

FLOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY

Floods are a natural phenomenon that occur when water covers land that is usually dry. Flooding most commonly occurs from heavy rainfall when natural watercourses cannot carry the excess water. Flooding can also be caused by storm surges as a result of a tropical cyclone, or severe storm, a tsunami or even due to a dam release or fail.

Extensive flooding in 2011, led the Australian Government to introduce a [standard definition of flood](#) for certain insurance policies. For this purpose, a flood is defined as:

The covering of normally dry land by water that has escaped or been released from the normal confines of: any lake, or any river, creek or other natural watercourse, whether or not altered or modified; or any reservoir, canal, or dam.

According to Geoscience Australia, floods can have both positive and negative impacts. They can bring welcome relief for people and ecosystems suffering from prolonged drought, but also are estimated to be the costliest natural disaster in Australia.

Appropriate emergency preparedness and mitigation strategies need to be developed to ensure flooding can be a manageable hazard, especially in flood prone communities. Changes in rainfall intensity and the occurrence of severe storms and rising sea levels, however, have made many parts of Australia, especially coastal areas, a flood risk. The Australian Warning System is a new national approach to information and warnings during emergencies including flooding and tsunamis.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.
-------	----------------------------	---

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	
Sec 174(2)(a)	Serious incident - Any emergency for which emergency services attended
Sec 174(2)(c)	Any incident that requires the approved provider to close, or reduce the number of children attending the service for a period
Sec 174(2)(c)	Any circumstance at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service
4	Definitions “multi-storey building” and “storey”
12(d)	Meaning of a serious incident- any emergency for which emergency services attended
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
136	First aid qualifications
168	Education and Care Services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures are to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

RELATED POLICIES

Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation Policy Cyclone Management Policy Delivery of Children to and from EEC Service Policy Emergency and Evacuation Policy Family Communication Policy	Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Lockdown Policy Record Keeping and Retention Policy Supervision Policy
---	---

PURPOSE

We aim to maintain children’s safety and wellbeing by developing an *Emergency Management Plan* that includes flood emergency plans and proactive responses to minimise the potential risks faced by children and staff of the Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Service during a flood.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, management, approved provider, nominated

supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Management will take effective action to ensure that the OSHC Service is as flood safe as possible. We will identify possible flood risks, engage members of the community for advice and help and ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and roles if required to respond to a flood emergency. Our Emergency Management Plan (EMP) is developed and updated in consultation with children, families, educators, management and emergency services.

FLOODS IN AUSTRALIA

Floods are categorised according to the speed at which floodwaters rise:

Slow-onset flood: Occur by slow rise and fall of water level and usually lasts for a relatively longer period. Slow-onset floods may last one or more weeks, or even months. Due to the flood lasting for a longer period, it can lead to loss of livestock, agricultural products, roads, railroad etc.

Rapid onset floods: Occur by a rapid rise in water level which lasts for a shorter period. The damage rapid onset floods can cause are often more destructive and pose a greater risk to life and property as people usually have less time to take preventive action prior to the flood.

Flash-Floods: Occur by a rapid rise in water level, within minutes or a few hours after heavy rainfall, tropical storm, failure of dams or levees. Flash-Flooding poses the greatest threat to life and may result in significant damage to property.

TSUNAMIS IN AUSTRALIA

Tsunamis are essentially a series of ocean waves that send surges of water onto land. Where regular waves are caused by wind, tsunamis are caused by the large-scale vertical displacement of the water. Tsunami warnings may be issued by the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre who monitor real-time tsunamigenic potential such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes submarine landslides and other events that could generate tsunamis.

THE AUSTRALIAN WARNING SYSTEM (AWS)

The Australian Warning System (AWS) is a nationally consistent, three-tiered approach designed to make warnings clearer and lead people to take action ahead of severe weather events including flood and tsunami warnings. The warning system comprises of levels, action statements, hazard icons, colours and shapes. <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-warnings/>

The three warning levels are:

Advice (Yellow): An incident has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes. Monitor conditions.

Watch and Act (Orange): There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now. Prepare to leave/evacuate. Do not enter flood water.

Emergency Warning (Red) : An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You need to take action immediately. Leave/evacuate (immediately by am/pm/hazard timing).

The AWS are issued by Emergency Services. The predicted extent of the flood and the amount of time available before it arrives will determine the course of action to be taken.

