

# AFP Commissioner's Order on governance (C01)

The Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police issues the AFP Commissioner's Order on governance (C01) using powers under sections 37 and 38 of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth) and under regulation 79 of the [Australian Federal Police Regulations 2018](#) (Cth).

Under section 69C of the AFP Act, these powers for issuing Commissioner's Orders have been delegated as detailed in this [Delegation Authority](#).

This Order takes effect from the date of its publication on the AFP intranet.

This version of C01 has been issued by Acting Commissioner Krissy Barrett on 20/08/2025.

## 1. Introduction

C01 establishes a governance framework to support the effective performance of the AFP. It ensures risk is appropriately managed and key accountability and integrity requirements are met to a high standard. It also provides appropriate authority to issue and amend governance instruments in a flexible and timely manner to respond to operational priorities and ongoing legislative reform.

Compliance with the AFP Governance Framework ensures that:

- the AFP continues to enjoy a high level of confidence and support from government, the community and key partners
- the requirements of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (Cth) (PGPA Act) are met
- AFP functions under section 8 of the [AFP Act](#) are delivered
- AFP appointees understand their obligations when performing their duties
- risk is managed to protect the AFP, its appointees, the public and to inform decision making.

## 2. AFP Governance Framework

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the oversight of the AFP Governance Framework which includes:

- a statement of values, a code of conduct and a comprehensive collection of enforceable internal governance instruments in the [Governance Instrument Framework](#)

including a [collection of legislative delegations and authorisations](#), as well as related guidance information and templates

- an [annual corporate plan](#) that outlines the AFP's purpose, future direction, operational environment, initiatives, activities, methods of assessing performance, and managing capacity, capability and risk in a four-year period
- governance measures to control documented business risks, particularly treatments identified in the [AFP Risk Profile](#)
- the [Strategic Board Framework](#) with clearly articulated terms of reference and accountabilities
- a command and control based [organisational structure](#) to manage resources and business activity
- an [Investigator's Toolkit](#) to support the national consistency and the ongoing professionalism of investigators
- a [Ministerial Direction](#) and [Commissioner's Statement of Intent](#) detailing the Australian Government's expectations and priorities of the AFP
- adherence to security obligations in accordance with the Australian Government's [Protective Security Policy Framework \(PSPF\)](#)
- systematic approaches to strategic and [business planning](#)
- management of fraud, security and other business risks via the [AFP Fraud and Corruption Control Plan](#)
- allocating resources to internal auditing, business reviews and professional conduct investigations.

### 3. The AFP Governance Instrument Framework (GIF)

The GIF is an integral component of the AFP's integrity, operational and corporate functions. The GIF is located within the AFP's intranet (AFP Hub) making it accessible to all AFP appointees.

An AFP business area may, for operational or sensitivity reasons, determine that a governance instrument is not 'publishable'; however, it should still be appropriately referenced within the GIF with details for AFP appointees on how to access the instrument if they have a business need and appropriate clearance.

AFP governance instruments establish and contribute to:

- the safety and security of the AFP environment by conveying practices and procedures in accordance with the [PSPF](#) and the [Information Security Manual](#)
- the effective administration and operations of the AFP Act

- AFP professional standards, including the practices and procedures of the AFP, for the purposes of Part V of the [AFP Act](#)
- legal compliance by AFP appointees in discharging their duties and accountabilities, particularly under the [PGPA Act](#), [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (Cth), [Crimes Act 1900](#) (ACT), [Crimes Act 1914](#) (Cth) and the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth)
- management of risk, particularly in relation to informed decision making and the control and treatment of risks identified in the [AFP Risk Profile](#)
- delegation of statutory authority and powers
- best and standardised practice guidance for AFP appointees in achieving operational outcomes consistent with AFP values and the efficient, effective, economical and ethical use and management of Commonwealth funds and property.

### 3.1 Categories of AFP Governance Instruments

AFP governance instruments consist of primary governance instruments, functional governance instruments, legislatively based instruments, rules and arrangements, and external agreements.

#### 3.1.1 Primary Governance Instruments

The following are primary governance instruments, in order of hierarchy, that establish the rules, orders, instructions and obligations applicable to all AFP appointees.

