Title	Emergency Planning for Major Events in the Community Setting
Purpose	This document aims to provide guidance for service providers to consider in the planning for some of the major and reasonably foreseeable emergencies that may impact vulnerable persons being supported by community supports and/or services in the community setting. This guideline should be read in conjunction with **Guideline for Infection Control and PPE's in the Community Setting**
Background	Each catastrophic event involves a unique set of circumstances. This document provides general guidance only. Thoughtful actions based on the assessment of the current situation is always required when responding to an event. However, prior planning to manage emergency events will reduce potential risks noting that service user Health and Safety are the overriding priorities in all emergency situations. *A catastrophic disaster is what is beyond our current arrangements, thinking, experience and imagination (i.e., that has overwhelmed our technical, non-technical and social systems and resources, and has degraded or disabled governance structures and strategic and operational decision-making functions).* *– Emergency Management Australia* It should be noted that severe to catastrophic disasters differ from emergencies in that they exceed business as usual emergency management systems and capability design parameters.
Disclaimer	This guideline contains practical guidance to support service providers in safely delivering supports and services in the community setting in the event of a large-scaled emergency event. This information does not in any way replace legislative, regulatory, or contractual requirements. Users of this document should seek appropriate expert advice in relation to their circumstances. ACIA does not accept any liability on the use of this guideline.

Definitions and Supporting Information	**Community Supports and/or Services** is defined as the provision of paid supports and services in a service users home or community. It includes, but is not limited to, the following activities of daily living: • clinical supports • community access • gardening and home maintenance • higher risk supports • housework or domestic assistance • nursing services • palliative care • personal care or support • respite care • social support • transport assistance **Service User:** is a person receiving supports to remain living independently in their community. Also, commonly known as a Participant, Consumer, Client, Care Recipient. **Service provider:** is an organisation or person accountable for the delivery of supports to service users. **Support Worker/staff/personnel:** also referred to as an attendant care worker, disability/aged care worker is an individual who is paid to assist or supervise a service User to perform tasks of daily living to support and maintain general wellbeing and enable meaningful involvement in social, family and community activities in the person's home and community. **Emergency Event:** is an event involving a sudden and large-scale alteration in state or circumstance which may also include Police / Military Operations, and Terrorism where there is the potential for widespread implications. In terms of its definition within this guideline, it refers to Natural Disaster, Severe Weather (Fire / Flood) and Health Pandemic with the potential of widespread implications for service delivery. **PPE:** Personal Protective Equipment.
Desired Outcome	To assist service providers to best respond to an emergency event in situations of Severe Weather (Fire / Flood) or Health Emergency (e.g., Communicable disease) in the interests and safety of their service users and personnel in the home and community setting.
Guideline	**Natural Disaster / Fire / Flood** 'Catastrophic' is the highest fire danger rating. If a fire starts during catastrophic conditions, lives, and homes will be at risk.

Service providers should:

- Ensure that policies, procedures, or instructions in the management of Health and Safety relating to emergency planning for large-scaled events are reviewed regularly to ensure currency of information on a regular basis and included as part of their internal audit program.
- Provide planned education on emergency policies, procedures or instructions for all staff and document same in the organisation's training register.
- Communicate with service users as to what is planned in the event of an emergency, and how the organisation will continue to support them.
- Review or develop a Business Continuity Plan to reflect actions in an emergency and ensure their workforce are familiar with their role/s in the plan.

Service User Risk Register

The Service User Risk Register can be used as a tool to identify service users residing in areas potentially may be affected by an emergency event. By identifying the LGA of the impacted area, it enables the service provider to quickly identify and respond to those at risk considering their medical or physical conditions, which in turn may add further risk if not identified promptly.