When there is an Emergency Warning educators need to prepare for possible emergency evacuation and implement the procedures effectively to ensure the safety of all children, staff, families and visitors in the Service.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS

To ensure compliance with National Regulations our OSHC Service will ensure:

- the nominated supervisor, management, staff, educators and educator assistants comply with this policy
- all staff have a thorough understanding of the [Australian Warning System \(AWS\)](#)
- a comprehensive risk assessment to identify local risks associated with the impact of flooding is completed annually in collaboration the SES (State Emergency Services) 132 500 (for anywhere in Australia) and an Emergency Management Plan (EMP) is developed
- hazards within the OSHC Service that may be harmful to children or staff during a flood are identified in the risk assessment
- families are made aware of the *Flood Management Policy* and emergency evacuation procedures
- emergency evacuation plans are displayed in prominent positions near each exit and in the indoor and outdoor learning environments
- clear procedures are in place for when a flood warning occurs to ensure the safety of educators, children and families
- emergency evacuation rehearsals (drills) will be practiced every **three months**, including identifying a designated assembly point and place of refuge in case of flooding
- a range of possible flood scenarios are included in evacuation drills
- each emergency evacuation drill is documented (Reg. 97)

- refer to the *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* for steps to be followed when the service needs to close in response to an emergency, including when to notify the regulatory authority and department of education of service closure
- a serious incident notification is submitted to the regulatory authority within 24 hours when there has been an emergency that has posed a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the children
- the regulatory authority is notified if the OSHC Service is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency (evacuation due to flood, or to repair damage caused by a flood) (Reg.175 (2)(b))
- the Department of Education is notified if the service is temporarily closed via CCS Software or PEP
- emergency telephone numbers will be clearly displayed in prominent positions within the Service
- emergency contact details of all children are updated regularly
- strategies to implement emergency plans are discussed and documented at each staff meeting
- consideration is made to how to save critical records- (current records, historical artefacts and archives)
- counselling services are provided to employees and their family members affected by flooding
- the OSHC Service insurance policy is current and covers the Service for flood damage

TSUNAMI

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- consultation is conducted with our local council to find out where local assembly areas are in the event of large-scale emergencies such as a Tsunami
- consultation with emergency services is conducted to assist writing the OSHC Services' EMP (Emergency Management Plan)
- risk assessments are completed for the OSHC Service identifying hazards and potential treats specific to your location and service details (including evacuation from multi-storey buildings of all children, staff and visitors)
- Evacuation Diagrams are displayed with correct and up to date information
- emergency kits are easily accessible and located in a central location, fully stocked items are working and in date
- regular rehearsal of emergency evacuations is undertaken in accordance with Regulation 168
- up-to-date information about Tsunami emergencies is monitored and communicated with all staff
<http://www.bom.gov.au/tsunami/>

- the department is notified of any closures, incidents, evacuations or damage to premises. While the regulations require this to be done within 24 hours, services should ensure the safety of children, educators and staff as a first priority. Services can contact the department by phone or email if they do not have access to NQA ITS.

BEFORE A FLOOD

MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL:

- continue to visit Bureau of Meteorology to check current flood and weather warnings
<http://www.bom.gov.au/>
- visit the Bureau of Meteorology flood watch- [Flood warning system](#)
- refer to the SES State Flood Plans which outline arrangements for responding to floods in NSW
<https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Documents/plans/sub-plans/SubPlan-Flood.pdf>
- download a copy of our council's flood plans
- be familiar with the warning levels and what action needs to be taken during a flood
- ensure the removal of leaves, debris and other items that can enhance flooding (e.g.: check gutters and drains)
- become familiar with the emergency evacuation plan identifying routes and safe locations if evacuation is required (note: this may be different for a flood situation)
- prepare the Emergency Evacuation Kit
- ensure an up-to-date emergency contact list for all children is included in the Emergency Evacuation Kit
- organise sandbags and sand
- follow the advice by emergency services
- place chemicals on a high shelving to reduce contamination of flood water
- talk to the children about the flood, using simple words that children can understand
- ensure there is a procedure for out of hours decision making
- ensure plans are made to include removal of animals (if safe to do so).

DURING A FLOOD

MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL:

- act quickly
- monitor current flood warnings in the local area
- liaise with Emergency Services instructions and react to changing conditions

- contact families to come and collect their child/ren once emergency services have issued a Watch and Act for your area
- turn off electricity, water and gas
- place sandbags in the toilet bowls and over shower and bath outlets to prevent backflow of sewerage into the OSHC Service
- lock all doors and take recommended evacuation routes for the local area
- contact emergency services to ensure the relocation area is safe before proceeding and follow all advice
- evacuate the Service immediately and relocate to clearly defined area as discussed with emergency services and clearly identified in the OSHC Service's Emergency Evacuation Plan
- if located on school grounds, liaise with School Management
- keep families updated regularly of the relocation site

IF IT'S TOO LATE TO LEAVE DURING A FLOOD

Important: calm and logical thinking will be required. The following points are options depending on the circumstances within your own context. Seeking safe options to move children and staff above rising waters levels will be the primary objective.

MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL:

- continue to seek advice from emergency services
- remain calm
- move to higher ground and avoid standing in flowing or rising water
- if time permits, stack possessions, equipment and resources onto benches and tables
- ensure that if flowing water is above the ankles, STOP! Turn around and go another way
- avoid entering flood waters

AFTER THE FLOOD

MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL:

- stay tuned to local radio stations for official warnings and advice
- wait until emergency services have declared the area safe before entering the flood zone
- do not enter the OSHC Service until the water has dropped below floor level
- do not let children play in or near floodwater
- stay away from drains
- wear rubber boots or rubber soled footwear and rubber/leather gloves when entering the Service

- check with electricity, gas and water establishments to determine if the supplies to the OSHC Service and local area have been affected and if it safe for them to be turned on
- be aware of damaged power lines, bridges, buildings, trees surrounding the OSHC Service
- contact families or emergency contacts to confirm the location and safety of the children
- if possible, take photographs for insurance claims
- when safe and convenient, clean or discard contaminated toys and equipment
- complete a serious incident notification to the regulatory authority within 24 hours when there has been an emergency that has posed a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the children- [NQA ITS](#)
- notify the regulatory authority if the OSHC service is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency (evacuation due to flooding or to repair damage caused by flooding)
- notify the Regulatory Authority if the service is temporarily closed via the Provider Entry Point (PEP)
- notify families about absences and Child Care Subsidy (CCS) due to a local emergency

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Australian Government- Emergency Management Australia-[What to do before and after a flood](#)

Australian Government National Emergency Management Agency [Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub- Flood](#)

[NSW Department of Education: Flood planning for Early Childhood Education and Care \(ECEC\)](#)

RESOURCES TO ASSIST SERVICES BEFORE AND AFTER AN EMERGENCY/NATURAL DISASTER

Australian Government Department of Education Resources

<https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/help-emergency>

[BeYou Educator Wellbeing after a natural disaster](#)

[Emerging Minds. Community Trauma Toolkit](#)

NSW SPECIFIC INFORMATION

New South Wales

New South Wales State Emergency Service SES

Flood plans for NSW <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Documents/plans/sub-plans/SubPlan-Flood.pdf>

Council Flood Plans <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/flood-resources/before-a-flood/know-your-risk/>

Phone: 132 500 SES

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Flood Management Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, educators and staff.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP RESOURCES

Emergency Bag Audit Emergency Management Plan (EMP)	Extreme Weather Procedure
--	---------------------------

SOURCES

ABC Emergency: Plan for an emergency – Flood <https://www.abc.net.au/news/emergency/plan-for-an-emergency/flood/>

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).

Australian Government. Bureau of Meteorology. Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre. <http://www.bom.gov.au/tsunami/>

Australian Government Department of Education (2020). Help in an emergency

Australian Government: Geoscience Australia. (2023). [Flood](#)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023). Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology <http://www.bom.gov.au/tsunami/>

Australian Government National Emergency Management Agency *Australian Warning System* <https://www.australianwarningsystem.com.au>

Australian Government tsunami Awareness https://www.ga.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/86493/Tsunami-Awareness-brochure.pdf

Floods: Warning, Preparedness and Safety

http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/flood/EMA_Floods_warning_preparedness_safety.pdf

Queensland Government Get Ready Queensland <https://www.getready.qld.gov.au/understand-your-risk/types-disasters/tsunami>

Queensland Government Natural disaster resources

SES – NSW State Emergency Services <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au>

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Libby Haines	Director	January 2024
POLICY REVIEWED	JANUARY 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JANUARY 2025
VERSION NUMBER	V3.01.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy maintenance • minor edits within policy • additional information added re: notification to regulatory authority if service needs to be closed in response to an emergency • added information about preparing for Tsunamis for services required to include information in policy • Child Care Centre Desktop Resources added • sources checked and links repaired as required 		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
JANUARY 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy maintenance • inclusion of Australian Warning System (AWS) warnings • additional information added to 'Continuous Improvement' section • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' • minor formatting edits within text • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • update of DESE to Department of Education 	JANUARY 2024
MARCH 2022	New Policy developed for OSHC Services	JANUARY 2023