London Ambulance Service NHS
NHS Trust

Out Of Service (OOS) Policy and Procedure

DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL.

Purpose of the document: To establish a policy and procedure for the management and resolution of Out Of Service (OOS). This document replaces OP/044 (Vehicle Off Road Procedure).

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Sponsor Department: A&E Operations

Author/Reviewer: ADO Fleet & Logistics. To be reviewed by June 2014.

Document Status: Final

Amendment History			
Date	*Version	Author/Contributor	Amendment Details
10/06/2013	2.1	IG Manager	Document Profile and Control update
29/05/2013	1.3	ADO Fleet & Logistics	Addition of 8.6, 8.7 and minor amendments to 7.10
24/05/2013	1.2	ADO Fleet & Logistics	Minor additional amendments
23/05/2013	1.1	ADO Fleet & Logistics	Final version to EMT following amendments and the addition of 7.8-7.10 inclusive
18/04/2013	0.2	ADO Fleet & Logistics	Final version for SMT approval
08/03/2013	0.1	ADO Fleet & Logistics	New document

*Version Control Note: All documents in development are indicated by minor versions i.e. 0.1; 0.2 etc. The first version of a document to be approved for release is given major version 1.0. Upon review the first version of a revised document is given the designation 1.1, the second 1.2 etc. until the revised version is approved, whereupon it becomes version 2.0. The system continues in numerical order each time a document is reviewed and approved.

For Approval By:	Date Approved	Version
SMT	07/06/2013	2.0
SMT	24/04/2013	1.0
Ratified by (If appropriate):		
EMT	29/05/2013	1.1

Published on:	Date	By	Dept
The Pulse	10/06/13	Governance Coordinator	GCT
LAS Website	10/06/13	Governance Coordinator	GCT
Announced on:	Date	By	Dept
The RIB	11/06/13	IG Manager	GCT

Equality Analysis completed on	By
18/04/2013	Project Manager
Staffside reviewed on	By

Links to Related documents or references providing additional information		
Ref. No.	Title	Version
OP/033	Resource Centres & Operational Staffing Procedure	
OP/052	On-Day Dynamic Resourcing Procedure	
OP/066	Paper Operations Within Control Services	

OP/068	Operational Procedure for the use of CAD with Limited Functionality	

Document Status: This is a controlled record as are the document(s) to which it relates. Whilst all or any part of it may be printed, the electronic version maintained in P&P-File remains the controlled master copy. Any printed copies are not controlled nor substantive.

PART A – Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 It is recognised that during the course of normal Trust operations, situations will arise, either as a matter of routine or unexpectedly, which will render a member of staff or a vehicle unavailable to respond to the full range of duties. Out Of Service (OOS) is the expression used to describe this state of unavailability whenever an operational Resource is not capable of responding to the full range of duties.

1.2 OOS arises for two principal reasons – the unavailability of either people or vehicles, or for both reasons simultaneously. The causes of this unavailability are widespread and vary in their complexity, but ultimately all OOS has an impact on the Trust's ability to provide responses to emergency calls.

1.3 The Trust has a duty to provide a fully capable range of Resources able to respond to emergency calls and incidents. Consequently it also has a responsibility to maintain OOS at the lowest practicable level, thereby optimising the availability of on-duty Resources.

1.4 The triage, decision-making and end-to-end management of all cases of OOS are performed by a Production Hub, comprising specialists in the people- and vehicle-related aspects of OOS. Day to day management of the Production Hub is by the Resource Production Manager. Overall accountability for production and OOS falls to the on-duty Tactical Commander, who is also the final point of escalation for all OOS matters.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all Resources that would be expected to respond to emergency calls. This includes ambulances, solo responders, specialist resources and managers who respond in any capacity, but is applicable to any member of staff who is on duty and may reasonably be directed by the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to respond to an emergency call. The purpose of the policy and procedure is to provide a framework in which dynamic decisions can be made by the Production Hub as to whether or not a Resource becomes unavailable to respond to emergency calls, or has its availability restricted in some way.