It is recommended that service providers maintain records of each service User, with the details of persons at most risk stored in a Service User Risk Register, with an assessed rating, which may be accessed remotely by the service provider when required. This includes persons at risk of both Environmental / Natural Disasters and critical Health Events / Pandemics in the community. The following information may be considered for the register:

- Service Username
- Service User Year of Birth
- Full Residential address
- LGA/Postcode
- Is this a High Fire / Flood Risk area?
- Home Phone / Mobile Phone
- Does the service user speak / understand English?
- If the service user is from a CALD background, what is their preferred language?
- Mobility/ Level of Assistance Required
- Senses – sight / hearing / smell
- Residential status- lives alone / family / carer
- Health issues - medical condition
- At risk of communicable diseases – e.g. Related to one of the medical issues
  listed on the register
- Pets in residence

Consider the following questions to better understand their independence should an emergency arise.

1. Transportation access
   a. Do they have transport if they need to evacuate
2. Mobility
   a. If they need to evacuate, are they physically independent to do this or
   b. do they require assistance
3. Social / Connection
   a. What are the names and contact details of neighbours, family, and
   b. friends if required to assist in an emergency
4. Evacuation Location
   a. In the event of emergency evacuation, where would the service user relocate to (obtain address and contact details to verify their safety should you be unable to contact them)
5. Communication
   a. Can they access emergency information, updates, and warnings
   b. Do they have a home phone and / or mobile phone
   c. If they need to evacuate and relocate for an interim period, where would they go and what are the contact / location details
   d. Service providers may also consider developing a checklist of actions useful in providing guidance for staff when presented with an emergency event.

Be Alert

Service providers have a responsibility to ensure their staff follow instructions to keep their service users safe. This includes:

- Knowing where their staff are located to identify if they are scheduled to provide services in areas that are or may be affected by severe weather and to avoid deploying staff into those areas in an emergency.
- Maintaining regular communication with staff to ensure they are safe and well, either through SMS or phone conversations.
- Documenting Services Users' individual requirements in their file and their support plan for reference in the case of an emergency.
- Refer to available resources that can provide guidance on emergency services that are available in the service user locations, including specific websites and flyers that can be printed for the service users' home as a reference guide.
- Providing regular communication during an event utilising available technology, such as phones, SMS to mobile phones, or social media, reminding service users and staff to:
  o Listen to the radio to receive updates and information on what is happening in their local community.

<table>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>

    o Avoid flood waters reminding them not to drive, ride, or walk-through flood waters or roads which are affected by floods.

    o Avoid fires – reminding them not to drive into an area where there is fire or fire warning.

Additional information and resources have been developed specifically for service users and service providers. Please visit <u>Disasters and emergencies: Managing Risk Attendant Care (living-with-attendant-care.info)</u>

Communication during an emergency

Service providers should develop a communication plan to be used during an emergency event to ensure all staff, service users, family / next of kin and funders are kept informed of any changes or developments.

Staff should participate in training as part of the service providers annual mandatory training requirements. This should include potential emergency situations such as flood, fire, and infection control.

Home Safety and Environmental checks are integral to ensuring everyone's wellbeing and should include fire safety equipment, location, risk, and evacuation method.

Encourage service users to have an evacuation plan and to be prepared to evacuate if advised by emergency services.

After an emergency event, a follow up and wellbeing check on service users and staff to assess service or support requirements.

<u>Emergency Calls</u>

The Australian Government, via the website Australian Communications and Media Authority (acma), has provided some comprehensive information on how and when to call the emergency services in Australia **including for Hearing and Speech impairments**. <u>Emergency calls | ACMA</u>.

Communication Plans during Crisis

Having a clear communication plan for service users and their families, as well as staff, affected by a disaster aids in providing a sense of calm and reassurance of the wellbeing of everyone along with supporting the ability to continue to deliver some <u>essential services</u> where they can be provided, in a safe manner. This stored information requires regular updates and review to ensure its currency.

Service users

<u>Contact Information</u> – requires that current contact information (phone, mobile, email and next of kin and emergency contacts) for service users be stored in a central and accessible location.

</td>
</tr>
</table>

Service User Communication Procedure – should be detailed on the support plan, which should be stored in a central and accessible location.

Staff / Organisation

Staff Contact Information – requires that current contact information (phone, mobile, email, emergency contacts) for all staff be stored in a central and accessible location, i.e.: hard copy, digital, via an organisations app etc.

