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| Health and Human Services Sector  Emergency Management Policy |
| Frequently Asked Questions |

## What is the Health and Human Services Sector Emergency Management Policy?

The policy describes the roles and responsibilities of the health and human services sector to prepare for and respond to emergencies such as bushfire, extreme heat, floods and storms.

It is intended to ensure that all services have undertaken appropriate emergency preparedness and service continuity planning to maximise the health, safety and wellbeing of clients or patients during and after emergencies.

The policy replaces the *Health and Human Services Sector* *Emergency Preparedness Policy 2018-19.*

## Which services are covered by this policy?

Compliance with this policy is required by:

* services that are directly delivered by the department
* agencies delivering services that are funded by the department, as outlined in service agreements, funding plans and other relevant performance agreement documentation
  + any other agency or service provider, as stated in contractual agreements or regulatory/registration requirements, including quality and safeguards for disability service providers involved in the transfer of Government services.

Agencies who do not meet any of the above conditions are out of scope of the policy.

## I used to be a funded service, but I’m now an NDIS provider. What does this mean for me?

If you still have a funding agreement or other contractual arrangement with the department, or your conditions of registration require you to apply the Victorian Quality and Safeguards arrangements, you will still need to apply the policy.

If your registration as an NDIS provider has completely transferred to the NDIS commission then you will not need to apply the policy.

**What are the department’s responsibilities under the policy?**

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

Operations 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 comply with the policy?**

Service providers, including department service delivery streams, are responsible for preparing their facilities and services for external emergencies and for planning their response in situations 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 all key stakeholders, local emergency service agencies and local government. These plans should be reviewed, exercised and updated regularly.

## What does my organisation need to do differently this year?

As with previous requirements, services directly managed by the department and those that are funded by the department must undertake emergency preparedness activities and have an up-to-date emergency management plan consistent with the policy.

In scope services:

* + Refer to services covered by this policy above.

Out of scope services:

* Disability services formerly funded by the department that have transitioned to the NDIS and are within the purview of the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
* Aged-care services regulated by the Commonwealth Government
* Private hospitals
* Supported Residential Services.

## What is a Code Red day?

Between 1 November and 30 April each year, the Bureau of Meteorology provides a daily Fire Danger Rating for each weather district in Victoria. You can find out what weather district you’re in and what the Fire Danger Ratings mean by visiting [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au).

Code Red (known as Catastrophic in other Australian states) is the highest level of rating in Victoria and it signifies the worst conditions for grassfires or bushfires. A Code Red Fire Danger Rating means that if a fire were to start:

* it is likely to be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving
* fire services may find it difficult to put out
* there is a high likelihood that people in the path of a fire could be killed or seriously injured
  + homes are not designed or constructed to withstand in these conditions - even the best prepared homes will not be safe.

Leaving high-risk bushfire areas the night before a Code Red day or early in the morning of a Code Red day is the safest option for your survival – do not wait and see.

## In addition to the policy, what other materials are available to support me to develop a plan?

The department has developed *Preparing for emergencies: A reference guide for the Health and Community Services Sectors*. This document is designed to assist any organisation across the sectors to plan for and respond to emergencies.

In addition, in-scope services can access a Google earth overlay of the CFA Victorian Fire Risk Register – Bushfires (obtainable from your DHHS contact).

## How can I get more information?

Visit <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/emergency-preparedness> for more information.

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