3 Objectives

3.1 To optimise the availability of all on-duty Resources that would be expected to respond to emergency calls.

3.2 To establish a clear framework in which decisions on OOS will be made.

3.3 To provide clear guidance to all staff.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 The following individuals or groups of staff have designated responsibilities under this policy and procedure:

Tactical Commander	The on-duty tactical commander has overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to the policy and procedure.
Production Hub	Staff on duty in the Production Hub have responsibility for adherence to this procedure in order to uphold the objectives of the policy.
Resource Production Manager	The Resource Production Manager is responsible for leadership of Production Hub staff and for the oversight of their individual performance.
Operational Managers	Operational Managers have a responsibility for minimising downtime through effective planning, and ensuring that they and staff under their direction adhere to the objectives of the policy when requesting an OOS event.
Responding Staff	All staff that would be expected to respond to emergency calls have a responsibility to declare their availability according to the procedure, and to adhere to the letter and the objectives of the policy.
Control Services staff	Staff in Control Services have a responsibility to keep the status of operational Resources updated according to the procedure, and to uphold the objectives of the policy.
Vehicle Resource Centre staff	VRC staff are responsible for managing vehicle Resources and promptly resolving vehicle defects in order to uphold the objectives of the policy.
Resource Centre staff	Resource Centre staff are responsible for liaison and engagement with the Production Hub in relation to all staff resourcing matters, in order to uphold the objectives of the policy.
All Trust staff	It is the responsibility of all staff to support or contribute to the return of OOS Resources to a fully-available state as soon as practicably possible.

5   Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this policy:

Resource	An operational unit which is on duty for the purposes of responding to emergency calls, and staffed with personnel of the appropriate quantity and skill level to render the vehicle fit to provide a response. An operational unit will generally be an appropriately-staffed vehicle but may include people

	who respond on foot either alone or as a combined Resource.
Out Of Service (OOS)	Any state in which a Resource is unable to respond to the full range of duties, as judged by a Production Coordinator.
Production Coordinator	A member of staff working in the Production Hub who makes decisions about OOS on the delegated authority of the Tactical Commander.
Production Supervisor	A supervisor with oversight of all on-duty Production Coordinators. Production Supervisors are also Production Coordinators in their own right.
Resource Production Manager	The manager with overall responsibility for the leadership of Production Coordinators and Supervisors and for the achievement of Key Performance Indicators relating to the Production function.
Responding Staff	Any individual who is on duty and attached to a Resource for the purposes of responding to emergency calls. In the case of a Resource which requires more than one person to function fully, all individuals so attached are the Responding Staff and have equal and joint responsibility in that regard.
Full range of duties	All the tasks, functions and responsibilities that would be reasonably expected of a Resource or its Responding Staff whilst the Resource is on duty.
OOS event	The term relating to an entire episode of OOS from the time the episode begins to the time of resolution (i.e. restoration to a fully-available state, or the end of shift, whichever is sooner)
CPCAD	The Trust's computer-aided dispatch software.
Prima facie	At first sight, prior to any investigation.

6   Categorisation

6.1   Any decision to restrict the availability of an on-duty Resource has a potential impact on the Trust's ability to respond to emergency calls. Therefore any OOS event will be categorised so that the impact of the OOS is mitigated to the furthest extent possible. Decisions on the categorisation of OOS, including the decision not to apply any category, are made by Production Coordinators and cannot be overridden by other Trust employee with the exception of the on-duty Tactical Commander. The categories available to the Production Hub are as follows:

Category 1	**Immediately unavailable**

The Resource is wholly unavailable for any form of response.

Category 2A	**Available pending time-limited resolution**

The Resource remains available for the full range of duties whilst a resolution is arranged, within a maximum permissible time of two hours.

Category 2R	**Render Aid pending time-limited resolution**

The Resource is available only to render aid whilst a resolution is arranged, within a maximum permissible time of two hours.

