

Emergency Planning Policy

1. Policy

My Help plans for emergencies in order to protect the safety and wellbeing of older people and Aged Care Workers and to ensure older people have access to supports without interruption.

My Help will ensure essential services are maintained as far as is practicable and that full-service delivery is recommenced as soon as possible after an emergency.

2. Definitions

Altering or ceasing services	Services may at times need to be altered or ceased due to emergencies. This may be due to direct risk or impact on the location itself or because travel in the area is considered too unsafe.
Leaving early	The practice of relocating well in advance of an emergency. This activity is undertaken by households in response to a range of triggers such as a weather forecast or flood warning.
Emergency planning	Identification of potential events that could have a negative effect on an organisation and/or its services, and the actions that can be taken to minimise the impact or extent of damage.
Evacuation	The urgent movement of older people to a safer location in response to an imminent threat or impact of an emergency. An evacuation without any prior warning is resource intensive and potentially detrimental to the health of older people, Aged Care Workers and emergency services personnel. The main priority when deciding to evacuate is the protection of life. An evacuation must be effectively planned and executed.
Extreme heat or heatwave	A period of unusual and uncomfortable hot weather that could negatively affect human health. Extreme heat can also affect community infrastructure (such as power supply and public transport) and other services. Extreme heat can affect everyone, however some people, including people with a disability, are more vulnerable.
Organisational Resilience	The ability of a business to rapidly respond to and recover from emergencies, critical disruptions or threats, and continue operating with limited impact on service delivery.
Relocation	The planned movement of older people and an appropriate number of Aged Care Workers from a facility or home to alternative accommodation with a similar type of care available, in response to a forecast or warning of potential or actual emergency.
Shelter in place	To remain on site within an existing facility or home during an emergency. The decision to shelter in place is based on information from a variety of sources that confirms this option is safer or more appropriate than relocation or evacuation. The movement of older people from one facility or home to another safer building within the same location is also considered shelter in place.
Shelter indoors	To remain inside a building and limit the exposure to unhealthy conditions in the air outside such as gas leaks, smoke and other air contaminants. On receiving advice to shelter indoors, people must go indoors immediately, close all doors and windows, turn

	off heaters, air conditioners and exhaust fans, and listen to radio or television or monitor emergency services websites for the 'all clear' message.
Vulnerable person	Someone living in the community who is: • older, frail, and/or physically, intellectually or cognitively impaired; and • unable to comprehend warnings and directions and/or respond in an emergency situation

3. Emergency Planning

My Help must take an 'all hazards' approach when preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies. This includes planning for a range of possible emergencies such as fire, bushfire, flood, relocation, evacuation and prolonged service interruption.

The WH&S Officer will prepare, test and annually review an Emergency Plan for My Help, in consultation with all relevant Aged Care Workers and older people.

The Emergency Plan, or a summary of key elements of the plan, must be readily accessible by Aged Care Workers and on display in My Help's premises.

The Emergency Plan must include:

- how serious accidents, fire, flood, other natural disasters will be responded to, as well as how incidents relating to hazardous chemicals and clinical waste will be managed;
- contact details for key Aged Care Workers who have specific roles or responsibilities under the plan, for example, fire wardens and first aid officers;
- contact details for local emergency services (e.g. police, fire brigade and poison information centre) and medical assistance;
- a description of how people will be alerted to an emergency or possible emergency, for example, sirens or alarms (at My Help's office) and by phoning affected older people or their supporters
- a map of My Help's workplace, illustrating the location of fire protection equipment, emergency exits and assembly points;
- evacuation procedures, including arrangements for assisting any people with hearing, vision or mobility impairment;
- testing of emergency procedures, including the frequency of testing; and
- information, training and instruction to relevant Aged Care Workers on implementing the emergency procedures.

The Emergency Plan must be tailored to the business' location and circumstances and be based on consultation with local health and emergency services.

In the event of an emergency, My Help's Emergency Plan must be implemented. Directions from emergency services workers must also be complied with.

The Management Team will review My Help's Emergency Plan at least annually and:

- when there are changes to the workplace such as re-location or refurbishments;
- when there are changes in the number or composition of Aged Care Workers including an increase in the use of temporary contractors;

- when new activities have been introduced; and
- after the plan has been tested.

