



Residential aged care homes – preparing for an emergency event

Key activities for residential aged care homes preparing for, and responding to emergency events may include:

Preparing for an event

•	Consider the range of hazards that are most likely to affect your aged care home (home).
•	Take all reasonable measures to ensure that your home can withstand the most likely hazards.
•	Ensure you are aware of any state/territory or regional/local emergency management arrangements and requirements, including changes from previous seasons and possible trigger points for evacuation
•	Develop an appropriate emergency and disaster management plan that addresses ongoing needs of vulnerable people receiving care in the event your home becomes isolated (water, food, power, communication, medical supplies etc.).
•	Determine appropriate staffing levels to meet potentially higher care needs during periods of high risk, including heat waves and evacuations.
•	Develop an evacuation plan that includes realistic arrangements for transportation and alternative accommodation relevant to different scenarios (e.g. only your home is affected or all homes in the region are affected) and includes provision for care recipient identification and care-plan documents.
•	Liaise with your local hospital/s to ensure the integration of your emergency and disaster management plans with its plan (particularly important in rural or remote locations).
•	Develop agreements with other service providers for alternative accommodation in the instance your or other homes need to partially or fully evacuate people receiving care. *
•	Contact local emergency services to seek advice and ensure the service is aware of your homes size, location, and the care needs of those under your care. Provide key personnel contact details to the emergency service. Ensure your key personnel have access to local emergency service/s contact details.
•	During any period of high risk, ensure your key personnel monitor emergency broadcasts and the media for localised warnings and advice.
•	Discuss emergency and disaster management plans with staff, people receiving care and their families or representatives.

•	Develop a plan for recovery following an event including post trauma counselling for people receiving care and staff.
•	Undertake exercises to test key parts of your plan to identify gaps and to provide staff the opportunity to put into practice their specific responsibilities.

During an event

•	Liaise with local emergency services to determine the seriousness of any emergency situation and the level of risk posed to your home and people receiving care.
•	Activate emergency and disaster management plans; ensuring decisions are timely and informed and whether there is the potential for a partial or complete evacuation of your home.
•	Continue to deliver appropriate care in accordance with your emergency and disaster management plan. This may require sourcing additional staff or volunteers.
•	Keep staff, family and people receiving care well informed during and after the emergency situation.
•	When safe, and if required, provide advice to the Department of Health and Aged Care about any impacts of the event on your home and people receiving care.

Following an event

•	Assess the impact of the event on your home, staff and people receiving care and take steps to return to business as usual.
•	Liaise with and request assistance as required from local agencies providing recovery and other relevant services.
•	Review and amend your emergency and disaster management plans, as needed, considering lessons learned from previous events.

*As part of the emergency planning process you are expected to explore and document alternative accommodation options and where possible make arrangements at a local/regional level. These arrangements may include, but not be limited to, discussions about ongoing care of people receiving your care services, staffing requirements and associated costs.

You need to give particular consideration to transport options for evacuations, recognising that ambulance services may be fully occupied responding to other emergencies calls, and alternative transport providers may have limited capacity. Multiple alternate means of transport, suitable for frail, elderly residents, such as buses, vans or cars need to be considered alongside access to your site and availability at short notice and 24-hour contact details.

In an emergency event, including an event that has impacted your home or a situation where other homes are relocating or evacuating people receiving care, officers from the [Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#) may contact you to:

- determine the impact of the event on your home and whether any need for additional assistance is being met; and
- ascertain the potential of your home to provide emergency accommodation to relocating people receiving care from at-risk homes.