Staff Communication Procedure – provides instructions of recommended methods of staff communication during the emergency (mass email, call tree).

Intra-Organisational Communication – identifies people within the organisation that need to be contacted to report and coordinate responses.

Emergency Services – lists contact numbers, websites, or apps for emergency services.

Communicable Diseases and Health Threats

Service providers should remind staff to stay home if they are unwell to protect vulnerable service users and other staff and be able to evidence regular training on the importance of universal precautions/infection control and the use and disposal of PPE.

Service users should also be made aware of the importance of informing a service provider if they are unwell with a potentially highly communicable disease.

Reporting

It is important to comply with general health orders and government directives and to remain updated on Commonwealth, State / Territory requirements for reporting during emergency events including the need for service providers to report any cases of communicable disease or interruption to service delivery.

Service providers should maintain awareness of these obligations, either through communication or alerts from those Authorities, checking their websites for updates or contacting them directly.

Please refer to ACIA's website for Guideline for Managing Infection Control and PPE's in the Community Setting.

Information access / storage

Organisations that fail to make contingency plans for their electronic and essential data may be inviting serious business disruptions when an emergency occurs.

Consideration and measures put in place to support your organisation if you need data protection, backup, and / or disaster recovery.

The types of disasters include not only environmental (flood, fire, earthquake), but may also include power outage, evacuation of premises, terrorism etc.

1. Identify Risks

For many organisations, losing data and information is the biggest threat. Start by identifying where the data is stored, if there are copies, and if so, where are the copies stored (onsite or in a separate location).

2. Think About Off-Site Backups

If an organisation does store data separate from its primary location, is it accessible now and later when you need to restore your data.

3. Consider Disaster Recovery Solutions

Many companies use cloud storage as a backup since it is easily scaled and cost-effective. Evaluate the physical and virtual locations of the data, then review how susceptible both would be to loss from fire, floods, or other events,

In addition to having cloud-based disaster recovery technology implemented and tested, IT teams need to practice their disaster recovery plans to understand what works well and where there are opportunities for improvement.

Things to consider and include in your planning:

1. What are the core functions of our business that we need to continue, no matter what?
2. How do we process payroll if we cannot access the building or computer systems?
3. How do we contact staff and clients if we do not have access to the building or computer systems?
4. How is our electronic data backed up?
5. How do we access our data offsite? Have we tested this? e.g. Service user information

Resource documents	**Australian Capital Territory (ACT)**
	ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA)
	https://www.esa.act.gov.au/fire-rescue
	ACT State Emergency Service (SES)
	https://esa.act.gov.au/state-emergency-service
	New South Wales (NSW)
	State Emergency Services (SES) NSW
	https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/
	NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)
	https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/
	Northern Territory (NT)
	NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (PFES)
	https://pfes.nt.gov.au/emergency-service
	Queensland (QLD)
	QLD Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)
	https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx
	State Emergency Services (SES) QLD
	https://www.ses.qld.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx
	South Australia (SA)
	South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service
	https://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp
	South Australian Country Fire Service
	https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp
	South Australian State Emergency Service (SES)
	https://www.ses.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp

Tasmania (TAS)

Tasmania Fire Service

https://www.fire.tas.gov.au/

TAS State Emergency Service (SES)

https://www.ses.tas.gov.au/

Victoria (VIC)

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)

https://www.frv.vic.gov.au

State Emergency Services (SES) VIC

https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/home

Western Australia (WA)

Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)

https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/aboutus/operationalinformation/Pages/stateemergencyservice.aspx

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au

Australian Government Department of Health

https://www.health.gov.au/

Managing Risk Attendant Care

http://managingrisk.living-with-attendant-care.info/Content/Disasters_and_Emergencies_a_Introduction.html

What is Resilient Community Organisations?

http://resilience.acoss.org.au/

Preparing for Emergencies

https://www.redcross.org.au/prepare

Physical Disability Council of NSW

https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/