



Disaster and emergency management procedure

Version: 1.6 | **Version effective:** 13/07/2021

Audience

Department-wide

Purpose

This procedure directs the arrangements and responsibilities required for department-owned schools and workplaces to effectively manage the department's response to a disaster or emergency event.

Overview

From time to time, the impact of disasters and emergency events on a school or multiple schools requires a capability within the Department of Education (DoE) to prepare and respond in a coordinated approach. The first priority in the case of a disaster or an emergency event is the immediate and ongoing safety of students and staff.

To prepare for, and respond to a disaster or emergency situation, DoE requires that all department-owned schools and workplaces must have a current Emergency Response Plan (ERP). The ERP must contain a risk assessment, address hazards and potential threats to the location (school, regional office or executive centre) and identify appropriate responses to mitigate the risks and recover from the event.

During the response phase the department will implement a three tiered response structure to meet the needs of the department and connect with the State Disaster Management Arrangements.

The second priority is to continue to operate the department's essential services during and beyond a major business interruption or outage. Each school's Emergency Response Plan will be supported by the region's Business Continuity Management Plan to ensure that normal business is resumed as quickly as possible.

Useful resources:

- [DoE Disaster and Emergency Management Arrangements](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide – Disaster and Emergency Management Framework](#)

Responsibilities

During normal business operations

All principals are required to:

- Develop their School Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) in consultation with the relevant Disaster Management Group, the region and/or the Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) prior to the annual commencement of the natural disaster season;
- Ensure the ERP is available through the department's nominated central storage location;
- Coordinate training and exercising of local disaster or emergency management arrangements annually to ensure that processes work and are familiar to everyone;
- Review ERPs each semester and after a disaster or emergency to ensure all risks are identified and managed;
- Ensure that contact details identified in the ERP are reviewed regularly and updated as required; and
- Ensure that the ERP can be successfully operationalised by a number of school staff in the event of the Principal being off site.

Regional Directors are required to:

- Develop their Regional Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) in consultation with the relevant Disaster Management Group, the Executive and/or the Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) prior to the annual commencement of the natural disaster season;
- Ensure that schools and workplaces, within their region, including the regional office, have conducted annual training prior to the commencement of the natural disaster season;
- Ensure that regional staff, including members of the Regional Response Team (RRT), have a clear understanding of their Regional Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and undertake annual training;
- Ensure the Region's Emergency Response Plan includes business continuity strategies, workarounds and resources to ensure essential services can continue to operate through, or resume operations as soon as practicable after, a business disruption; and
- Review and assure, or cause to be reviewed and assured, the school Emergency Response Plans.

Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU):

- Assist all department-owned schools and workplaces in meeting their mandatory responsibilities in a disaster or emergency event by providing advice and assistance during the planning, preparedness and recovery phases;
- Provide support to the Executive Response Controller and manage the Executive Coordination Centre in the response phase to a disaster or emergency;
- Lead the development of the Executive Emergency Response Plan (ERP);
- Develop and maintain a Staff Disaster Readiness Strategy which should include the delivery of training and exercises for the Executive and Regional levels; and

- When the ERT is not activated to provide support to the Regions and/or the Schools during a response or recovery.

The Executive Response Controllers (Assistant Director-General ISB) is responsible for:

- Approving the Executive Emergency Response Plan, formulating the Executive Response Team and providing an Executive Coordination Centre for operations.

During a disaster or emergency event

Executive Response Controller (Assistant Director-General ISB):

- Responsible for leading the department's disaster and emergency operations from the Executive Coordination Centre (ECC);
- Activates the Executive Response Team (ERT) assigning responsibilities including operations, intelligence, logistics, HR and wellbeing functions as required; and
- Managing data/reports, liaising with the SDCC and other Agencies in response to a disaster or emergency event.

Regional Response Controller (Regional Director) is:

- Responsible for managing the Region's disaster and emergency operations, usually from the Regional Coordination Centre (RCC);
- Required to activate the Regional Response Team (RRT) as required;
- Be responsible for the allocation or coordination of resources to support schools to respond and recover including the DHPW BAS response, liaising with the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) or Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and staff wellbeing;
- To manage the [School Closures website](#) which provides information to inform the SITREPs for the ERT and the State Disaster Coordination Centre; and
- To nominate the Business Continuity Coordinator to manage the necessary resources and business continuity activities in the event of a business interruption or outage during or after a disaster or emergency event.