Category 3	**Available with problem noted for resolution**

The Resource is available for the full range of duties. The problem is noted and a resolution will be achieved by the Production Hub, but there is no time limit.

6.2 Decisions by Production Coordinators will be informed by a combination of procedural handbooks and the coordinators' own knowledge, experience and judgement. Any decision will take into account staff safety, any legal or regulatory implications, and the potential impact on patient care.

6.3 An OOS event will not be placed into any category if, in the opinion of the Production Coordinator, the problem is not serious enough to warrant an on-duty impact and can be successfully managed through other established channels (for example, the Vehicle Defect Book). Production Coordinators will at all times be mindful of the potential for a problem not categorised in this way to escalate to a more serious state later on.

6.4 An OOS event assigned category 2 by the Production Hub has a two-hour time limit for resolution. If the resolution (i.e. the restoration of the Resource to a fully-available state) is not achieved within the time limit, the OOS will be upgraded to category 1. The two-hour time limit applies to the OOS event as a whole and therefore the removal of a Resource from this category does not reset the clock for the same event.

7   Principles of availability

7.1 All Responding Staff have a personal responsibility to ensure that the Emergency Operations Centre is aware of their availability at all times. This includes the absolute requirement to confirm, immediately upon the commencement of the shift, that EOC is aware of the status and location of the Resource.

7.2 A Resource is deemed to be available for the full range of duties unless notification otherwise has been made by the Responding Staff.

7.3 A Resource which is Category 1 OOS will not be assigned to any emergency call or incident. The sole exceptions are running calls (in which case the responding staff are responsible for notifying EOC of their status) and the declaration of a major incident (see 11.14).

7.4   A Resource which is Category 2A OOS will continue to be available for the full range of duties. Where the nature of the OOS means backup or other assistance is required during an emergency call or incident, it is the responsibility of the Responding Staff to request this via the appropriate sector desk. No automatic backup will be provided.

7.5   A Resource which is Category 2R OOS will be assigned only to render aid in connection with Red 1 or Red 2 calls. Within the normal exigencies of Trust operations, appropriate backup will be provided to any Resource assigned to an event for the purposes of rendering aid. Responding Staff should further request any particular Resource or other forms of assistance that they consider to be appropriate.

7.6   A Resource which is Category 3 OOS will remain available for the full range of duties.

7.7   Decisions on availability are made by Production Coordinators. Any member of Responding Staff who wishes to dispute a decision by a Production Coordinator should request escalation to the Production Supervisor in the first instance. The on-duty Tactical Commander will be the ultimate point of escalation in respect of any OOS matter.

7.8   There is no restriction arising from a state of OOS which affects the ability of EOC to allocate a rest break to a Resource.

7.9   A resource will be Category 1 OOS if it does not have, as a minimum, the following equipment:

- Bag-valve mask (adult and paediatric)
- Oxygen
- A defibrillator with pads
- A handheld or mechanical suction unit
- Basic airway adjuncts (OP and NP)

        In these instances, it will be an absolute priority of the Responding Staff, managers and Production Coordinator to resolve any shortfalls.

7.10   A resource will be Category 2 (A or R) OOS if it does not have all of the following equipment, in addition to the equipment shown in 7.9, providing the equipment is part of the basic inventory for that resource:

