NSW Early Learning Commission

Practice guide

Emergency preparedness

By understanding what emergency situations may arise at your service and how to manage them, you can help reduce risks to the health and safety of children and young people.

Display evacuation diagrams and instructions

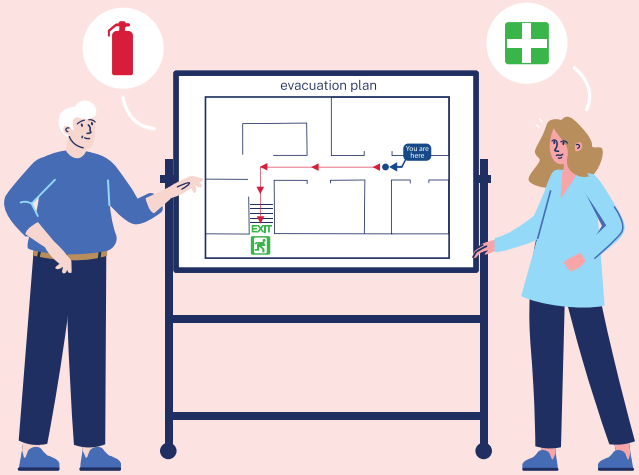
All services must prominently display emergency and evacuation floor plans (also known as evacuation diagrams) and instructions near each exit to help everyone respond quickly and safely in an emergency.

This includes doors used to enter and exit your service premises and those used to enter and exit outdoor learning environments.

Identify, reduce and manage risk

Everyone at your service should be involved in conducting risk assessments. Risk assessments must be completed at least every 12 months to identify and address all threats, hazards and incidents that can result in an emergency.

Consider your service's individual context when assessing potential emergencies and strategies to remove and manage any risks.



Rehearse emergency responses

All procedures for emergency situations must be rehearsed at least every 3 months. If your service has multiple emergency and evacuation procedures (such as evacuations, shelter-in-place and/or lockdowns), you must rehearse each procedure. Consider your service context when planning rehearsals to ensure all staff and children participate. Plan rehearsals at different times as the response may change.

Being prepared builds confidence and helps everyone respond quickly, know what to do and where to go in an emergency.

Understand roles and responsibilities

Your service's emergency and evacuation policy and procedures should define and explain staff roles and responsibilities during emergencies.

Understand your role and responsibilities and practise them during emergency rehearsals. Seek guidance from your leadership team if you have questions or need additional support with implementing your responsibilities and policies.

Centre-based services in multistorey buildings

If your service is located within a multistorey building and does not have direct exits to an emergency assembly area, your policies and procedures must detail:

- all possible evacuation routes from each storey on which the premises is located
- the evacuation routes that must be used
- how all children will be safely evacuated from the premises, including how staff will meet individual children's needs
- the stages in which an evacuation will be carried out
- the person in charge of an evacuation
- the roles and responsibilities of staff members during an evacuation
- any arrangements made with other building occupants relating to evacuation processes.

Discover more guidance and resources to support quality practice.

linktr.ee/ECECEducatorResources

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