School Response Controller (Principal/Executive Principal) is:

- To lead the school response to a disaster or emergency event;
- To respond in accordance with any established plans and if police are requested, or attend, to support their response as practical;
- To coordinate the school's disaster and emergency operations from the School Coordination Centre (SCC) if practicable;
- Responsible for actioning the determined response (Lockdown, evacuation, [temporary closure](#) or other response) to a disaster or emergency event;
- To liaise with the Regional Coordination Centre (RCC) and the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) or the departments representative at the LDMG, to provide support or request assistance required to prepare and respond; and

- To ensure that parents are notified of the emergency when practicable, but preferably on the day of the emergency.

Process

Step 1: Create the location's (Executive, Region or School) Response Team (RT) and assign roles and responsibilities

1. Identify the applicable location for the Coordination Centre to operate from including an alternative location.
2. Identify the Response Controller (normally the Officer-in-charge or their delegate) for the location.
3. Designate an alternate Response Controller for the location who could also assume control in the absence of the Response Controller.
4. Assign roles and responsibilities based on the number of staff and location complexities. (Include Shadow Team)
5. Deliver training to the response team and ensure they know their roles and responsibilities.
6. Understand the roles of the relevant Disaster Management Groups and the departmental response structure.
7. Post copies of your location's Response Team in plain view, and include copies in your emergency kit.

Useful resources

- [Quick Reference Guide - Disaster and Emergency Management Framework](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide – Response Team Roles and Responsibilities](#)

Step 2: Identify the risks for the location

1. Assess and record the risks relevant to the location taking into consideration demographics, geographic factors and other site specific risk factors. Refer to the Region and School risk profiles.
2. Consult with the relevant Disaster Management Group and the region to confirm your risk profile.
3. Consider your risk assessment when developing the Emergency Response Plan, ensuring that you clearly identify any controls and treatments available to mitigate the risks.

Useful resources

- [Enterprise risk management procedure](#)
- [Disaster event case studies](#) (DoE employees only)

Step 3: Plan the Emergency Response

1. Identify the disaster or emergency events (or risks) applicable to your location.
2. Plan your responses to the identified emergency events.
3. Define your procedures – lockdown, evacuation, [temporary closure](#). In the case of a Regional Office, or another workplace, the need for a relocation during the response phase may be necessary.

4. Identify available communications channels and be familiar with the templates for use in accordance with the Communications Strategy advising stakeholders of relevant information about the event and in particular the status of the schools and any [temporary closure](#) or re-opening.
5. The School ERPs are to be approved by the Regional Directors. The Regional ERPs are to be approved by the ADG-ISB.
6. Publish ERP and store your ERP in DoE's central storage facility prior to 1 September annually.
7. Communicate the ERP to the relevant location's community and stakeholders.

Useful resources

- [Emergency Response Plan template – Schools](#)
- [Emergency Response Plan template – Regions](#)

Step 4: Compile relevant contacts and information lists

1. Ensure completed tables in your ERP:
 - Emergency numbers sheet including relevant Disaster Management Group
 - Emergency numbers for school personnel
 - Students and staff with specialised health needs
 - Important emergency management locations
 - DoE regional and central office numbers
 - Employee Assistance Program contact/s
 - DHPW BAS number.
2. Prepare an Emergency Kit and store in accessible locations and ensure the kit includes a hardcopy of the ERP. The nominated RT Logistics officer is responsible for making sure the contents of the Emergency Kit are complete.