- Trolley bed and straps * (R)
- Carry chair and strap * (R)
- 12-lead ECG capability (R)
- Cervical collar (adult and paediatric) (R)
- General drug pack (R)
- Ability to monitor Blood Pressure (A)
- Orthopaedic Stretcher (A)
- Maternity pack (A)
- Station-based drugs (A)
- Gloves (A)
- Assorted dressings (A)
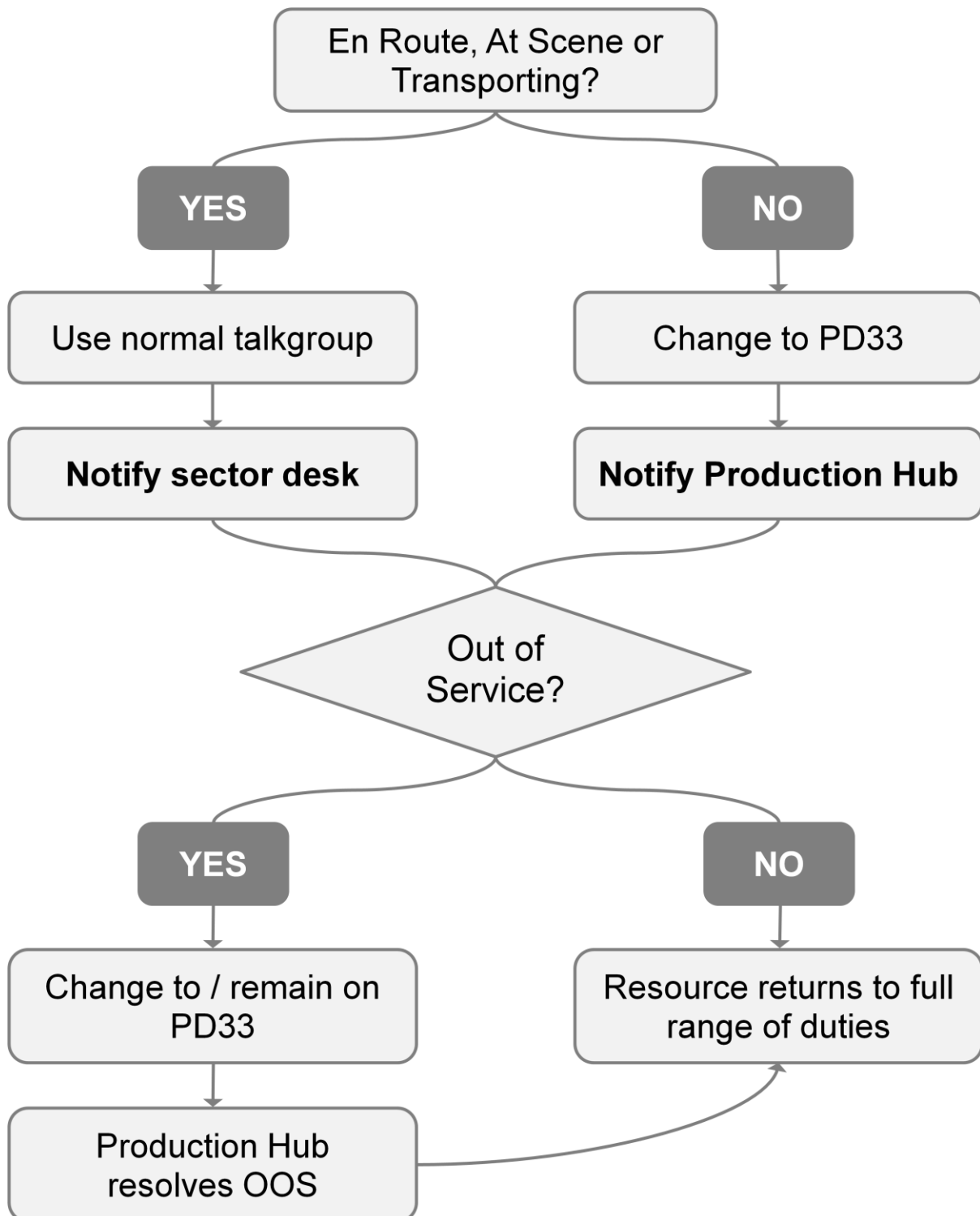- Access to appropriate decontamination facilities (i.e. a sluice and cleaning materials)

        *Service dates on trolley beds and carry chairs are for guidance. If a service date has elapsed this should be escalated to the Production Hub but will not render the vehicle OOS.

