

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE POLICY

Policy Details

Document Group: Health and Safety

Assigned Owner: Risk, Quality and Compliance

Approved by: Executive Leader Organisational Support

1. Purpose

Bendigo Community Health Services (BCHS) is committed to the implementation and maintenance of comprehensive and effective emergency preparedness and response approaches.

BCHS' emergency preparedness and response documents provide a formal framework to ensure that the organisation is placed to appropriately respond in the event of an emergency incident.

This policy provides guidance and direction for BCHS employees in relation to emergency preparedness and response, in addition to supporting appropriate planning, preparation, monitoring, decision making and responses.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all BCHS employees.

3. Definitions

Emergency Incident - For the purposes of this policy and related documents, the term emergency incident applies to an incident or circumstance that triggers BCHS' Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan to be activated. Minor incidents across BCHS sites may be appropriately dealt with by employees and management without the need for the emergency response plan to be activated.

Emergency Management Coordination Group – a group established within BCHS to lead, coordinate and oversee the activation of the response phase of BCHS' Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. BCHS' Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan outlines contact details for BCHS' Emergency Management Coordination Group members.

Refer to BCHS Key Definitions for the definitions of key words used in BCHS policies, procedures and related documents.

4. Policy Overview

BCHS is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of employees, clients, visitors and other persons in the event of an emergency incident.

BCHS' Emergency Preparedness and Response approach aims to:

- Provide guidance and direction in relation to BCHS' approach to emergency prevention and preparedness;
- Provide guidance and direction in relation to immediate and secondary responses in the event of an emergency incident;
- Support the continuity of critical services and supports in the event of an emergency incident;
- Support recovery and return to business as usual following an emergency incident.

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The objectives of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Framework are to:

- Ensure a safe, effective and coordinated response in the event of an emergency incident;
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of employees, clients and visitors during an emergency incident;
- To equip employees with the knowledge and skills to respond to an emergency incident, (where relevant) until the arrival of attending emergency services;
- Protect the site from further damage during and after an emergency incident;
- Educate and empower clients around their preparedness to respond to an emergency impacting the community more broadly.

BCHS' Emergency Preparedness and Response Framework aligns with Victoria's Health Emergency Response arrangements and the State Department's emergency preparedness and management documentation (including the State Emergency Management Plan).

BCHS will respond to directions from the appointed State Chief Officer, Emergency Management Commissioner and emergency services in the event of an emergency incident.

5. Policy

To ensure that appropriate approaches to emergency preparedness and response approaches are in place, BCHS will:

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan to guide employees in relation to emergency preparedness and response;
- Ensure appropriate monitoring of foreseeable emergency incidents through the Vic Emergency App and other emergency alerts;
- Maintain appropriate emergency infrastructure, facilities and emergency safety equipment appropriate to the size and complexity of the organisation;
- Ensure appropriate emergency preparedness and response training is provided to employees;
- Ensure regular emergency evacuation drills are completed routinely to test the organisation, procedures and employee responses, and ensure employees are familiar with what is expected of them in the event of an emergency incident;
- Maintain appropriate insurance coverage to protect against some of the risks which present within its business operations relating to emergency incidents;
- Wherever possible, support clients and the community with their own emergency preparedness and planning, understanding of key emergency alerts and warnings, and enacting their emergency response plans.

6. Related Legislation, Regulations and Standards

Country Fire Authority Act 1958 (Vic)
Emergency Management Act 1986 (Vic)
Emergency Management Act 2013 (Vic)
Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003 (Vic)
Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958 (Vic)

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7. Related Documents

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
 Appendix 1: Emergency Contact List
 Appendix 2: Emergency Preparedness List
 Appendix 3: Site Profile and Emergency Safety Equipment
 Appendix 4: Emergency Response Summary
 Appendix 5: Emergency Evacuation Protocol
 Appendix 6: Site Evacuation Diagrams
 Appendix 7: Fire Extinguishers
 Appendix 8: Fire Danger Ratings
 Appendix 9: Neighbourhood Safer Places (for fire ONLY)
 Appendix 10: Heat Health Day Plan
 Appendix 11: Catastrophic Fire Danger Day Plan
 Appendix 12: Pandemic Response Plan
 Business Continuity Policy

8. Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer

- Ensure implementation and review of appropriate emergency infrastructure, facilities and emergency safety equipment across BCHS;
- Lead, or delegate a member of BCHS' Emergency Management Coordination Group or Executive Leader or Chief Warden to lead, the activation of an emergency incident response as per BCHS' Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan;
- Ensure that BCHS maintains appropriate insurance coverage for protection against emergency incidents.

Executive Leader Organisational Support

- Ensure that employees have access to appropriate emergency preparedness and response training;
- Ensure that emergency evacuation drills are completed routinely.

BCHS Executive Leaders

- Ensure appropriate monitoring of foreseeable emergency incidents;
- Ensure they understand their responsibilities and comply with this policy and related documents;
- Ensure BCHS Senior Leaders understand their responsibilities and comply with this policy and related documents;
- Ensure this policy and related documents are regularly reviewed and maintained in line with applicable legislation, guidelines and standards;
- Ensure that any breaches of this policy are managed in line with Performance Improvement Policy and Procedures.

BCHS Senior Leaders

- Ensure appropriate monitoring of foreseeable emergency incidents;
- Ensure they understand their responsibilities and comply with this policy and related documents;
- Ensure BCHS employees understand their responsibilities and comply with this policy and related documents;
- Ensure that any breaches of this policy are managed in line with Performance Improvement Policy and Procedures.

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BCHS Employees

- Ensure they understand their responsibilities and comply with this policy and related documents.
- Complete any mandatory training relating to emergency preparedness and response;
- Participate in training and emergency evacuation drills to establish a satisfactory level of competence in responding to an emergency incident;
- Report to line management where emergency management procedures are not being implemented or observed.

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