Useful resources

- [Checklist - Emergency Kits \(Schools\)](#)

Step 5: Training

1. Conduct annual training and exercising of event responses including Response Team roles and responsibilities, lockdowns, evacuations and assess ability to enact a [temporary school closure](#).
2. Engage your relevant Disaster Management Group or the Regions representative to externally assess your event response and Emergency Response Plan (ERP) if practicable.
3. Log the lessons learned and update your ERP as required.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Business Continuity Plan (BCP)	Identifies the response the department will use to continue or resume an essential business activity as quickly as possible following a significant disruptive event.
Disaster or Emergency	Representatives from government agencies responsible for managing disaster events in their relevant community level (local, district or state). Generally comprised of local government, state emergency response agencies, other State agencies and any non-government organisations appointed by the Chairperson.
Disaster preparedness	Identifies the preparation activities to ensure that, if a disaster or emergency situation occurs, that the department is able to cope with the effects of the event.
Emergency Response Plan (ERP)	Document used to detail assigned roles and responsibilities and required response and recovery activities, in the event of a disaster or emergency situation. They are to be developed at the Executive, Regional and School level.
Executive Response Controller (ERC)	The person assigned the responsibility for leading and coordinating the department's disaster and emergency operations state-wide.
Executive Response Team (ERT)	The peak disaster management decision-making body in DoE. It sets strategic direction, guides and advises the Regions and monitors operations in accordance with the Executive Emergency Response Plan. The ERT includes other Senior Executives as determined by the ERC. The team may vary in size depending on the nature of the event and the location.
Executive Coordination Centre (ECC)	The ERC and the ERT operate from the Executive Coordination Centre (ECC) which is a purpose built facility located in Education House. It has technical capability to monitor operations and communicate with the Regions and the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC).
Natural Disaster Season	A division of the year marked by changes in the weather and ecological conditions which create the potential for severe weather to create a disaster or an emergency.
Regional Response Controller (RRC)	Leads and manages the regional response in accordance with the Regional Emergency Response Plan. This includes the activation of the Regional Response Team (RRT) and the coordination and resourcing of School responses as required.
Regional Response Team (RRT)	The regional level team supporting the RRC. Responsible for providing support to Schools. The RRT is the key operational team to coordinate the regional response which may cover a large geographic area and may have a significant span of control. The team may vary in size depending on the nature of the event and the location.

Term	Definition
Regional Coordination Centre (RCC)	The centre established at a suitable location within the Region to provide the location and technical capability for the RRC and RRT to operate and communicate with the ECC, Schools, ECEC's, other DET workplaces and other agencies.
School Response Controller (SRC)	The Principal or their delegate who is responsible for managing the school and coordinating the local response. The SRC should engage with the LDMG and other relevant stakeholders.
School Response Team (SRT)	The school level team supporting the SRC. The SRT is the key operational team to coordinate the school response. The team may vary in size depending on the nature of the event and the location.
School Coordination Centre (SCC)	The centre established at a suitable location, usually within the School, to provide the location and technical capability for the SRC and the SRT to operate and communicate with the RCC, the school community and other agencies.
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School Response Controller (SRC)	The Principal or their delegate who is responsible for managing the school and coordinating the local response. The SRC should engage with the LDMG and other relevant stakeholders.
School Response Team (SRT)	The school level team supporting the SRC. The SRT is the key operational team to coordinate the school response. The team may vary in size depending on the nature of the event and the location.
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Legislation

- [Disaster Management Act 2003 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Policies and procedures in this group

- Nil

Supporting information for this procedure

- [Chief Executives Directive No. 1 2019 - Temporary closure and re-opening of State Schools in disaster or emergency situations](#)
- [Checklist - Emergency Kits \(Schools\)](#)
- [Disaster and Emergency Communications Strategy](#)
- [Emergency Response Plan template - Regions](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide - Disaster and Emergency Management Framework](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide - Response Team Roles and Responsibilities](#)

Other resources

- [State Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework](#)
- [Enterprise risk management procedure](#)

- [Developing a business continuity plan procedure](#)
- [Emergency Response Plan template - Schools](#)
- [The DoE Disaster and Emergency Management Arrangements](#)
- [School Lockdowns – The DoE Approach](#)
- [School Lockdowns Process](#)
- [Responding to Bomb and Armed Attack Threats](#)
- [Queensland State Disaster Management Plan](#)
- [School Closures website](#)

Contact

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1/07/2017

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

1.0 Disaster and emergency management

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