Quick Guide

Australian Government
National Emergency Management Agency

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Planning to prepare for effective emergency response

Speed read

- Natural hazards are inevitable. Prevention and mitigation activities will not eliminate all risks to people and animals.
- Collaborative planning that includes members of the community is vital and can reduce the impact of hazard events on animals and people.
- Everyone plays a role in Australian emergency management. It is important identify and understand your role and the roles of others to best prepare as a whole.
- There are many things to consider for an effective emergency response. This is why planning is crucial for animal and human safety.

Key points

- Emergency planning is about capacity and capability building. Emergency planners will need to plan for the integration of Animal Emergency Management into local emergency management plans. Plans need to be clear, written in plain language and agreed upon by all parties. All of the considerations below should be documented in relevant emergency plans.

  Who needs a plan?

  - Individuals and households
  - Communities
  - Owners or operators
  - Organisations
  - Emergency planners

- Awareness raising and community messaging inclusion of animals in EM campaigns and should be tailored to target an audience and consider beyond just animal owners to the broad diversity across custodians. Meaningful engagement in messaging must be inclusive, culturally and linguistically diverse that doesn't make assumptions about human-animal bonds in the community.
- Media, public information and warnings should address what is happening and what actions people need to take to avoid putting themselves in harm's way and avoid putting emergency responders at risk. Emergency planners need to consider, plan for, agree to and approve ahead of time the messaging that includes animals.
- Early evacuation is defined as self-initiated evacuation prior to an official warning. This ensures animals are evaluated safely which avoids unsafe rescues of animals or entering unsafe areas. Custodians need to plan for when, how, and to where they move animals.
- Shelter in place for large numbers or hard to move animals might be necessary. Plans need to consider how and where animals will be housed and what kind of biohazard and other risks these housing arrangements might cause.
- Emergency shelters and animals: Evacuation centres may or may not be able to accommodate animals. Plans need to consider how to keep animals and their custodians together safely.
- Animal emergency shelters, holding and safe areas need to be considered, especially for larger animals and plans should also consider how custodians will stay to care for their animal.

This brief is part of the quick guide series produced by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR). Quick guides for other handbooks in the collection can be found on the knowledge hub:: knowledge.aidr.org.au

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- Informal sheltering locations are places that are not considered in formal EM arrangements or encouraged by authorities. They are often places where custodians feel familiar sense of safety, however they are often not equipped to safely house people and animals and are not recommended.
- Food and water supply is the primary responsibility of the animal custodian. However, EM planning should consider the availability, quality and supply of some food and water when planning.
- Biosecurity is important to prevent other hazards that may result from a disaster such as the spread of infectious disease.
- Heath of animals affected by a disaster is a priority. Engage with veterinary professionals on how to plan for this.
- Death and disposal includes plans about euthanasia protocol, who will conduct that task and how quickly carcasses and remains will be buried and where the intended cite is located.
- Rescue requires specialised skills and equipment. It is important to consider the responders risk and animal welfare to ensure the safety of both is not compromised.
- Reunification: animals can go missing for a range of reasons. It is important that a proper method of identification, either with microchips, ear tags or recorded documentation is secure/maintained to aid the process of bringing animal and custodian back together post emergency.
- Protection of habitat refers to practices prior to a hazard that protect critical wildlife species.

Additional considerations in emergency planning include: equipment safety, fatigue management, psychosocial support, trauma and/or responder safety. The full list can be found on page 29 in the Handbook.

Take action

- Consider what aspects of planning are relevant to you and your role.
- Exercise or practice your plans.
- Consider what makes an evacuation centre fit for purpose. Read the list of recommendations on page 30 of Evacuation Planning (AIDR 2023)
- Plan for return and recovery of evacuees. See Quick Guide Stage 5: Return, Chapter 7 of Evacuation Planning (AIDR 2023)

More information

- Planning for Animals (AIDR 2024)
- Evacuation Planning, Chapter 5 (AIDR 2023)
- Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience (AIDR 2020)
- Gender and Emergency Management Guidelines (GADAUS 2023)
- Emergency planning for children and young people (Department of Human Services, Victoria)
- Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers (AIDR 2017).
- Resources for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction
- Large Animal Rescue Operations Guidelines (AFAC 2022)
- Australian Government Business Portal has guidance on business continuity planning
- Managing Exercises (AIDR 2023)

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