Procedure – Risk assessment for emergency management

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<th>Authorised by</th>
<th>Leader, APFHEPR</th>
<th>Authorisation date</th>
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<td>Effective date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepared by</td>
<td>Joanne Loughlin – Project Officer Health &amp; Safety, GEPR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Officer</td>
<td>Manager, General Emergency Preparedness &amp; Response</td>
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REVISION HISTORY

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<th>Version</th>
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1. Application / Scope

Risk management approach to emergency management activities is required to ensure risks are identified and appropriate controls are implemented to reduce/eliminate risk. Risk assessments must be related to and supported by plans, policies and procedures and should not be used independently.

The objectives of risk management as stated in the Australian Standard Risk Management AS/NZS 4360:2004 is to achieve:

- A more confident and rigorous basis for decision making and planning
- Better identification of opportunities and threats
- Gaining value from uncertainty and variability
- Pro-active rather than re-active management
- More effective allocation and use of resources
- Improved incident management and reduction in loss and the cost of risk, including commercial insurance premiums
- Improved stakeholder confidence and trust
- Improved compliance with relevant legislation
- Better corporate governance

Risk assessments are conducted at various levels to include strategic and tactical risks in emergency management. Specific detailed tactical risk assessments must support strategic risk assessments.

Personnel conducting risk assessments should be trained and competent to identify and treat risks enabling them to have an appreciation of the principles and processes involved in risk management.

2. Abbreviations / Definitions

- Consequence – outcome or impact of an event which can range from positive to negative, be expressed qualitatively or quantitatively, and are considered in relation to the achievement of objectives.
- Control – an existing process, policy, device, practice or other action that acts to minimise negative risk or enhance positive opportunities.
- Hierarchy of control – a preferred order of methods for treatment of risk (elimination, isolation, substitution, engineering, administration and PPE)
- Risk – the chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives measured in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event and their likelihood, and may have a positive or negative impact.
- Risk management – the culture processes and structures that are directed towards realising potential opportunities whilst managing adverse effects
- Risk assessment – the overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation
- Risk identification – the process of determining what, where, when, why and how something could happen
- Risk analysis – systematic process to understand the nature of and to deduce the level of risk, and provides the basis of risk evaluation and decisions about risk treatment
- Risk evaluation – process of comparing the level of risk against risk criteria, thus assisting in decisions about risk treatment
- Risk criteria (rating) – terms of reference by which the significance of risk is assessed
- Risk treatment – process of selection and implementation of measures to modify risk
- Risk avoidance – a decision not to become involved in, or to withdraw from, a risk situation
- Strategic – Strategic elements of incident management are characterised by continuous long-term, high-level planning by organisations. These elements involve the adoption of long-term goals and objectives, the setting of priorities, the establishment of budgets and
other fiscal decisions, policy development, and the application of measure of performance or effectiveness.

- Tactical - Tasking of personnel and resources to implement the incident strategies. Incident control tactics are accomplished in accordance with appropriate procedures and safety directives.

3. Resources / Equipment

- Access to risk assessment templates ad supporting information
- Trained and competent personnel for the identification and treatment of risk
- Knowledge of the program, task or property/area being assessed eg local knowledge and local situation information

4. Warnings

- Ensure the treatment is supported by NSW DPI policies, procedures and legislation (where relevant) to ensure consistency across the response
- Sufficient trained and competent personnel must be available to complete the necessary risk assessments at each level of the response/organisation
- Failure to conduct risk assessments may impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of planning and the resultant outcomes for a program/response leading to an inability to achieve objectives

5. Procedure

Risk management processes and principles are documented in the:

- NSW DPI Policy G-001 Risk management
- A-063 OHS risk management
- Risk Management Framework Implementation procedures

Using these principles, risk assessments must be conducted at a minimum of 3 levels of the operation to address the various risks and improve strategic and tactical planning.

Risk assessments should be conducted by personnel with an appropriate competency level.

5.1 Strategic risk assessments

Strategic risk assessments are required at the program level of an emergency to identify areas of risk prior to a response occurring and during an emergency response. Risks and the associated control activities are then incorporated into the planning process.

