

EMERGENCY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT POLICY OPERATIONAL POLICY



POLICY TITLE:	EMERGENCY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT POLICY		
VERSION:	002	DATE EFFECTIVE:	12/05/2020
AUTHORISED BY:	Chief Executive Officer	DATE REVIEWED:	05/03/2024

SUMMARY

The policy ensures the safety and ongoing support for participants and staff during emergencies by focusing on readiness, action plans, and teamwork for immediate and effective responses.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Emergency and Disaster Management Policy is to ensure the safety and continuity of services for participants of ARC Disability Services Inc. (ARC) during times of disaster, whether natural or pandemic related. By prioritising preparedness and proactive measures, our organisation aims to instil confidence in the participants we support, providing them with a reliable support lifeline when they need it most. We recognise the critical role our services play before, during, and after emergencies, particularly for individuals who may not have access to alternative support systems. Through this policy, ARC commits to delivering consistent and adequate assistance to our participants, fostering resilience and stability in the face of uncertainty and adversity.

SCOPE

The scope of this policy encompasses both the participants and staff of ARC. Participants will receive comprehensive information regarding emergency procedures, empowering them to prepare effectively, enhance their resilience, and maintain trust in our organisation's ability to support them during times of crisis. Additionally, our staff will undergo thorough training and preparation to aid participants in navigating emergencies within the community, thereby bolstering the disaster resilience of ARC as a whole.

IMPLEMENTATION

A disaster is defined as any event, whether natural or human-made, with the potential to cause extensive destruction of life and property. Similarly, an emergency represents a grave risk to health, life, or the environment.

To ensure comprehensive disaster readiness, ARC has developed an Emergency and Disaster Management Plan, complemented by the development of individual Participant Emergency Plans where applicable. This holistic approach allows us to address both overarching community-wide strategies and personalised plans tailored to the specific needs of individual participants.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure our emergency procedures are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities, we commit to inclusivity in all emergency responses. This means adapting communication, evacuation procedures, and support to meet diverse needs, ensuring safety and preparedness are accessible for all participants.

DRILLS AND TRAINING

To build on the foundation of preparedness established through our Emergency and Disaster Management Plan, ARC commits to a program of training and drills. Annual training sessions and regular drills will be undertaken for staff and participants, aiming to familiarise them with emergency procedures, evacuation routes, and the practical use of emergency equipment.

This hands-on approach ensures that our community is not just theoretically prepared but also practically ready to respond to emergencies efficiently and effectively. This initiative reinforces our culture of safety, readiness, and resilience, ensuring that when emergencies occur, our response is swift, coordinated, and informed by best practice.

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CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION

ARC's Board and Leadership Team are committed to engaging participants, support networks, and staff in regular consultations to review and update these plans, ensuring their continued relevance and effectiveness in mitigating risks and ensuring the safety of all involved. Through this concerted effort, we aim to foster a culture of preparedness and resilience within our community.

Our approach aims to be participant-centered, involving Participants in the planning and review processes. By engaging with participants, we gather valuable insights into their unique needs and preferences, ensuring our emergency plans are personalised and inclusive. This collaborative approach not only enhances the effectiveness of our plans but also empowers participants, making them an integral part of our preparedness strategy

Our emergency management strategy includes forming partnerships with local emergency services, non-profits, and government agencies. This collaboration will leverage external resources and expertise, enhancing our response capabilities during emergencies

TYPES OF EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

ARC may encounter various types of large-scale disasters and emergencies, including but not limited to:

- Cyclones
- Flooding
- Storm Surges
- Bushfires
- Heatwaves
- Tropical Disease Outbreak
- Power Outages
- Landslides
- Tropical Storms
- Pandemics

Through diligent planning and proactive measures, we strive to mitigate risks and safeguard the well-being of our community members and the continuity of our services.

DETAILED RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

To ensure a structured response to various emergencies, we will establish detailed protocols for the emergencies and disaster applicable to region. These will specify immediate actions, communication strategies, and coordination with external agencies, providing clear guidance to staff and ensuring an efficient response.

