

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY

Quality Area: NQS 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

Policy Owner: Safety and Compliance

A light teal speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'Why this is important' in a dark teal, handwritten-style font.

Why this is
important

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

This policy outlines the organisation’s approach to emergency management to ensure the safety, wellbeing, rights, and best interests of children are the paramount consideration at all times. It establishes a consistent framework for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies, in line with legislative requirements and recognised best practice, to protect children, families, team members, and visitors.

2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

All Team Members, Children, Students, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors

3.0 What is our Policy:

Each centre will have the documents and equipment to ensure that they know how to respond to an emergency. This includes an Emergency Management Plan (EMP), and Evacuation Diagrams displayed at each exit.

We ensure that centre facilities remain safe and compliant by maintaining a combination of fire safety and emergency systems. This includes a fire panel and alarm system, smoke or thermal detectors, emergency lighting, and sprinkler systems, all of which are regularly tested with formal reports. In addition, fire hoses, fire extinguishers, and fire blankets are tested, tagged, and maintained to ensure they remain in good working condition.

Operationally, a working telephone and emergency telephone numbers will be available on the important phone numbers document and displayed in each play space as well as in the administration area. And at least one team member must hold a current, approved first aid qualification and be at the centre during operating hours. They need to be immediately available in the event of an emergency.

3.1 Emergency Management Plan (EMP)

All centres will have an *Emergency Management Plan* (EMP) that meets Australian Standards. The EMP will reflect and document specific evacuation requirements to support centres to exit the building including how to evacuate non ambulant children and adults.

The EMP will be in place for (5) five years and a review conducted annually or sooner if information changes. The EMP will include a documented risk assessment to identify potential emergencies particular to that centre. It may include procedures for the following.

- natural disaster or weather event
- fire / bushfire
- bomb threat
- gas leak, chemical or hazardous leaks and spills, loss of power or water
- building invasion, intrusion or personal threat
- medical emergency
- structural instability

3.2 Emergency Management Plan Development and Review

We classify centres based on risk, then implement a proactive approach to emergency management in response to this classification. Centres are classified as low, high, extreme or other.

1. **Low risk centres** are generally single level with evacuation egress and assembly that are unobstructed and uncomplex.
2. **High Risk Centres** are those multi-storey centres above three levels, where we are evacuating babies from above a second level and geographical locations which may experience significant weather conditions such as cyclones.
3. **Extreme Risk Centres** that are considered high bushfire areas on the Bushfire at Risk Register, evacuation from high rise multi-tenanted centres with shared evacuation paths.
4. **Other classification** relates to those centres that have specific requirements documented on their Service Approval or in their Development Approval that dictated or sets out emergency management drill or other requirements.

We ensure all centres have an EMP that caters for the centres individual circumstances and address the different emergency responses that may occur. Some centres may also have additional external training and observed drills implemented as part of managing the risk, this includes internal /or training for centres in bushfire areas.

3.3 Emergency Management Plan – Review Process

EMPs will be subject to a large review every five (5) years or earlier if there is a significant change to the evacuation route or change to the building that impacts evacuation.

All centres will undertake an annual review and update sections of their EMP. The Compliance Team will advise when an EMP is going to be reviewed. All requests for external EMP updates or review will be managed by the Compliance Team.

3.4 Emergency Management Drills

3.4.1 Emergency management drills are carried out quarterly.

- a. We highly recommend these to be undertaken monthly, at different days of the week, times of day and practicing different emergency situations (documented in your EMP) so that a variety of team members and children can be involved.
- b. It is highly recommended that a lockdown be conducted once a quarter to ensure our children and teams are familiar with lockdown procedures in addition to evacuation.

3.4.2 Each emergency drill is documented on the *Emergency Management Drill Report*.

- a. This documentation is kept for a minimum of three years and stored in the safety folder in Centre Desktop and /or the centre safety folder.
- b. All centres will be provided with the equipment required to undertake an emergency drill safely. This may include emergency cots, prams and / or carriers or other equipment that are to be used for any children not walking during evacuations. Evacuation cots are clearly marked to ensure that all team members know which cots should be used for evacuation purposes.
- c. Cots/equipment are checked regularly and maintained in good condition to ensure they remain in good working order.