My Help will communicate any changes to the plan as a result of reviews as soon as practicable to all affected Aged Care Workers and stakeholders.

4. Emergency Evacuation Plans

The WH&S Officer must also prepare and regularly review Emergency Evacuation Plans for how people should evacuate My Help's premises, including where they should assemble if there is an emergency. Reviews should take into account the choices, safety, rights and feedback of older people, whilst also managing My Help's need to manage risk. Where there are changes to Emergency Evacuation Plans, these must be promptly communicated to Aged Care Workers and other stakeholders who access the premises.

Emergency Evacuation Plans must be displayed prominently in My Help's premises. Each Plan must clearly indicate its current location, where the exits are and where the assembly area is. This information must also be included in Aged Care Workers Inductions and individual older people intakes.

Emergency and evacuation procedures must be practised with all Aged Care Workers at least annually. My Help will utilise different scenarios as part of the drills, e.g. fire, flood, bomb threat, mass illness. A record of who attended the exercise, who conducted the exercise and the date it was conducted will be kept with organisational records.

5. Operational Readiness

The WH&S Officer must ensure My Help is prepared to rapidly respond in an emergency. This includes:

- having an Emergency Plan in place;
- ensuring the Emergency Plan is tested and linked to broader community emergency frameworks;
- actively engaging with local emergency service agencies and local government about how to respond in different emergencies;
- regularly testing emergency management and evacuation procedures;
- being prepared to make informed decisions about Aged Care Workers and individual older people safety and whether to cease services, relocate Aged Care Workers or older people, or direct Aged Care Workers and older people to shelter indoors;
- considering how support for older people can be continued if services need to be altered or ceased in an emergency;
- planning how to respond if critical infrastructure fails during an emergency, such as power failures;
- ensuring Aged Care Workers are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency;
- ensuring all relevant contact details (such as Doctor, older people, next of kin, emergency services, and relevant government agencies) are up to date and available; and

- training Aged Care Workers to implement emergency procedures, ensuring they are equipped to address individual older people needs.

Aged Care Workers must:

- ensure all individual older people information, including contact details for the individual older people and next of kin, are up to date and easily accessible;
- consider older people's needs in a range of possible emergency events;
- communicate the Emergency Plan to relevant stakeholders, for example, older people, supporters members and related service providers;
- as part of support planning, ensure alternative plans for older people exist if service delivery is interrupted;
- support older people living independently to develop their own personal emergency plan; and
- notify older people and their next of kin where relevant, of all relocations and service cessations related to emergencies.

6. Obtaining Emergency Information

In the event of an emergency situation, the WH&S Officer will obtain information about current and forecast conditions from radio, television the internet and its local networks. Agencies such as the Bureau of Meteorology (weather forecasts), the State Emergency Service (floods and storms), Fire and Rescue services (fires and bushfires) and the Police monitor forecast hazards and provide advice and warnings.

For any high risk or high needs older people, the WH&S officer will also make contact with local emergency services to advise of the situation and potential support that may be needed.

7. Fire Safety

The WH&S Officer must ensure that fire equipment is installed, suitable for risks specific to My Help's workplace and be readily accessible in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards. Fire extinguishers must be placed away from heat sources and regularly maintained, with at least 1 metre of clearance to access the extinguisher.

Signage within My Help's premises must assist people to find fire equipment quickly and identify what type of fire it can be used on.

My Help will determine which Aged Care Workers require training in the use of first response procedures and fire equipment, based on the nature of their position and on risk assessment. Refresher training will be provided annually.

The WH&S Officer must ensure fire equipment is regularly tested by My Help's local fire authority or fire equipment supplier in accordance with Schedule 2 Internal Review and External Audit Schedule.

Emergency exits must be kept clear at all times. Emergency exits must be kept unlocked and unblocked and all exit signs must be maintained and kept illuminated.

My Help will also screen older people to identify people who should be listed on a Vulnerable Persons Register (VPR), that is, they meet the definition of a vulnerable person and cannot identify personal or community support networks to help them in an emergency.

My Help will obtain informed consent from identified people and enter and maintain their information on VPRs in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services' Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy, February 2018.

