

Emergency Management

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Purpose

This document outlines the procedure that the department will apply to emergency management in the workplace.

Background

Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation in NSW requires that an emergency plan is prepared for workplaces that provides for:

- Emergency procedures including but not limited to effective response to an emergency, evacuation procedures, emergency service notifications, provisions for medical assistance and communication protocols.
- Testing emergency procedures, including frequency.
- Information, training and instruction relevant to implementing emergency procedures.

Scope

This procedure applies to all departmental controlled workplaces where employees, contractors and sub-contractors and visitors who perform work for or on behalf of the department.

Procedure

Contained in this procedure are a number of emergency situations with prescribed responses. This list of emergency situations is not exhaustive and workplaces are encouraged to identify all possible emergency situations and customise their emergency response plans/protocols to suit their workplace.

Each workplace should have an emergency plan developed, implemented and communicated for their particular workplace.

The most senior officer or appointed delegate at each site is responsible for site co-ordination in the event of an emergency.

Site/workplace control

In a workplace emergency situation the Chief Warden and their emergency response team will assume control of the workplace and its occupants until such time as emergency services arrives and assumes control.

Emergency services will hand control of a site/workplace back to the Chief Warden when it is safe to do so.

Shelter in place/lock down

Shelter in place/lock down refers to a direction for all people including, but not limited to employees, contractors/sub-contractors and visitors at a department site/building to stay where they are and shelter. A shelter in place/lock down direction will be given where a threat is such that an attempt to move people would expose them to a danger.

A Shelter in place/lock down direction may be issued by:

- NSW Police
- Emergency Services including Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS)
- Department executive
- Chief warden

When a direction is issued to lock down, the following should occur:

- Close the office and advise all people at the workplace not to leave the building/site or walk outdoors.
- Unless there is an imminent threat, people should call their emergency contact to let them know where they are and that they are safe.
- Turn on call-forwarding or alternative telephone answering systems or services. If the workplace has voice mail or an automated attendant, change the recording to indicate that the business is closed.
- Quickly lock exterior doors and close windows and air vents. Have employees familiar with your building's mechanical systems to turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Some systems automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air. These systems, in particular, need to be turned off, sealed, or disabled.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains.
- If available and able, gather essential supplies, such as non-perishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first-aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting, and plastic garbage bags.
- Select interior room(s) and where available select a room above the ground floor, with the fewest windows or vents. The room(s) should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms if necessary. Large storage closets, utility rooms, pantries, copy and conference rooms without exterior windows are appropriate. Avoid selecting a room with mechanical equipment like ventilation blowers or pipes, because this equipment may not be able to be sealed from the outdoors.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room(s) you select (if practicable). Call emergency contacts and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.
- Take your emergency supplies and go into the room you have designated in the site emergency plan. Seal all windows, doors, and vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape or anything else you have on hand.
- Write down the names of everyone in the room, and notify the department's designated emergency contact (as specified in the emergency plan) to report who is in the room with you, and their affiliation with your business (employee, visitor, and customer).
- Listen to the radio, watch television, or use the internet for further instructions until you are told that it is safe to evacuate.
- Useful links in the event of a direction to shelter in place/lock down:
 - Secure NSW: www.secure.nsw.gov.au
 - NSW Rural Fire Service: www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Evacuation

1. When an alarm is activated, stop what you are doing.
2. Collect small items of personal property and wait for directions from emergency personnel or wardens.
3. Listen for instructions to evacuate.
4. Exit the building/premises in an orderly manner. Do not push or run.
5. Follow exit signs out of the building following the nearest exit. Do not use any lifts.
6. Escort any visitors or those who require assistance.
7. Follow the directions of the wardens, host or other emergency personnel to the designated assembly area and wait for further direction.
8. Do not re-enter the building/premises until instruction is given by the emergency personnel.
9. Your assembly point is identified on your site emergency plan.

Fire

1. Phone 000.
2. Notify chief warden and building manager who will provide further direction. If the chief warden is not available or if after hours: all workers must evacuate.
3. Try to extinguish the fire with correct extinguisher if safe to do so.
4. Don't take unnecessary risks.
5. Evacuate the building.

Bush fire

If a workplace/site is located in a bushfire prone area (as determined by NSW Rural Fire Service, local government area or from a risk assessment) a bush fire site assessment must be undertaken to determine primary actions in the event of a bush fire to either shelter in place or evacuate.

Workplaces/sites in bush fire prone areas must ensure that procedures for bush fire emergencies are reflected in the relevant site emergency management plan.

In addition:

- All workers at a workplace in a bush fire prone area must be trained in the bushfire emergency evacuation procedures relevant to that workplace.
- Workers who are required to travel into areas where fire ratings such as extreme or catastrophic may be declared, must have appropriate safe work practices and procedures for undertaking tasks when such declarations are made.
- For total fire ban declarations, workers undertaking outdoor work must be familiar with total fire ban rules.

Threats

Phone threats:

If you receive a phone threat:

1. Remain calm
2. Do not disconnect the call
3. Notate the exact wording of the threat
4. Record as much information from the caller as possible
5. Notify the Police on another line

Hostile/threatening situation:

1. Contact police if people are at risk
2. Listen to person & acknowledge the situation/problem
3. Provide options to resolve the problem
4. If unable to calm the person, politely request that the person leave the premises
5. If the person refuses to leave the premises contact the police
6. If person becomes violent, call the police, do not enter their physical space & remove items in the vicinity that may be used as weapons
7. Create distance between yourself and the hostile person

Medical/first aid

If a person is seriously injured or ill including having a suspected heart attack or stroke call an ambulance immediately on 000 and provide the following details:

1. Your name and location (street name, number and any cross streets)
2. Number of people injured
3. Details of medical emergency
4. Notify your site first aid officer

Workers should not attempt to move or take seriously injured workers to a hospital unless in an isolated location with no means of communication.

