

# Flood planning for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services

## Introduction

The aim of this information is to ensure appropriate flood preparation and response is built into ECEC emergency management plans for services at risk of flooding.

## Planning considerations for flood

### Understanding the risk

Local councils and NSW SES can help services understand their flood risk.

Key considerations:

- Where is the service in relation to the flood risk map?
- Will the service be isolated? If so, where and at approximately what flood height?
- Will the service be inundated? If so, where and at approximately what flood height?

### Protecting what's important

Flood planning needs to be consistent with, and built on, the existing service emergency management plan. Prior to a flood services need to identify what's important:

**People and animals** – where are they? When are they at risk during a flood?

- For people, consider: staff, children at the service, other service users and contractors or service providers that may be on-site.
  - Agree on the triggers to cease operation.
  - Determine who is monitoring warnings and who makes the decisions.
  - Include procedures for warnings issued outside school hours.

- Link to existing communication methods.
- Ensure staff know where to report if the service is not operating.
- For animals: how many are there, where are they and do they need to be moved? If so, to where? By whom? How long will it take to move them?

**Assets** – what assets are threatened by the floodwater? The service needs to prioritise which assets to protect. Consider:

- Buildings – should they be opened to allow floodwater free passage? Is there value in trying to protect the building from water ingress, e.g. shallow inundation? If so, how (sandbags or other barriers), how long will it take and who will do the work?
- Building services – develop a shut-off plan for utilities (energy, water, communications) in consultation with the utility provider
- Equipment – what equipment is threatened? Is it movable (e.g. mowers and grounds maintenance equipment, sporting equipment, ICT equipment, library books)? If so, where could it go (raise to higher shelves or remove altogether)? How long would it take and who would do the work? If it's not movable, is there any way to protect it?
- Records – what are the critical records? Consider current records, historical artefacts and archives. Where could they go, how would they get there and who would do the work?

**Continuity** – how will the service continue to deliver education and care? Consider a short-term approach for a week of major disruption during the flood, and the fortnight immediately following the flood while longer-term plans are prepared.

**Environment** – are there potential hazards to the natural environment at the service? Consider hazardous materials (e.g. mower fuel, herbicide, pest control chemicals, chemicals used in class). How much is on-site, where is it stored, how could it be relocated away from floodwater?

### Setting realistic priorities

There may not be time or resources to protect every important item. Each item should be assigned a priority.

### Develop protective actions

There are three protective actions for a flood:

**Barrier** (e.g. levee banks, sandbags, door seals and a range of proprietary approaches).

**Raise** (e.g. lifting items above the predicted flood height within a structure, such as to shelves or an upper-floor).

**Relocate** (e.g. moving stock or equipment to higher ground on the property or transporting it away to a safer location).

For each item:

- Determine which approach is most useful.
- Determine what equipment might be needed (e.g. horse floats, packing crates or archive boxes, sand and sandbags).
- Determine who would do the work (think about during term and during holidays).
- Appoint a responsible person (and alternate) to manage the task.
- Work out the time needed for the task.

- Write up a “job-card” for each task; leave it on-site and/or with the responsible person

### Make the call

Confirm that service emergency management plans are clear about how potential emergencies are monitored, how potential (or actual) impacts are assessed, and who makes (or can make) decisions.

Ensure there is a procedure for out-of-hours decision-making.

Ensure the existing communication methods are appropriate.

### Put it together

List the actions in order of priority, noting the time needed to take each action. This will determine the triggers for decision-making. Write up the “flood emergency procedure” and any “job-cards” for specific actions.

### Handy links

- An outline of common [flood terminology](#).
- A description of the [emergency management system for flooding](#).
- A description of the [warning systems and products](#) (NB: further advice is available from the websites of the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) and the [NSW SES](#)).