8. Power Failure

Power failures can be common and unexpected so the Emergency Plan should include a plan to ensure supports can continue to be provided during them. Strategies include:

- having access to a phone, such as a charged mobile phone or land line that doesn't rely on electricity to operate;
- having access to alternate lighting, such as a torch or a battery-operated light;
- having access to a battery-powered radio;
- having access to fresh water;
- considering the safety of food supplies and alternative cooking arrangements if the electricity in a individual older people 's residence has an outage, including a plan for older people who require vitamised meals;
- where older people require an uninterrupted power supply (for instance, for life support equipment) considering how they can be supported (such as contacting their electricity retailer and ensuring the retailer has the individual older people 's up-to-date contact details), or letting the individual older people 's supporter know to do the same;
- if a individual older people 's medication may have been compromised, contact the Clinical Advisor to organise new medication to be dispensed.

9. Extreme Weather

The Emergency Plan should also plan for extreme weather (such as extreme heat or cold) that is likely to occur where My Help supports are delivered. The plan should help Aged Care Workers identify which older people are most at risk and the support they may require.

To support older people on extreme heat days or during heatwaves, Aged Care Workers must be aware of the following:

- which older people are most at risk;
- how to assist older people to reduce the risk of heat related illnesses;
- how to recognise heat related symptoms; and
- what to do if a individual older people is heat affected.

On days above 30 degrees Celsius, Aged Care Workers should encourage older people to:

- drink plenty of water, even if they don't feel thirsty;
- spend as much time as possible in cool or air-conditioned buildings (shopping centres, libraries or community centres);
- wear light coloured, loose fitting clothing;
- stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day;
- wear a hat and apply sunscreen;

- avoid strenuous activity, cancel or postpone outings;
- avoid alcohol and caffeine;
- close curtains or blinds to block out the sun; and
- use wet towels and cold foot baths to cool themselves down.

My Help also requires all Aged Care Workers to follow the same precautions when working on hot days to ensure their health and wellbeing is maintained.

10. Organisational Resilience

In addition to planning for the safety and wellbeing of Aged Care Workers and older people in an emergency, My Help's emergency planning is also based on strengthening its organisational resilience – or building the business' capacity to continue providing necessary services during emergencies.

To support this, My Help undertakes organisational risk assessments related to business continuity and disaster management and recovery. It also develops specific Business Continuity Plans to complement its emergency planning activities. See the Risk Management Policy and Procedure for more detail.

11. Individual / Older People Readiness

My Help's services may need to be changed, ceased or relocated in the event of an emergency or other service interruption. Support planning for all older people must consider how services can continue to be provided in these situations. This includes, for instance, considering how changes to services will be communicated to older people and alternative services that could be provided should My Help be unable to deliver normal services.

For services provided to an individual older people in their own home (whether rented or owned by the individual older people), My Help expects that they (and where appropriate, the owner of the home) will be responsible for their own fire safety and ensure the home meets all relevant building laws, regulations and legislation.

Older people receiving services in their home should be encouraged and supported to develop personal emergency plans that cater for all types of emergencies and address their needs.

My Help Aged Care Workers will support older people with personal emergency planning in the following situations:

- where My Help provides the majority of services required by an individual older people, and these services are provided in the individual older people's home;
- where multiple providers support the individual older people and it is agreed by all providers and the individual older people that My Help will support the individual older people with personal emergency planning; and/or
- where assessment and planning activities identify that the individual older people require support with personal emergency planning.

Aged Care Workers will support older people to exercise choice and control in emergency planning by listening to their needs and preferences and involving them and their supporters and carers in the planning process.

Key considerations include:

- health needs;
- transportation;
- location of the individual older people's home in regard to fire or flood risks; and
- ensuring emergency information is available and relevant for the individual older people.

Personal emergency management plans should:

- be appropriate to the location, physical environment and individual older people and Aged Care Workers profile;
- include planned emergency responses for different emergency situations, such as options for altering or ceasing services, relocation, sheltering and evacuation;
- include clear triggers for when the plan is activated, including processes for maintaining situational awareness and sourcing accurate and up-to-date information;
- be tailored to meet the particular CALD needs of older people, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, to ensure a culturally responsive approach;
- outline clear authority for decision making and communication arrangements; and
- include business continuity arrangements and options should emergency services be unable to respond immediately.

Personal emergency plans should be reviewed and updated regularly as part of the individual older people's Care Plan reviews.

12. Reporting

Incidents relating to emergencies and service interruptions should be reported in accordance with My Help's Incident Management policies and procedures.