For minor first aid injuries and illnesses contact your site first aid officer or seek local medical treatment.

Details of workgroup first aid officers can be found on the Health & Safety intranet.

Spills (chemical, flammable, biological)

1. Contact emergency services if the spill is of a significant size or substance is unknown
2. Prevent unauthorised access to spill area
3. Ensure all electrical equipment and other ignition sources are isolated/turned off
4. Don't allow electrical equipment to be operated within the vicinity of the spill
5. If deemed safe to do so, commence evacuation
6. If emergency services are not required, manage spill as specified in the relevant SDS's.

Extreme weather conditions

Extreme weather conditions include but are not limited to floods, storms, heat wave and snow storms.

A risk assessment should be undertaken to determine if a workplace/site and its occupants could be vulnerable to declarations of extreme weather warnings.

Normal site evacuation procedures should be triggered as required and depending on the risk assessment during declarations of extreme weather conditions. When workplaces/sites have been closed due to extreme weather conditions, department executive will communicate procedures for returning to work or office relocation to affected staff via email, mobile telephone and internet notifications.

Bomb threats

If you are notified of a bomb threat, record the following:

1. Type of call (local, STD, mobile)
2. Male/female caller
3. Speech (fast, slow, accent)
4. Background noise (street, aircraft, trains, music, children)

If you receive a bomb threat questions to ask:

1. Where is the bomb?
2. When is it going to explode?
3. What does the bomb look like?
4. Where did you put the bomb?
5. What kind of bomb is it?
6. What will make the bomb explode?
7. What is your name?
8. Where are you now?
9. Why are you doing this?

Active shooter (threat from firearms)

Advice for workers in the event of an active shooter at a workplace/site is based on the elements of escape, see and tell.

Escape:

1. In the event of immediate gunfire take cover initially and then attempt to leave the area as soon as possible (if safe to do so). Try to confirm that your escape route is safe.
2. If gunfire is nearby, leave the area immediately, moving away from the gunfire, if this can be achieved safely.
3. Leave your belongings behind.
4. Do not congregate at evacuation points.
5. Try to maintain cover from gunfire and from view.

See & tell: if it is safe to do so, think about obtaining the following information:

1. Exact location of the active shooter
2. Whether the shooter is stationary or moving in any particular direction
3. Number and description of shooter and details of any firearms being used or possessed
4. Number of people in the area and number of casualties.

Suspicious mail or package

If mail or package has not been opened:

1. If safe to do so, place the mail or package in a plastic bag and seal the bag. Place all items in a second plastic bag and seal that bag.
2. Stay in the office or immediate work area and prevent others from accessing the area and potentially becoming contaminated.
3. Notify your manager and workgroup chief warden and advise the exact location of mail or package and number of people potentially exposed and a description of the package and any action taken.
4. Keep hands away from face and if able, wash hands without leaving the secure area.
5. Wait for assistance to arrive

If mail or package has been opened:

1. Do not disturb the item any further and if possible place an object over the mail or package (i.e. waste bin).
2. Stay in the office or immediate work area and prevent others from accessing the area and potentially becoming contaminated.
3. Notify your manager and workgroup chief warden and advise:
 - a. Exact location of mail or package and number of people potentially exposed
 - b. A description of the package and any action taken.
4. Keep hands away from face and if able, wash hands without leaving the secure area.
5. Wait for assistance to arrive.

If you suspect that the item is an explosive device:

1. Notify manager, chief warden and police.
2. Evacuate the area.

Civil disorder/illegal occupancy

1. Notify building manager/chief warden
2. If it is safe to do so:
 - a. Restrict entry to building/site
 - b. Attempt to confine personnel involved in the illegal occupancy/civil disorder to the ground floor or foyer area.
 - c. Restrict contact between the demonstrators and building occupants or evacuate the building/site.
 - d. Notify manager/supervisor.

People with specific needs

Workers with restricted mobility have a responsibility to notify the workplace chief warden and area warden and consult with them regarding their specific needs. Such workers are encouraged to specify what assistance they may require from other people in the event of a workplace emergency.

Assisting people with restricted mobility:

1. Do not provide physical guidance to a person with restricted mobility without their permission.
2. If a person is reliant on a wheel chair for mobility and there is no access available to get down stairs, another person should wait with the person in a fire isolated stairwell until emergency services arrive. The location of the worker with restricted mobility should be communicated to emergency services by the chief warden and this action should be specified in the workplace emergency plan.

Assisting people disoriented or having a panic attack:

1. Provide reassurance to the person by speaking calmly to them and confirm that someone will remain with them.
2. Escort the person to the emergency assembly point.

Related legislation

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

Related policies and procedures

- [Policy IND-P-185 – Work Health and Safety](#)

Other related documents

- SecureNSW: NSW Counter Terrorism Plan
- [Site Emergency Plan template](#)
- [Code of Practice: Managing the Work Environment & Facilities](#)

Revision history

Version	Date issued	By	Review date
1	01/06/2015	Director, Health and Safety	01/06/2017

Contact

All enquiries can be directed to the Health & Safety Unit

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