PART B – Procedure

8   Procedure for Responding Staff

8.1   Any Resource unable to undertake its full range of duties must declare this immediately, using the following process:

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │   En Route, At Scene or  │
                    │       Transporting?      │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
              ┌────YES────┐           ┌────NO────┐
              ▼                                  ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
    │ Use normal       │          │ Change to PD33   │
    │ talkgroup        │          │                  │
    └──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
              ▼                                  ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
    │ Notify sector    │          │ Notify           │
    │ desk             │          │ Production Hub   │
    └──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘

                    ◇ Out of Service? ◇

         ┌────YES────┐           ┌────NO────┐
         ▼                                  ▼
  ┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
  │ Change to /      │          │ Resource returns │
  │ remain on PD33   │          │ to full range of │
  │                  │          │ duties           │
  └──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
         ▼
  ┌──────────────────┐
  │ Production Hub   │
  │ resolves OOS     │
  └──────────────────┘
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8.2   Any Resource that has been OOS for any reason, and becomes fully available, should declare its 'available' status by pressing the "Available on Radio" MDT button or using the appropriate hand-portable radio sequence. The button press must be performed even if the MDT indicates that the Resource already has an available status. There is no requirement verbally to notify the Production Hub or EOC that a Resource is fully available, unless there is a material change in the condition of the Resource – for example, a vehicle defect which resolves itself.

8.3   Any unjustifiable delay by Responding Staff in declaring a change in their availability is likely to be viewed as a disciplinary matter. This includes any further changes to their availability once any OOS event has commenced.

8.4   In the event that EOC falls back to paper operations, all new cases of OOS must be declared by the Responding Staff to the appropriate sector desk, irrespective of the status of the Resource. Following notification, the Responding Staff should change to PD33 unless otherwise notified.

8.5   All staff are obliged to notify the Production Hub of anything with the potential to cause OOS, even if this is at some time in the future (for example, a vehicle defect).

8.6   No member of staff may undertake or direct another member of staff to undertake a vehicle change without express approval, in advance, by a Production Coordinator.

8.7   No member of staff may use or direct another member of staff to use a liveried ambulance or FRU for the purposes of transportation between Trust premises, without express approval, in advance, by a Production Coordinator. This does not include PTS vehicles.

9   Procedure for Managers

9.1   Any manager wishing to restrict the availability of an on-duty Resource in any way must contact the Production Hub on PD33 or, if radio contact is not possible, by telephone. The sole exception is where the resource is *en route*, *at scene* or *transporting* in which case the initial contact should be with the appropriate EOC sector desk.

9.2   Planned OOS (that is, the abstraction is recorded in advance on GRS) should be facilitated by the Production Coordinator unless an overriding reason exists which was not evident at the time the OOS was planned.

9.3   Unplanned OOS will be considered by the Production Coordinator as per the process laid down in section 11.

9.4   Any OOS status change is the sole decision of the Production Coordinator.

9.5   If an OOS event commences following a request by a manager, it remains the absolute responsibility of the Responding Staff (not the manager) to communicate any changes in availability, including the conclusion of the OOS event.

9.6   If is the manager's responsibility to notify the Production Hub of any change in the reason for an OOS event, once it has commenced.

10   Procedure for Control Services staff

10.1   Any member of Responding Staff contacting EOC regarding an OOS matter who is not *en route*, *at scene* or *transporting* must be referred to the Production Hub on PD33.

10.2   If a member of Responding Staff with an eligible status as in 10.1 contacts EOC regarding an OOS matter, it is the responsibility of the radio operator to verify that there is a *prima facie* basis for the OOS event.

10.3   If there is no *prima facie* basis for the OOS event, the Resource's status should not be changed and the Responding Staff should be directed to continue with the full range of duties.

10.4   If there is a *prima facie* basis for the OOS event, the radio operator will change the Resource's status to "EOC" using the appropriate CPCAD command.

10.5   The radio operator must then direct the Responding Staff to change to talkgroup PD33 and await further instructions.

10.6   Upon handover to the Production Hub, EOC staff should play no further part in the management or resolution of an OOS event unless otherwise requested to by a Production Coordinator.

