is supported by the Emergency Management Services Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally loss of supply to more than 100 customers. Any incident that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results in significant traffic diversions, evacuations or property damage. All the Emergency Services attend. Media are on site. Where a gas asset or appliance is on fire. Results in a minor injury. An ambulance attends. Any incident involving damage to or contact with transmission pipe assets.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could involve substantial risk of serious injury or death, may have serious environmental impacts, result in serious loss of supply, and may have serious business continuity or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse publicity, substantial risk of injury / death, may have serious environmental impacts, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally loss of supply to more than 1,000 customers.

LEVEL	DEFINITION	IMPACT	OPERATIONAL / DESCRIPTIVE GUIDELINE
	<p>information technology impacts, and may attract adverse publicity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This level of emergency demands the attention and mobilisation of both Operational and Executive management to combat the impacts of the emergency. A Senior Manager, or after hours a Duty Manager is responsible for declaring a Level 3 event. 	<p>result in serious loss of supply, may have serious business continuity impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed by Emergency Management Team, which is usually the Incident Coordination Team (ICT). The Emergency Duty Officer activates the ICT process on advice from the Senior Manager or Gas Duty Manager, and contacts the Incident Coordinator. Notify and mobilise both the Operational and Executive Management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fires or explosions resulting in or posing substantial risk of serious injury, death, or major property damage.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An emergency that has escalated to the extent that the impacts of the emergency are beyond a single distribution company or a transmission company. The overall system safety and integrity is not in jeopardy but the impacts are such that they require the joint response of two or more companies (distribution or transmission) to combat the event. Generally an Executive level manager is responsible for declaring a Level 4 event in conjunction with the other entity's equivalent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts affects more than a single distributor company or a transmission company. System safety and integrity is not in jeopardy but a joint response of two or more distributor companies, or a distributor company and a transmission company are required. The Emergency Duty Officer activates the ICT process on advice from the Senior Manager or Gas Duty Manager, and contacts the Incident Coordinator. The Incident Coordinator in consultation with the Senior Manager or Gas Duty Manager contacts an Executive level manager and determines whether the Crisis Management Team activated. The Single Industry Spokesperson is activated when the event is confirmed to be a Level 4 event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally loss of supply to greater than 1,000 customers requiring the resources from more than one distributor / transmission company. Gas quality excursions requiring implementation of specific mitigation measures and gas supply limitations effecting more than one distributor / transmission company.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An emergency which has escalated to the extent that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) or AEMO reasonably believes that there is a situation which requires them to declare an emergency. The Governor of Victoria acting in Council declares an emergency under Part 9 of the Gas Industry Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESV or AEMO reasonably believes that there is a situation that requires them to declare an emergency. The declaration of a Level 5 Emergency or Threat to System Security is not an action that is taken lightly. Where possible, prior to AEMO declaring a Level 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of supply from a major injection point or unplanned isolation of a significant transmission pipeline jeopardising the integrity of the transmission network.

LEVEL	DEFINITION	IMPACT	OPERATIONAL / DESCRIPTIVE GUIDELINE
	<p>2001 on the recommendation of the Minister for Energy and Resources or Responsible Minister.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ESV or the Director of ESV issues a direction under section 106 of the Gas Safety Act 1997. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where AEMO, the Director of ESV or the Victorian Government believes a Level 5 emergency is likely to exist for a substantial span of time, involve resources beyond the supply capacity of the industry and have widespread impact on the community, AEMO will recommend to the Minister for Energy and Resources or the Responsible Minister and his/her Department that the Governor in Council be requested to proclaim an emergency under Part 9 of the Gas Industry Act 2001. • The AEMO Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operations Officer, or Group Manager Real Time Operations are the authorised officers who may declare a Level 5 Emergency. If none of the authorised officers can be contacted in reasonable time and having due regard to the absolute urgency of the situation, then the AEMO Gas Duty Manager may declare a Level 5 Emergency. 	<p>emergency, AEMO will consult with ESV. The following needs to be considered by AEMO officers and industry in determining whether a situation warrants AEMO making a declaration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ threaten the reliability of gas supply; or ○ pose a risk to public safety; or ○ cause material damage to the transmission system; or ○ cause material damage to a distribution pipeline and impact on the operation of the transmission system or the market; or ○ threaten the system security or the security of a declared distribution system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governor / Minister in Council declares the emergency under Part 6A of the Gas Industry Act or ESV or the Director of ESV issues a direction under section 106 of the Gas Safety Act 1997. • The Crisis Management Team and the Single Industry Spokesperson are activated by the Incident Coordinator, who is assisted by Emergency Duty Officer. • The Energy Industry Response Committee (ERIC) and the Gas Emergency Management Group (GEMG) are convened. • The declaration will be implemented by issuing the Emergency Declaration Notice, to the Emergency Manager, Duty Manager or General Manager of each Registered participant. 	

