

Check points in biosecurity emergencies

Check points are a strategy to prevent the spread of emergency pests and diseases by controlling the movement of biosecurity matter (BM) and carriers (such as animals, plants, products and contaminated vehicles and equipment) according to the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. This is achieved by:

- locating check points ([temporary fixed](#) or [mobile](#)) in high risk (for BM movement) areas
- [stopping and inspecting vehicles](#) for prohibited matter
- [managing prohibited matter](#)

Check points can be implemented:

- as part of a livestock standstill
- to prevent spread of BM and carriers from a particular area
- to monitor compliance to movement restrictions.

Planning considerations

- Personnel stopping and searching vehicles for biosecurity matter must be an Authorised Officer under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.
- Vehicles in the *Biosecurity Act* (and this guide) is defined as conveyance of any kind, e.g. truck, trailer, train, ship, hovercraft, boat, raft, aeroplane, helicopter, hot air balloon, drone, and other aircraft, water craft and land vehicle.
- Carriers in the *Biosecurity Act* (and this guide) means anything (whether alive, dead or inanimate, and including human) that has, or is capable of having, any biosecurity matter on it, attached to it or contained in it.
- Locations and duration of check point operation must be determined in consultation with NSW Police, transport and local government representatives, e.g. Roads and Maritime Services.
- Check points can be either in a fixed location or mobile, with layouts documented (by qualified traffic management personnel) including a list of resources.
- Stopping criteria for vehicles must be determined and is based on risk, e.g. stop all vehicles; stop only vehicles carrying animals or stop vehicles randomly.
- Hours of operations to consider risks versus benefits.
- Type and quantity of data to be collected, e.g. number and types of vehicles passing check point (single or both directions), number and types of vehicles being stopped and/or searched, BM seized, details of persons with BM.

Roles and responsibilities

Check points plan to be developed by Planning function in conjunction with Operations function and other agencies. Operations are responsible for on-site operational planning and risk management. Check point management is coordinated by the Movements Unit in Operations.

Personnel inspecting vehicles at a check point must be an Authorised Officer (under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*) which includes Field Crew (Movements) role and NSW Police. Refer to the Operations section of the [DPI emergency response roles](#).

Setting up fixed check points (not in established facilities)

Personnel setting up fixed check points are required to:

- a) Receive a briefing on what to do, look for and relevant safety issues (see [Safety](#) below) for the allocated location
 - Where the location is adjacent to a business, site under biosecurity order, dwelling or other site accessed by people, contact the occupant to ensure concerns are addressed and access is unhindered

- b) Collect or arrange resources (see [Resources](#) below)
- c) Travel to location
- d) Conduct an on-site risk assessment
- e) Conduct task
 - Personnel wear appropriate safety gear
 - Signs, traffic barricades and cones located to slow/stop traffic and create a safe area for staff, according to the layout plan
 - Lighting for low light and night operations established
 - Access provided to toilet and handwashing facilities
 - Covered break areas established including waste collection
- f) Record
 - Complete an event log (includes on-site risk assessment)
 - Photos/videos
- g) Depart site and report to supervisor
 - Conduct [debrief](#) including reporting any issues, [accidents and incidents](#)
 - [Download and label images](#)
- h) Restock, return or maintain resources used during the task

Setting up fixed check points in established facilities

Where established check point facilities are available, such as heavy vehicle safety stations (HSV), the set up process is similar to fixed non-established check points, except requirement for:

- Approval for shared use of facility which may include training and authorisation of current vehicle inspectors (under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*)
- Different or less resources, e.g. road barricades and signs may not be required
- Induction of DPI personnel assigned to the facility

Setting up and operating mobile check points

Personnel setting up and operating mobile check points are required to:

- a) Receive a briefing on what to do, look for and relevant safety issues (see [Safety](#) below) for the allocated location/s or area
- b) Collect resources for task (see [Resources](#) below)
- c) Travel to location/area
- d) Conduct an on-site risk assessment
- e) Conduct task
 - Personnel wear appropriate safety gear
 - Signs, traffic barricades and cones, and lighting located to slow/stop traffic and create a safe area for staff, according to the layout plan
 - Stop and inspect vehicles including dealing with prohibited matter as detailed in [stopping and inspecting vehicles](#) below
 - Provide updates to supervisor as agreed
- f) Record
 - Complete an event log (includes on-site risk assessment)
 - Task data – record details for all vehicles stopped on [check point log](#)
 - Photos/videos
- g) Depart location/area – repeat at various sites in area (as per briefing)
- h) Report to supervisor
 - Conduct [debrief](#) including reporting any issues and [incidents](#)
 - [Download and label photos](#)
 - Submit data sheets
- i) Restock, return or maintain resources used in the task

Stopping and inspecting vehicles

Personnel stopping and inspecting vehicles at check points are required to:

- a) Signal driver to stop vehicle using appropriate method for location e.g. Stop/slow sign, wand, lights, loud hailer/megaphone
- b) Stand in designated safe area until vehicle comes to a halt
- c) Assess personal safety before approaching vehicle
- d) If safe to approach, check driver has applied brake and it is in neutral (where possible)
- e) Identify yourself and explain current situation
- f) Ask driver if they have movement permit which may include a prohibited matter permit and/or prohibited goods in their vehicle and if you can inspect the permit, vehicle and any load. Occupants are to open any boxes, bags, doors, hatches etc.
 - If prohibited matter is found (not consistent with permit), ask the driver to move vehicle to a designated location and await further instructions – refer to Managing prohibited matter below
 - If vehicle is clear of prohibited matter, thank the driver and provide 'hand out'

Managing prohibited matter

Prohibited matter (according to the biosecurity direction and movement permits) identified in or on a vehicle at a check point must be either:

- Seized/impounded by an Authorised Officer (under the *Biosecurity Act*)
- Destroyed by an Authorised Officer (under the *Biosecurity Act*)
- Returned to the site of origin (e.g. for animals or large loads) if compliant with movement restrictions
- Cleaned to meet movement restrictions
- Some other action that meets biosecurity direction and movement restrictions

Authorised Officers must:

- Ensure animal welfare is maintained
- Record details of breach, including details of driver and vehicle, and actions taken
- Provide driver with details of the breach and any actions required, e.g. application for a movement permit, decontamination of vehicle
- Make a recommendation for any follow up action by response personnel, such as recommending site visit, prosecution

Resources

General resources

- Vehicle - suitable for terrain and conditions
- First aid kit – suitable for location/conditions, may include additions (e.g. snake bite kit)
- PPE – suitable for the task and conditions, e.g. enclosed, non-slip footwear, high visibility vests, sun protection (hat, sunscreen), wet weather gear, insect repellent (refer to the [safety risk assessment/safe work method statement](#))
- Recording devices with GPS capability – tablets, paper/pens/clipboard, camera (preferably waterproof and GPS capable)
- Data collection forms - [event log](#), [check point log](#)
- Communication/safety devices – suitable for the area, e.g. mobile phones, radios (on GRN), satellite phones, personal locating beacon (PLB) or tracking device/App for remote/isolated work
- Water and food
- Contact details e.g. LCC, other teams
- Information e.g. local area maps (maybe available on recording devices)

Task specific resources

- Identification card, including Authorised Officer card
- Torches and spare batteries

- Traffic management equipment, e.g. witches hats, road barricades, stop/slow signs, light wands, road signs (prepare to stop, biosecurity check point etc), portable traffic lights, loud hailer/megaphone (for vessels)
- Portable flood lighting (for work at night)
- Portable decontamination equipment, including gloves
- Written information for drivers, e.g. disease/pest information, movement conditions, list of prohibited matter, standstill order (if relevant), list of current permits
- Access to toilets and hand washing facilities
- Shelter (i.e. rest/dining area) with table(s) and chairs
- Waste bins

Safety

Safety issues must be addressed by implementing appropriate controls. Risks may include:

- [Animal handling in emergencies](#)
- [Boating operations](#)
- [Dealing with aggressive stakeholders](#)
- [Driving vehicles](#)
- [Establishing and operating check points](#)
- [Fatigue management](#)
- [Manual handling](#)
- [Remote and isolated work](#)
- [Working around plant and equipment](#)
- [Working on or around water](#)

Further information

NSW Department of Primary Industries – [Operations resources and publications](#)