Governance Type	Description
<b>Commissioner's Orders</b>	Commissioner's Orders regulate AFP policy and legislative compliance and are set at the Commissioner's discretion.
<b>Commissioner's Financial Instructions</b>	The Commissioner's Financial Instructions outline the financial, legislative and regulatory requirements for management and accountability of public resources by the AFP.
<b>National Guidelines</b>	National Guidelines establish mandatory compliance obligations for significant or higher risk matters relevant to AFP appointees. They may also outline principles and frameworks that are operationalised through functional governance instruments.

## Authority to issue, review, amend or revoke a primary governance instrument

Commissioner's Orders are issued, reviewed, amended or revoked under section 38 of the AFP Act by the Commissioner or [relevant delegate](#).

The Commissioner's Financial Instructions are issued, reviewed, amended or revoked under section 37(1) of the AFP Act and sections 16 and 20 of the PGPA Act.

National Guidelines are issued, reviewed, amended or revoked under section 37(1) of the AFP Act by the Commissioner or [relevant delegate](#).

The [relevant delegate](#) may authorise the creation of a primary governance instrument if:

- it has been determined to be the most effective means of managing a risk assessed to be significant, high or critical
- the proposed instrument does not duplicate or contradict content already on the GIF.

To ensure relevance, consistency and currency, primary governance instruments must be reviewed at least every 3 years. The review must include mandatory stakeholders as defined in sections 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 of this order. The business area SES must ensure governance instruments remain fit for purpose and therefore must update them throughout the 3 years in the event of any changes to the operating environment. If the instrument is no longer required, the relevant delegate should authorise its revocation.

### 3.1.2 Functional Governance Instruments

The following functional governance instruments are issued by SES Band 1 (commander or manager) or above in relation to operational, capability, or capacity activities for which they have responsibility.

Primary governance takes precedence over functional governance if they conflict. The responsible AFP SES appointee(s) must correct any inconsistency promptly.

Governance Type	Description
Commander's Orders	pecific mission dures and nal conduct l deployed by overseas tion contact @afp.gov.au. s 47E(d)
Better Practice Guides	ulate ehaviour for rmance of
Standard Operating Procedures	ures articulate AFP appointees in the performance of

Governance Type	Description
	designated operations or functions in designated situations.
<b>Handbooks</b>	Handbooks provide comprehensive guidance and information relating to a particular subject matter, area of business or operation within the AFP.
<b>Investigations Standards and Practices</b>	<a href="#">Investigations Standards and Practices (ISP)</a> provides a point of reference on the AFP Hub for investigations practices and procedures and includes the <a href="#">Investigator's Toolkit</a> and other governance instruments such as doctrine, standards and manuals.

Authority to issue, review, amend or revoke a functional governance instrument

Commander/manager SES Band 1 appointees and above may authorise the creation of a functional governance instrument if:

- they or their staff have identified a need to detail the practices and procedures to be followed in a specific area of AFP business
- the proposed instrument does not duplicate or contradict content already on the GIF.

To ensure accuracy and relevance, functional governance instruments must be reviewed at least every 3 years. The business area SES must ensure governance instruments remain fit for purpose and therefore must update them as necessary throughout the 3 years in the event of any changes to the operating environment. If the instrument is no longer required, the relevant delegate should authorise its revocation.

### 3.1.3 Legislatively based instruments, rules and arrangements

The AFP operates under a broad range of Commonwealth, state and territory legislation that typically includes legislative arrangements/agreements, ministerial directions, instruments, appointments, standards, delegations and authorisations. While the Commissioner may issue some of these instruments, most are issued by government ministers and agencies, state and territory police commissioners and other authorities. Examples of legislatively based instruments include:

- AFP special member appointment instruments
- the Commonwealth Procurement Rules issued under the PGPA Act.

### 3.1.4 External agreements

The AFP operates within an extensive framework of joint governance and external agreements with Australian and foreign government agencies, as well as private sector partners and stakeholders. For more detailed information about creating, reviewing, signing and compliance with external agreements (e.g. a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or

letter of exchange (LOE)), see the [AFP National Guideline on external agreements](#) and [Procedures for developing an external agreement \(DOCX, 60KB\)](#).

## 3.2 Delegations and Authorisations

AFP appointees must be aware of the powers delegated to them, and the limitations of those powers. Revised delegations are issued from time to time, and AFP appointees must ensure that they keep up to date with any changes.

Delegates must exercise sound decision making principles in accordance with AFP governance, Commonwealth policy and any other applicable legislation.

Delegation and authorisation instruments must be reviewed at least every 3 years by the owning Command. Delegates must consider the appropriateness of an instrument having regard to legislative or organisational changes and if the delegation or authorisation is still necessary.