3.5 Off-Site Evacuation Drills

All centres must conduct a minimum of one off-site evacuation drills to their assembly point each year to ensure preparedness in the event of an emergency. Refer to the Guardian Way for information about how and when to conduct a safe off-site evacuation.

Where a service approval specifies a requirement for off-site evacuations, the third-party–conducted contractor evacuation will be counted toward that requirement. However, if additional evacuations are required under state-based

legislation or as a condition of the service approval, those additional evacuations will be provided. Where an external contractor conducts these drills, these must be documented on an *Emergency Management Drill Report*. All recommendations received in an external contractor's report, must be implemented with a month of receiving the report.

An off-site evacuation is considered an excursion/outing once the premises are exited. Therefore, centres must:

- complete a *Routine Outing, Excursion and Incursion Parent Authorisation Form* and
- a *Routine Outing, Excursion and Incursion Risk Assessment* prior to conducting the drill.

Centres may choose to classify the evacuation drill as a routine outing at the beginning of the year, including proposed dates, and then provide families with at least seven days' notice to confirm details such as the date, time, destination, and purpose of the drill.

3.6 Evacuation Diagrams

Evacuation Diagrams must meet the Australian Standard and are located near each emergency exit door. Evacuation Procedures must include the procedures to evacuate. These are updated every five (5) years or more frequently if there is a change to the premises that impacts evacuation.

3.7 Training

We ensure centre-based team members are knowledgeable in emergency management, understanding procedures and site-specific requirements that have been identified in the EMP. The Approved Provider engages third party experts to ensure that training and other advice can be provided.

State-based requirements related to emergency management including fire safety are met. This may include fire wardens, first-aid and other prescribed emergency training.

Incident Alerts and Safety Summaries are developed in response to incidents or to address knowledge. These are accessible to all team members to support improvements.

Emergency Drills are considered training opportunities for team members to understand effective emergency procedures where centre specific emergencies are regularly practiced.

During the induction, new team members will have access to this policy and the Emergency Management Plan. They will also receive an overview of evacuation routes, lock down procedures, fire equipment and their role in an emergency.

3.8 Children who are non-ambulant or not confident walkers including the use of evacuation aids

Additional equipment is required to support the safe evacuation of non-ambulant children (those who are not yet confident walkers). This includes:

- a. Where evacuation routes include stairs, specific procedures for safely evacuating non-ambulant children must be documented in the centre's *Emergency Management Plan*.
- b. Equipment to support evacuation may include purpose-designed evacuation cots, porta cots, four-seater prams, and approved baby carriers.
- c. Cots and emergency aides must be in good working order and will be checked as part of evacuation drills.
- d. Where there are maintenance issues with any aide, this will be raised immediately to the Lead Educator / Centre Manager for action. In these cases, a plan will be developed to address how you will evacuate whilst these items are being repaired or replaced.
- e. To support evacuation, evacuation cots must be positioned close to the sleep room door for quick access during an emergency. The arrangement of equipment, furniture and resources in the learning environment must enable a clear evacuation pathway for the emergency evacuation cot. No more than four non-ambulant children may be placed in an evacuation cot at one time.
- f. Evacuation cots that are designed and labelled by the manufacturer as suitable for emergency use may also be used for sleeping after other cots have been used.

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 The **Approved Provider** will:

1. Develop and provide expectations related to training and regular practices of the emergency responses
2. Respond to incidents in a timely and proportionate manner
3. Engage third party emergency management experts where required
4. Ensure that where a Be Safe Report is received by a centre that this is reported in the prescribed timeframes to the appropriate reporting bodies

We recommend the **Portfolio Manager**:

1. Be involved in a full off-site emergency evacuation drill annually, for each of their centres. They will support and contribute to the completion *Emergency Management Drill Report*. This will provide an opportunity for suggestions, and identify any issues for continuous improvement

