

Frequently Asked Questions

Emergency preparedness policy for clients and services 2016

What is the Emergency preparedness policy for clients and services?

The *Emergency preparedness policy for clients and services* (the policy) provides guidance to the department and service providers in the health and human services sectors to prepare for and respond to emergencies such as bushfire, heatwave, storms and floods.

While emergencies may occur at any time of the year, there is a heightened risk of emergencies associated with the summer period. The policy is located at:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/emergencies-and-preparedness/emergency-preparedness/summer-preparedness-kit

Is this a new policy?

No. This policy was issued in October 2016 and replaces the *Emergency preparedness policy for clients and services* issued in October 2015.

How is this policy different to previous versions?

There are no substantive changes to the policy intent or requirements for planning and responding to emergencies.

Changes reflect departmental restructures that have occurred since October 2015, legislative and program changes.

What information is available to support policy implementation?

The policy is supported by four documents:

- *Relocation, sheltering and evacuation guide*. A guide to emergency planning for the health and human services sectors
- *Reference guide and glossary*
- Implementation tables for the human services sector
- *What to do in a fire, flood or other emergency* – poster describing what to do if your facility is under threat.

The documents are located at:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/emergencies-and-preparedness/emergency-preparedness/summer-preparedness-kit

What services are covered by this policy?

The policy applies to all types of services that are:

- delivered from department owned or managed facilities
- delivered by departmental staff
- provided through departmental funding
- regulated by the department (including supported residential services).

The policy is relevant for services in the following health and human services sectors: health, mental health, aged care, disability services, out-of-home care, public and community housing, homelessness services, youth justice and secure services, state owned sport and recreation facilities and state owned residential camps.

What do operational divisions need to do with the policy?

Managers and staff need to be aware of and understand the policy and ensure it is implemented effectively across all service streams.

Operational divisions have established relationships with service providers across the health and human services sector and have a good understanding of the local risk environments. Managers and staff are asked to distribute the policy broadly and encourage the health and human services sectors to prepare for emergencies and plan their response on days when fire, heatwave and other emergencies may pose a risk.

What do service providers need to do with policy?

Service providers, including department service delivery streams, are responsible for preparing their facilities and services for external emergencies, and for planning their response on days when emergencies may pose a risk. Service providers must have emergency management plans in place, inclusive of activation triggers and communication arrangements. Planning should involve active engagement with local emergency service agencies and local government. These plans should be reviewed, exercised and updated regularly.

What are directed actions?

Directed actions are specific actions mandated by the department, which services must undertake in preparation for, and in response to, emergencies. Directed actions only apply to services in:

- the disability service stream
- the out-of-home care service stream

and only under the following conditions:

- where facilities or clients are located in areas designated as VFRR-B extreme risk or assessed as being at high bushfire risk, and
- their weather district is subject to a code red declaration.

Clients and services subject to directed actions must implement their client bushfire leaving-early plan or relocation plan when a code red is declared in their weather district.

All services are to notify the department of all relocations or cessations that:

- were completed (according to the plan or otherwise) – reporting this no later than 9 am on the code red day
- have returned to normal arrangements – reporting this no later than five days after the code red day.