Attachment 2: AEMO media release under SIS Protocol – gas emergency

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

(INSERT DATE AND TIME)

<<CAUSE>> CAUSES GAS SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS ACROSS VICTORIA

Victoria's gas distribution businesses and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) advise that an unplanned gas supply disruption has occurred, affecting customers across the state.

This is as a result of <<INSERT CAUSE>>.

At present, approximately <<INSERT TOTAL NUMBERS OFF SUPPLY>> Victorian customers are affected by the gas supply disruption.

The major areas affected are <<INSERT MAJOR AREAS AFFECTED>>.

<<INSERT ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION I.E. RESTORATION TIMEFRAME>>

AEMO, as operator of the Victorian gas transmission network, will continue to provide media with a state-wide overview of the situation on behalf of the Victorian gas industry until conditions improve.

Media requests for high-level, summary information about the gas supply disruption, or interviews, should be directed to AEMO.

Media enquiries regarding specific areas or regions affected by the gas supply disruption should be directed to the appropriate gas distribution businesses listed below.

Gas safety matters should be directed to Energy Safe Victoria.

ENDS

For state-wide media enquiries, please contact:

AEMO media enquiries

0409 382 121 or media@aemo.com.au



For region or area-specific media enquiries, please contact:

Multinet Gas media enquiries

03 8846 9998, mediaenquiries@ue.com.au

Australian Gas Networks Limited media enquiries

0438 897 174

AusNet Services media enquiries

03 9483 0989

For gas safety-related media enquiries, please contact:

Energy Safe Victoria, Sharon Rainsbury

03 9203 9744 or 0427 990 834

Attachment 3: Energy Safe Victoria media release – gas emergency



MEDIA STATEMENT

Date

URGENT SAFETY ADVICE IN GAS EMERGENCIES

Gas safety regulator, Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), provides the following advice during gas emergencies.

Can you smell gas?

Don't

- Smoke or strike matches in the vicinity of a gas leak.
- Turn electrical switches on or off.

Do

- Extinguish flames
- Open doors and windows
- Keep people away from the affected area.
- Turn off the gas at the gas meter.
- Keep this information where it is readily available.

In emergencies

Call **132 771** for gas leak and emergency services.

Further information:

Sharon Rainsbury – Media spokesperson

T: (03) 9203 9744 or 0427 990 834

Visit the ESV website at www.esv.vic.gov.au

Attachment 4: EnergySafe Victoria safety advice – gas emergency



MEDIA STATEMENT

Date

URGENT SAFETY ADVICE FOR HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCING LOW GAS PRESSURES

During winter months when there is cold weather, some households in Victoria may experience either low or no gas pressure. The shortages are due to the high demand for gas.

Gas safety regulator, Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), provides the following advice for households experiencing such situations.

Gas cookers – if the gas pressure is low and there is only a limited flame in cook tops, grillers etc., any cooking **must not be left unattended at anytime**. If no gas pressure is detected or the flame is extinguished, the appliance must be turned off. No attempt should be made to re-light the appliance until gas supplies are fully restored.

Hot water service/ central heating systems – these appliances will automatically switch off when gas supplies are curtailed. No attempt should be made to re-light them until gas supplies are restored.

Space heaters/wall furnaces – these appliances will also automatically shut off when there is no gas. Again no attempt should be made to re-light them until gas supplies are restored.

Information – listen to your local ABC radio for messages about restoration of gas supplies.

Relighting appliances – when gas supplies are restored, appliances can be relit. Manufacturers' instructions must be followed when relighting appliances. When relighting gas appliances after a supply interruption, relight a gas cook top burner first and make sure that the flame is stable for a few minutes before attempting to re-light other appliances.

If difficulties are experienced, households should contact their gas supplier (contact details are available on their latest gas bills) or a licensed gasfitter (contact details are available in local newspapers and Yellow Pages phone directories).

Assisting neighbours and relatives – the community is urged to assist, where possible, relatives, friends and neighbours who need help to relight gas appliances following low or non-existent gas pressure situations after gas supplies are restored.

In the case of gas emergencies, ring 132 771.

Further information:

Sharon Rainsbury – Media spokesperson

T: (03) 9203 9744 or 0427 990 834

Visit the ESV website at www.esv.vic.gov.au