Strategic risk assessments:

- should be conducted prior to plans being formulated and as part of the development of plans
- consist of numerous task risk assessments, with each risk equivalent to a task risk assessment
- document using the Strategic risk assessment template
- complete by workshopping ideas with people involved in planning responses
- approve by the relevant Director/Executive (non-response programs) and Controllers (during responses)
- review at least annually or as the situation changes for non-response programs
- review as required during responses
Completing the Strategic risk assessment template

1. Replace XX in template with general area eg Avian Influenza. Include a version number. Identify the parameters for the strategic risk assessment and insert in the title. Update the template footer.
2. List possible areas of risk in ‘specific risk’ column using the ‘Sources of Risk’ list on the template as a guide.
3. Assess likelihood of risk occurring based on current situation/resources – use the ‘Likelihood’ table at the end of the template.
4. Rate the consequence based on major area(s) of impact based on the current situation/resources – use the ‘Consequence Description for each Area of Impact’ table at the end of the template.
5. Determine the risk rating based on the likelihood and consequence. This rating can be used to determine action priorities.
6. Risk treatment options – make a choice to accept the risk, action the risk to reduce likelihood and/or consequence, or avoid the risk.

Notes:
A. Acceptance usually occurs when the risk rating is negligible, low or medium, and may require the risk to be actively monitored. High to extreme risk ratings should not be accepted as action is required and may include stopping activities related to risk.

B. Risk avoidance – see definition above

7. List activities (ie controls) that are in place to address each risk (in black font) and proposed activities (in red font). Use the hierarchy of controls – start with elimination and work down the list.

Note:
A. Assessment of risk based on proposed activities is completed after implementation of activities and is recorded in the next version of the strategic risk assessment.

8. Obtain approval from relevant authorised position (see above).

5.2 Task risk assessments
Task risk assessments relate to specific events, tasks or operations that are conducted at a tactical level and are used to enhance planning processes. Some tasks may involve multiple risk assessments to address different risks associated with the task. For example transporting carcasses have health and safety risks to operators and biosecurity risks, each with different areas of impact and treatment (or control).

Task risk assessments:
- are required when stipulated in operating procedures
- should be conducted prior to a task being undertaken
- documented using the Task risk assessment template
- complete by workshopping ideas with people involved in operational responses
- approve by the Manager GEPR or Leader APFHEPR (non-response periods) and Controllers / Section Managers / Officers-in-Charge (OIC’s) (during responses)
- review in conjunction with the relevant procedure or as the situation changes for non-response periods
- review as required during responses

Completing the Task risk assessment template

1. Identify the specific risk including conditions or boundaries eg a specific property, type of property, area or region
2. Determine the source(s) of risk using the ‘Sources of Risk’ table at the end of the template.
3. Determine to area(s) of impact using the ‘Areas of Impact’ table at the end of the template. Multiple areas of impact can be incorporated in a single risk assessment or each area of
impact may have individual risk assessments. Areas of impact may be clarified if required eg Human health – hearing.

4. List (using dot points) the current risk treatments or controls. These controls should be included in the task procedures where relevant. Treatments should take account of hierarchy of control.

5. Evaluate the current risk profile using the likelihood, consequence and risk rating tables at the end of the template. The area of impact will provide a guide to the consequence rating. If multiple areas of impact are included on a single risk assessment and give different consequence ratings, it may be practical to split into separate risk assessments.

6. Determine the proposed risk treatment based on the risk rating. Refer to the ‘Combined likelihood and consequence risk rating’ table at the end of the template for the appropriate level of response. Proposed risk treatment must be entered for extreme, high and medium ratings.

7. Re-assess risk profile after treatment using the same likelihood, consequence and risk rating tables.

8. Enter comments as required. Comments are mandatory for X (extreme) and H (high) risk ratings.

Notes:

a) Ensure the personnel completing and approving the task risk assessment and the relevant dates are entered.

b) Enter a property, area or region when using for tactical planning purpose during responses or when modifying ‘generic’ risk assessments for specific properties/areas.

c) Use modified task risk assessment templates with appropriate prompts for conducting tactical risk assessments during responses

5.3 General risk assessments

- Use the General risk assessment form for assessment of risks when the task to be completed has minor variations from a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or Task risk assessment.
- Tasks which vary greatly from the SWMS or task risk assessment require a new SWMS or task risk assessment.

6. References

Policy

- G-001 Risk management
- A-063 OHS risk management

Procedures

- NSW DPI Risk Management Framework Implementation procedures
- Pre-ops property inspection procedure

Forms

- Strategic risk assessment template
- Task risk assessment template
- General risk assessment form

Information


7. Appendices