10.7   In the event of a loss of CPCAD functionality, all OOS notifications will be made to EOC by the Responding Staff. EOC staff should follow the terms of OP/066 or OP/068. EOC staff should notify a Production Coordinator by telephone immediately upon changing the status of a Resource to OOS. Following notification to the Production Hub, the terms of this procedure continue to apply.

11   Procedure for Production Hub staff

11.1   The primary means of communication between Production Coordinators and Responding Staff will be by verbally by Airwave radio. In certain circumstances, verbal communication by telephone will be appropriate. Only as a last resort should Production Coordinators communicate through messaging systems such as SMS or MDT messages.

11.2   Any OOS event will initially be given one of the following holding Codes:

HUB   for all people-related OOS
VRC   for all vehicle-related OOS
EOC   for any OOS initiated by EOC as in section 10

11.3   The holding Code is a mechanism for making a Resource immediately unavailable whilst a more detailed triage takes place. Its particular role is in ensuring that the allocation of a Resource to an event is not impeded by the selection of a Resource which may be on the verge of becoming OOS.

11.4   The use of a holding Code has the same effect as Category 1 OOS (as in section 6).

11.5   OOS events originating within EOC will be given the "EOC" holding Code by the appropriate radio operator.

11.6 OOS events notified directly to the Production Hub will be given the appropriate holding Code on the basis of the nature of the OOS.

11.7 Any OOS with a holding Code must be triaged and re-coded to the appropriate OOS Code by a Production Coordinator within 90 seconds of the start of the OOS event. Once a holding Code has been used once, a holding Code cannot be used again within the same OOS event.

11.8 If upon the initial report there is no *prima facie* basis for the OOS event, the Resource must be returned immediately to a fully available state and this decision communicated directly to the Responding Staff by the Production Coordinator.

11.9 If there is a *prima facie* basis for the OOS event, the Production Coordinator should commence a triage process which must establish the following key facts as far as reasonably practicable:

- The nature of the OOS
- The impact on the ability of the Resource to respond to a full range of duties
- The potential length of the OOS event
- The options available for resolution

11.10 Based on the information obtained during the triage, the Production Coordinator will select a Code (as in Appendix 1) and apply that Code to the OOS event on CPCAD. The Production Coordinator will also communicate this decision directly to the Responding Staff.

11.11 Any subsequent changes of Category or Code within the same OOS event must also be reflected on CPCAD, and communicated directly to the Responding Staff, by the Production Coordinator.

11.12 An OOS event requested by a manager (as in section 9) will be subject to the process laid down in this section.

11.13 Once an OOS event has commenced, it is the responsibility of the Production Coordinator to ensure the event and the underlying cause are resolved. Where an OOS event has been resolved but the underlying cause has not, it is the Production Coordinator's responsibility to ensure the underlying cause is itself resolved or the matter formally handed over to another responsible individual. The closure of an OOS event does not necessarily mark the discharging of the Production Coordinator's responsibilities.

For example, an OOS event relating to a defective vehicle may be resolved by transferring the Responding Staff to another vehicle. However in this case it is also the Production Coordinator's responsibility to ensure that the Vehicle Resource Centre has taken responsibility for the resolution of the vehicle defect.

This responsibility also applies where an OOS event resolves itself because the OOS Resource reaches the end of its shift.

11.14 In the event of a loss of CPCAD functionality, all notifications of OOS will be made directly to EOC. Each new case of OOS will then be made by EOC to a Production Coordinator by telephone. Once notified, the same procedure (section 11) should be followed as if CPCAD was fully functional. Any subsequent change in OOS status, including a return to full availability, must be notified immediately (by telephone) to EOC by the Production Coordinator.

11.15 In the event that a major incident is declared, the Production Supervisor will instruct the Production Coordinators to undertake an immediate triage of every current OOS episode and where possible, restore OOS Resources to a state of availability.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
Intended Audience	This Policy applies to all staff.
Dissemination	This policy (which replaces OP/044) will be uploaded to the Pulse and announcements made in the RIB and on the Pulse.
Communications	Briefings will take place for all EOC and Production Hub staff. The flow chart shown in section 8.1 will be distributed to all operational staff by means of local briefings.
Training	Relevant training will have been completed locally for Production Hub staff before the implantation of the policy.