The [Delegations and Authorisations Collection](#) is managed by AFP Legal who can be contacted for any questions using this [online form](#).

## 4. Governance Compliance

### 4.1 Compliance with mandatory obligations

Section 39 of the AFP Act prescribes that all AFP appointees must comply with Commissioner's Orders.

In AFP governance instruments, mandatory compliance is denoted by the word 'must'. In accordance with the [AFP Commissioner's Order on professional standards \(CO2\)](#), failure to comply with a mandatory obligation may constitute a breach of AFP professional standards and be dealt with under Part V of the [AFP Act](#).

### 4.2 Departure from mandatory compliance obligations

See section 9.5 of the [AFP Commissioner's Order on professional standards \(CO2\)](#).

### 4.3 Discretionary compliance within guidance information

Guidance or best practice information within a governance instrument, government policy, external agreement or joint agency governance is typically denoted by discretionary terms such as 'should', 'may' or 'have regard to'.

If an AFP appointee determines it is necessary to depart from guidance information, they should do so with regard to performance, risk management, legal compliance, financial impact, security and professional standards obligations. Any decision to depart from guidance information should be recorded (e.g. official diary note, case note entry, email, critical decision log).

A breach of guidance information may be taken into account in assessing the performance of an AFP appointee. A serious breach may constitute a failure to meet security obligations and/or be a breach of AFP professional standards.

## 5. Governance roles

To ensure the GIF content is current, interoperable, and relevant to provide AFP appointees clarity on their obligations around practices and procedures, several roles have specific responsibilities.

### 5.1 All AFP appointees

All AFP appointees must:

- have an awareness of the AFP governance framework and specific governance instruments that apply to their area of work
- comply with mandatory obligations and governance instruments
- report any inconsistencies or errors they find in governance instruments to the relevant [Governance Network Member](#) as soon as possible.

### 5.2 Supervisors

Supervisors must:

- ensure AFP appointees under their supervision are aware of and comply with governance instruments
- allocate sufficient resources to manage governance needs
- raise governance issues to the attention of the relevant [Governance Network Member](#) and/or relevant AFP SES appointee.

### 5.3 AFP SES appointees

AFP SES appointees who are governance instrument owners must:

- authorise, review and revoke AFP governance instruments within their business area
- assume responsibility for governance instruments transferred into the business area due to organisational restructuring
- where necessary, provide advice interpreting governance instruments
- ensure sufficient processes, personnel and resources are in place to manage and maintain governance instruments, including appointing a [Governance Network Member\(s\)](#).
- ensure governance instruments:

- are relevant
  - assist AFP appointees (e.g. keep them safe, easy to understand)
  - do not create unnecessary obligations (i.e. reduce red tape)
  - do not conflict with other governance instruments (if this occurs, they must consult with the owner of the conflicting governance instrument to ensure the correct processes are clearly articulated)
  - are reviewed in accordance with the mandatory review period and process specified in this order
- make decisions whether an instrument:
    - is publishable in the GIF
    - may be released/disclosed to a third-party (see the [AFP National Guideline on information management](#))
    - may be published (either in full or with redactions), or should be exempt from publication, on the Information Publication Scheme ([IPS](#)).

These requirements are also detailed in the AFP SES Statement of Commitment.

## 5.4 Governance Network Members (GNMs)

GNMs are a community of governance practitioners appointed by an AFP SES appointee within each business area or command to administer its governance instruments. GNMs are responsible for:

- ensuring that the governance instruments owned by their business area are:
  - maintained, easy to understand, do not create unnecessary obligations, do not conflict with other instruments, are reviewed by the due date and re-issued by the owner
  - considered for external publication under the [IPS](#)
  - submitted for executive approval and sent for publication, in accordance with [GIF procedures](#) (If the instrument cannot be published in full (e.g. for security or operational reasons), a page should still be published on the GIF advising AFP appointees how to access the instrument if they have a business need.)
- approving 'minor amendments' to their business area's governance instruments with appropriate consultation (see Definitions)
- ensuring that the governance instrument's owner endorses an appropriate communication strategy notifying all affected AFP appointees when a new instrument,

or a reviewed instrument, containing substantive amendments has been published on the GIF or a revoked instrument has been removed from the GIF

- liaising within the governance network where there are impacts on other business areas or commands
- identifying governance responsibility changes due to organisational restructuring and coordinating the transfer of relevant governance instruments to the appropriate business area.

