

December 2022

Accessing a property in a biosecurity emergency

In a biosecurity emergency, everyone must play their part to reduce the risk of spread, and impact of, a pest or disease. Minimising biosecurity risks is a legal responsibility.

To manage a biosecurity emergency, NSW Department of Primary Industries in consultation with relevant stakeholders will undertake a risk-based response in accordance with the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, national agreements (such as the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity, AUSVETPLAN and PLANTPLAN) and the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*.

Restrictions are likely to be imposed on properties where agriculture and/or horticulture activities are undertaken. The restrictions may apply to the movement of people, animals, animal products, plants, plant products, vehicles, equipment, feed, soil, and/or water onto, within, and off a property. The restrictions for a property will be determined according to risk and will be specified in an instrument, such as a Control Order, or an Emergency Order under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

This factsheet provides some guidance on the kinds of restrictions that may apply to a person, their vehicle and equipment when seeking to move onto and off a property in a biosecurity emergency.

On properties of high risk (such as infected or infested properties), a person may only be able to enter a property in emergency situations (eg. to fix a power outage). They may also be required to obtain a permit and/or notify details of their visit to an Authorised Officer. Before leaving the property they may have to decontaminate vehicles and equipment, and clean and disinfect footwear or boots and clothing on entry to and exit from the property.

The high-risk properties will be in a 'restricted emergency zone'. This 'restricted emergency zone' may be surrounded by a 'control emergency zone'. Anyone who enters these zones who also may have had contact with infected animals, plants or their products may have to decontaminate their vehicles and equipment and clean and disinfect their footwear and clothing. There may also be other movement requirements in place, such as, where a vehicle that may be contaminated can enter or exit the zone.

RESTRICTED EMERGENCY ZONE - includes premises that are infected or believed to be infected or contaminated with an emergency animal, plant disease, or exotic pest as well as premises close to infected properties.

CONTROL EMERGENCY ZONE - forms a buffer between a Restricted Area and areas considered to be free from an emergency animal or plant disease, or exotic pest. It includes premises in the area neighbouring a Restricted Emergency Zone.

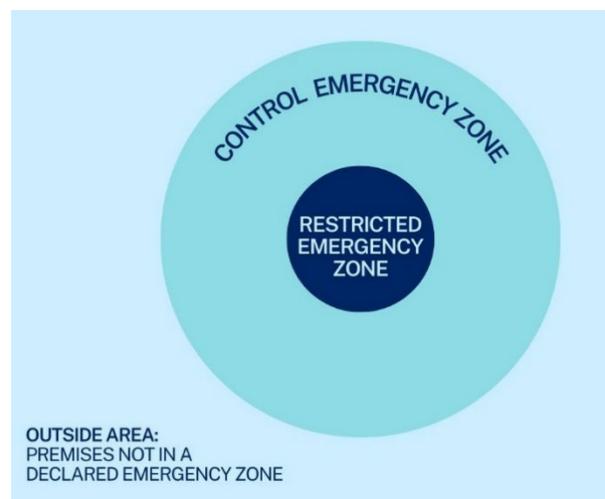


Fig 1. Diagrammatic representation on a Restricted Emergency Zone, Control Emergency Zone, and the Outside Area

There are three general principles for minimising risks when accessing a property in a biosecurity emergency:

1. Planning
2. Come clean. Go clean.
3. On-farm behaviours

Planning

Simple steps can be taken that help reduce certain biosecurity risks. Before accessing a property, a person should:

- Make sure they understand their legal obligations.
- Consider the biosecurity risks posed by their visit and make a plan to minimise these risks. For example, only take on property the equipment they will need and identify the specific area that must be accessed.
- If they need to visit more than one property, consider the order of visits to reduce the chances of spreading the pest or disease from one property to another (i.e., visiting lower-risk areas first).
- Schedule visits to minimise biosecurity risks, such as avoiding certain times when animals may be moved within the property.

In a biosecurity emergency, an Authorised Officer should be able to assist in planning and developing risk management strategies.

“Come clean. Go clean”

By following the “Come Clean - Go Clean” principle, the risk of biosecurity incidents can be significantly reduced. A guide to the effective washdown of vehicles and machinery is available at the following link: [Come Clean – Go Clean](#).

In a biosecurity emergency, a person accessing a property must follow the prescribed decontamination procedures.

However, in general, key aspects of “Come clean. Go clean” include:

- Make reasonably practicable efforts to ensure vehicles and personal equipment are free of biosecurity matter when moving from a contaminated area to a clean area. Regularly clean vehicles and equipment to ensure that they are reasonably free of biosecurity matter.
- Take extra care when operating in high-risk areas such as areas known to have disease or contaminants.

On-farm behaviours

In a biosecurity emergency, a person must comply with any legal obligations under the *Biosecurity Act (2015)* relating to the property/zone you are visiting. Legal requirements on accessing property are put in place to reduce the risk of spread and impact of a pest or disease.

Other simple steps can be taken that help reduce certain biosecurity risks when on property. When on property, a person should:

- Check for any biosecurity-related signs on gates before entering the property, or areas within the property, and where possible follow the instruction on the signs. People entering areas where a [biosecurity management plan](#) applies must comply with the measures outlined in the plan.

- Abide by reasonable requests from the land manager.
- As much as possible, reduce the exposure to biosecurity risks. This could be as simple as avoiding animal enclosures or production areas.
- Where possible, stick to formed and existing roads.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Don't leave contaminants or contaminated objects where they can affect stock or plants.

Additional information

Resources are available on the [NSW DPI website](#), including specific diseases and pest information, biosecurity emergency information, and policies, procedures, and guidelines.

This document provides general advice but in a biosecurity emergency a person must understand their legal obligations and requirements. These will be included in legal instruments and supported by a range of education and communication materials.

Failure to comply with regulatory requirements, may be an offence under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. The maximum penalty for an offence, in the case of an individual is \$1,100,000 or imprisonment for three years, or in the case of a corporation, \$2,200,000.

Help protect NSW's community, environment and economy by reporting suspect or unusual pests and diseases and other biosecurity concerns:

Type of concern	Contact details
Animal health (pest or disease), including aquatic animals	Call the 24 hr Emergency Animal Disease Watch hotline 1800 675 888 Or contact a vet
Mass fish deaths: a 'fish kill'	Call the Fishers Watch hotline 1800 043 536
Plant disease or pest Bee disease or pest, nuisance bees or bee products	Exotic Plant Pest hotline 1800 084 881
All other biosecurity concerns (animal, aquatic, bee, plant, weed, insect, chemicals etc.)	NSW DPI Biosecurity helpline 1800 680 244

© State of New South Wales through Regional NSW 2022. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing August 2022. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Regional NSW or the user's independent adviser.