4.2 The **Centre Manager / Nominated Supervisor (NS)** will:

1. Ensure that emergency drills are practiced quarterly and documented on the *Emergency Management Drill Report*
2. Ensure actual emergencies are documented on the Emergency Management Drill Report
3. Maintain the required equipment and resources to support emergency responses
4. Ensure evacuation diagrams are displayed at each emergency exit as documented on each diagram
5. Ensure all team members are aware of and have access to the *Emergency Management Plan* and they understand how to respond to an emergency and their role to support safe and effective responses to emergencies
6. Induct all team members (including casual team members), volunteers and students so they are aware of the EMP, related procedures and understand their responsibilities during an emergency
7. Ensure that if they identify additional emergency management risks that impacts their EMP that this is referred to our internal safety team so that the EMP can be updated
8. Assume the role of Chief Fire Warden if the building does not already have someone assigned to this role
9. Ensure all equipment that supports emergency management is available and in good working order such as warden caps, children's vests, ropes and evacuation bags
10. Review which team members were present during evacuations drills and use this information to inform upcoming drill times and days, so that a variety of team members are involved in emergency evacuation procedures
11. Ensure that emergency services apps are downloaded on all centre iPads to support emergency management decisions
12. Ensure that all team members complete

4.3 We recommend the **Centre Manager / Nominated Supervisor (NS)**:

1. Conduct an emergency drill monthly and at least one of these in the quarter to be a lockdown. These emergencies should be at different times of the day
2. Request that the Regulatory Authority provide a written recommendation to our Compliance Team when verbal advice has been given regarding changes to their centre's Emergency Management Plan or Evacuation Diagram.
3. Consider all emergency responses when designing or configuring spaces or making changes to the indoor or outdoor environment
4. Ensure that families are regularly reminded of the emergency procedures in place at the centre
5. Ensure whistles are readily accessible (if there is no other alarm system) and all team members know how to initiate a lockdown
6. Consider a combination of planned and unplanned evacuation drills

7. Involve team members in a debrief/discussion after each drill to identify areas that need improvement or changes that might be necessary
8. Conduct a monthly audit of emergency bags to identify and replace any out of date or used items. Emergency contact lists must be reprinted every 3 months or sooner if a new child is enrolled.

4.4 Team Members will:

1. Ensure they understand their centre or support office Emergency Management Plan, procedure/s and site-specific information
2. Ensure each child is signed in or out correctly, and rectify this record immediately
3. Sign themselves in/out on Time Target and in and out of the room on the Educator Log
4. Familiarise themselves with the emergency procedures in each area of the centre that they access as part of their day-to-day work
5. Assist the Nominated Supervisor in identifying risks and potential emergency situations
6. Participate in drills as outlined in the centre EMP
7. Be aware of the placement of, and know how to operate communications and emergency equipment
8. Ensure evacuation paths, exit doors, emergency equipment is always clear and unobstructed
9. Participate in and complete all required training

We recommend that Team Members:

1. Ensure all items in emergency bags are present and always stocked
2. Be alert and respond to the immediate needs of all children and visitors throughout any drills
3. Provide children with learning opportunities about emergency situations and procedures

Families will:

1. Be aware and follow any direction given to them during an emergency
2. Ensure they sign their child in/out correctly
3. Give permission on the enrolment form for child/ren to be involved in emergency drills
4. Provide emergency contact details on child's enrolment form and ensure that these are kept up to date

5.0 Definitions

Emergency Management Plan (EMP) is a written set of instructions that outlines what workers and others at the workplace should do in an emergency. It may also include a copy of all the buildings evacuation diagrams.

Evacuation Diagrams provide building occupants and visitors with information regarding how to evacuate the facility and where the relevant emergency equipment is located throughout. Building occupants and visitors will have access to these diagrams to predetermine the safest options available to them should an emergency occur at that facility.

Multi-Level centre

Guardian Childcare & Education defines a multi-level centre as any building that includes more than two floors; whether split level/mezzanine or multi levels that is licenced and non-licenced space and accessible but not limited to children, families, team members, third parties including volunteers and visitors.

6.0 Tools and Resources

<p>The most important documents I need are: Emergency Management Plan Template Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) EMP Annual Update Monthly Emergency Management Drill Report Emergency Evacuation Bag Checklist Incident Process Poster</p>	<p>Other supporting documents will include: Emergency Management Guardian Way page Sample Scenarios to Support Drills First Aid Policy</p>
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7.0 Additional Information

Legislation

Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008 (Qld)
Emergency Management Act 2013 (Vic)
Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (Qld)
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (SA)
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (NSW)
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (ACT)
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (SA)

Standards

Australian Standard AS 3745–2010, Planning for Emergencies in Facilities (Standards Australia, 2010)
Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1841.1:2007, Portable Fire Extinguishers – General Requirements (Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand, 2007)

7.0 Source Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Regulation 97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
Regulation 98	Telephone or other communication equipment
Regulation 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures must be followed



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