ARC places the safety and care of our participants at the forefront of our operational procedures. During a disaster, our team will adhere to this policy framework and the associated Emergency and Disaster plan, working within any additional guidelines and instructions provided by state and federal government authorities to our organisation.

The CEO (or in place of the CEO; Chairperson of the Board) is responsible for declaring a state of emergency for the organisation. In this event the Board will be notified; the Management team will meet and decide on the best plan of action. The Management Team in conjunction with the Board via the CEO will ensure a clear line of communication is maintained with all stakeholders of ARC. The management team will be responsible for ensuring all aspects of ARC and actively try to prevent disruption to services and mitigate any negative effects.

They will be required to consider many aspects not limited to the following:

- Supports provided to our participants
- Property belonging to ARC Disability Services Inc.
- Assets belonging to ARC participants
- People employed by ARC Disability Services Inc.
- Finances managed by ARC Disability Services Inc.

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RECOVERY AND SUPPORT

Following any emergency or disaster, we will provide comprehensive recovery and support services to our participants and staff. This includes support to seek psychological or healthcare services and supports designed to facilitate a return to normalcy. By addressing the physical and emotional well-being of our community post-disaster, we ensure a holistic approach to recovery, aligning with our commitment to the care and support of all individuals.

TECHNOLOGY USE

We will adopt advanced technologies, including communication systems and social media, for efficient information dissemination during emergencies. These tools will complement our communication plan, ensuring timely and accurate updates to all stakeholders

SUPPLY CHAIN AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

A strategy for managing supplies and resources during emergencies will be established, including pre-disaster stockpiling and coordination with suppliers. This will ensure that essential resources are readily available, supporting our response efforts.

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Following any emergency or drill, a structured evaluation and feedback process will be implemented. This will allow us to continually refine and improve our emergency management practices based on real-world experiences and feedback.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

To ensure our Emergency and Disaster Management Policy remains effective and relevant, we will implement a continuous improvement process. This will involve annual reviews of the policy and emergency plans, incorporating feedback from emergency response activities, drills, and changes in participant needs or organisational structure. This process ensures our approaches are up-to-date and reflect best practices in emergency management.

DOCUMENTATION

In the critical moments of an emergency or disaster, comprehensive documentation becomes vital not only for immediate response actions but also for future reflection and learning. It is important that all relevant documentation is carefully completed and securely stored.

This documentation serves a multitude of purposes, from providing a historical record of events and actions taken to serving as evidence for compliance with regulatory requirements and facilitating post-event analysis for improvement.

The types of documentation and reports gathered during, and post-emergency may include:

- **After Action Reports:** Summarise response effectiveness, lessons learned, and recommendations for future improvements.
- **Participant Feedback Forms:** Gather insights on the emergency response from the participant's perspective to identify improvement areas.
- **Staff Debriefing Reports:** Offer staff reflections on emergency plan execution and suggestions for enhancements.
- **Resource Utilisation Reports:** Detail the use of resources during the emergency to assess adequacy and inform future planning.
- **Compliance Audit Reports:** Ensure actions taken complied with laws, regulations, and identifying any gaps for corrective action.
- **Recovery Progress Reports:** Track recovery efforts and the provision of ongoing support to affected individuals.
- **Emergency Plan Revision Documents:** Document modifications to the emergency plan based on recent experiences and lessons learned.

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PRIVACY OF INFORMATION

Documentation generated from emergency responses will be handled in strict compliance with privacy and information management standards. This approach ensures the secure storage and controlled access of documents, safeguarding sensitive information while maintaining operational integrity.

By integrating these principles, we not only protect the privacy of individuals involved but also ensure that our documentation practices support transparency, accountability, and adherence to regulatory requirements, reinforcing our commitment to best practice.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Business Continuity Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Information Management Policy
- Human Resources Management Policy
- Work Health and Environmental Policy

REFERENCES

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Amendment (2021 Measures No. 1) Rules 2021
- Disaster Management Act 2003 (Queensland)

AUTHORISATION

This Policy is approved and issued by:

BENJAMIN KEAST

Chief Executive Officer

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