Monitoring:

Aspect to be monitored	Frequency of monitoring AND Tool used	Individual/ team responsible for carrying out monitoring AND Committee/ group where results are reported	Committee/ group responsible for monitoring outcomes/ recommendations	How learning will take place
Operational aspects	Monitoring of compliance on a day to day basis will be by the Resource Production Manager. Yearly review to be conducted.	The Resource Production Manager will produce a report for the Assistant Director of Operations (Fleet & Logistics) which will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT).	SMT	Bulletins and amendments to procedure as deemed necessary.
Technical aspects	Monitoring compliance on a day to day basis will be undertaken by all Production Hub staff and any problems escalated to the Resource Production Manager.	The Resource Production Manager will produce a report to the OOS Project Group.	OOS Project Group	Bulletins and amendments to procedure as deemed necessary.

OOS codes and their meanings

CPCAD	Description	Unit Status	Available to Respond
Production Hub OOS CODES			
FUELRD	Red for fuel/Critical fuel, unavailable	OOS	No
FUELUN	Off the air refuelling, unavailable	OOS	No
AWAIT	Awaiting return of vehicle	OOS	No
CLEAN	Cleaning vehicle/uniform at station/facility	OOS	No
CPVA	Child protection/Vulnerable adult form	OOS	No
INFECT	Infectious vehicle/uniform, cannot respond (e.g. contaminated with body fluids)	OOS	No
MISSEQ	Essential equipment missing, cannot respond (If the vehicle is not sufficiently equipped to provide Basic Life Support, e.g., no bag-valve mask and /or a Defibrillator of any type.)	OOS	No
IMPOUN	Impounded by police	OOS	No
SDOWN	All OOS initiated by a manager	OOS	No
SINGLE	Single staffed	OOS	No
TRAIN	VCS undertaking Training or PDR	OOS	No
UNSTAF	Unstaffed / Nil reply station	OOS	No
VCSRTC	Crew involved in RTC	OOS	No
WELF	OOS for a welfare reason (requested by Responding Staff)	OOS	No
PAPER	On a Paper event (post OP-066 Fall Back)	OOS	No
AIRWAV	Airwave Main Set Defective	OOS	No
BDOWN	Vehicle break down requiring assistance	OOS	No
DEFECT	Defective vehicle	OOS	No
MDTUN	MDT Unavailable – AVL not working	OOS	No
VEHNO	No vehicle available	OOS	No
VWORKS	Vehicle at a workshop awaiting repair	OOS	No
TLIFT	Vehicle has a tail-lift defect awaiting repair	OOS	No
TYRES	Vehicle has a tyre defect awaiting repair	OOS	No
DIRTY	Soiled uniform/vehicle (no infection hazard)	DSP	Yes
EQUIP	Non-essential equipment missing, able to respond	DSP	Yes
MDTAV	MDT Available - Defect but AVL works	DSP	Yes
FACIL	Urgent Facilities – Staff to use nearest hospital/Ambulance Station	OOS	No
PLAN	Any planned stand-downs as shown in exception reporting	OOS	No

CPCAD	Description	Unit Status	Available
Holding CODES			
VRC	Temporary holding code for all vehicle-related OOS	OOS	No
HUB	Temporary holding code for all people-related OOS	OOS	No
EOC	Temporary holding code for all OOS initiated by EOC	OOS	No

CPCAD	Description	Unit Status	Available to Respond
EOC Codes			
FUELAV	Available and mobile for fuel	DSP	Yes
RFB	Return for Break	DSP	Yes
SRUN	Service Run	DSP	Yes
AWAY	Away from vehicle	DSP	Yes

"OOS" means the Resource is unavailable for dispatch.
"DSP" means the Resource is dispatchable but not subject to auto-dispatch.