## 5.5 Governance Instrument Framework (GIF) team

The GIF team is responsible for:

- reviewing all primary governance instruments, as a mandatory stakeholder, to enforce CO1 requirements and quality-assure prior to executive approval and publication
- establishing procedures for managing the GIF, including developing, reviewing, and publishing governance instruments, and ensuring consistency across the collection
- raising GIF management issues with the appropriate AFP senior executive and/or management committee
- performing the role of GIF Registrar, maintaining a record that details the primary governance instruments of each command and the dates they are due for review.

The GIF team may make minor amendments to AFP governance instruments.

## 5.6 Chief Counsel portfolio

The Chief Counsel portfolio is responsible for:

- providing legal advice in relation to AFP governance instruments, particularly to ensure legal compliance and management of legal risk
- reviewing all new primary governance instruments, as a mandatory stakeholder, to confirm legal compliance
- establishing and maintaining an AFP-wide [collection of legislative delegations and authorisations](#) within the GIF.

## 5.7 Security

Manager Security is responsible for:

- reviewing all primary governance instruments, as a mandatory stakeholder, to confirm compliance with the PSPF and AFP security governance.

## 5.8 Professional Standards

Manager Professional Standards is responsible for:

- reviewing all primary governance instruments, as a mandatory stakeholder, to confirm obligations within an instrument are appropriate and in compliance with the AFP Professional Standards Framework.

## 5.8 Chief Operating Officer

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the oversight of the AFP Governance Framework and has delegation to approve amendments to this Order.

## 6. References

### Legislation

- [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth)
- [Australian Federal Police Regulations 2018](#) (Cth)
- [Crimes Act 1900](#) (ACT)
- [Crimes Act 1914](#) (Cth)
- [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth)
- [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (Cth)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (Cth)

### AFP governance instruments

- [AFP National Guideline on information management](#)
- [AFP National Guideline on external agreements](#)
- [AFP National Guideline on the Information Publication Scheme](#)

### Other

- [Protective Security Policy Framework](#)

## 7. Shortened forms

AFP Act	<i>Australian Federal Police Act 1979</i>
GIF	Governance Instrument Framework
GNM	Governance Network Member

<b>IPS</b>	Information Publication Scheme
<b>PGPA Act</b>	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>
<b>SES</b>	Senior Executive Service

## 8. Definitions

See the [Governance Instrument Framework Glossary](#).

### Other relevant terms

**Business area** an AFP branch headed by an SES Band 1 commander/manager

**Command / Function** a command of the AFP headed by an SES Band 2 assistant commissioner, national manager, or equivalent

**Governance instrument** a document that conveys to AFP appointees the obligations and procedures required for a safe and secure environment, meeting professional standards, compliance with legislation, delegation of statutory authority and powers, management of risk, effective administration and operational outcomes consistent with AFP values and the efficient, effective, economical and ethical use and management of Commonwealth funds and property

**Governance Network Member** a governance practitioner appointed within an AFP business area to manage that business area's governance instruments

**Minor amendment** an amendment that does not change an obligation or the effect or original intention of the instrument.

Some examples include:

- typographical and clerical errors
- grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors
- errors in numbering, cross referencing and alphabetical ordering
- errors in references to laws or instruments
- an ambiguity
- title or role changes due to an organisational restructure
- other errors of a similar nature.

**Senior Executive Service (SES) appointee** an AFP commander / manager (SES Band 1), assistant commissioner / national manager or equivalent (SES Band 2) or deputy commissioner / chief operating officer (SES Band 3)

**Supervisor** an AFP appointee with responsibility for managing staff (e.g. sergeant, team leader, superintendent, coordinator, inspector, officer in charge)

## Document details (metadata)

### Instrument type

Commissioner's Order

### Security classification

OFFICIAL

### Identifier

HC00001

### Command

Strategy and Performance

### Business area

Governance, Audit, Legislative Reform & Risk

### Owned by

National Manager Strategy and Performance

d by

ner

etails

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approved

THIS DOCUMENT IS PUBLISHED PURSUANT TO THE  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME (IPS)

## Last reviewed

20/08/2025

## Next review due

20/08/2028

## IPS status

Published - In full

## IPS decision date

11/09/2025

## Replaces

HC00001-005

## Stakeholders

All AFP Functions

THIS DOCUMENT IS PUBLISHED PURSUANT TO THE  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME (IPS)

**OFFICIAL**

**Last updated:** 31/03/2026, 09:17:48