

POLICY

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - PUBLIC SHELTER RESPONSIBILITIES

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| Responsibility of: | School Support Services | FILE2015/313 |
| Effective date: | November 2015 | EDOC2015/38792 |
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| Target audience: | Principals, shelter managers, staff | |

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Emergency Management - Plans for schools guidelines](#) and the [Emergency Management Sub Plan - Emergency Shelter Group \(all regions\) \(staff access only\)](#).

1. POLICY

For those Northern Territory (NT) Government schools designated as public emergency shelters, the principal is the designated shelter manager unless alternative arrangements have been made in accordance with this policy. Schools that are designated public emergency shelters must have appropriate plans in place to manage the shelter in the event of an emergency.

Each emergency shelter requires an identified shelter manager at all times throughout the year, including during school holiday periods. The shelter manager must familiarise themselves with the [Territory Emergency Plan](#), the regional counter disaster plan and the relevant shelter operations plan. The shelter manager is responsible to the shelter group leader for the operation and control of the shelter during an emergency event.

The shelter manager is responsible for having a sound working knowledge of the [Emergency Management Sub Plan - Emergency Shelter Group \(all regions\) \(staff access only\)](#) and how this will be operationalised at their school. This includes facilitating access for NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services and/or St John Ambulance staff to the school premises to fulfil their duties. These duties will vary between regions and are detailed in regional plans.

It is essential that the shelter manager provides regular progress updates to the shelter group leader during an emergency event.

2. BUSINESS NEED

In line with the [Territory Emergency Plan](#), a shelter may be required for emergency events including cyclone and flood. In accordance with the [Emergency Management Act](#), the Department of Education (the department) is the lead agency for emergency shelters and coordinates the operational training of shelter managers.

The department maintains a number of public shelters as outlined in regional and local emergency plans. Part of the department's responsibility is:

- to provide department buildings designated as public emergency shelters
- to provide staff to operate the department emergency shelters during activation periods
- to liaise with other organisations that have responsibilities relating to emergency shelters.

This policy outlines a consistent approach to ensure that the department meets its public emergency shelter obligations.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all NT Government schools, including Independent Public School status, which are designated in their regional counter disaster plans as public emergency shelters. Some schools have been identified in their respective local emergency plans as locations that may also be called upon to provide additional facilities during an emergency event, and in these circumstances, schools will assume the role of a public emergency shelter and be required to adhere to this policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

Counter disaster sub plan - Emergency Shelter Group (all regions) refers to the procedures detail the methods of staffing and operation of public emergency shelters in the event of a threat to people by cyclone, flood, fire or other emergency event.

Emergency encompasses a range of events which could otherwise be described as incidents, accidents, catastrophes, disasters or crises. An emergency embraces the range of terms frequently used to describe an event, actual or imminent, which endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and which requires a significant and coordinated response.

Emergency Management Committee is comprised of key department business areas responsible for reviewing risk and improving and promoting preparedness and recovery from a major emergency or disaster and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive Organisational Services.

Emergency Management Plans detail assigned responsibilities and procedures required in the event of an emergency or critical incident.

Executive Directors, when referred to in this policy, are those with the line management of schools

Independent Public Schools are schools that remain part of the public education system while operating with increased autonomy in relation to staff selection, financial management, governance, and their teaching and learning programs.

Local Emergency Plans are developed to ensure coordinated emergency and recovery operations for a specific locality.

Public emergency shelters include designated NT government buildings identified for use as a shelter during an emergency and as a temporary place of refuge for people during a disaster or emergency event such as a flood, cyclone or fire.

Regional emergency plans: the regional emergency management structure is based on the three police regions. The plans provide a basis for coordinated emergency and recovery operations in each region.

School includes preschool and the land area up to the school boundaries.

School staff includes any person responsible for the operations or education services at a school. This can include contractors and volunteers.

Territory Emergency Management Council has been established under the Emergency Management Act and is comprised of chief executives from a number of key departments. The primary functions of the Council include directing resources during emergency and recovery operations and provide advice in relation to emergency planning.

Territory Emergency Plan describes the Territory's approach to emergency and recovery operations, the governance and coordination arrangement, and roles and responsibilities of agencies. It is supported by regional, local and hazard-specific plans and functional group sub-plans.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Emergency Management Committee will:

- coordinate both advice within the department and the response during an event, in accordance with the department's [Emergency Management Framework \(staff access only\)](#).

The department's Planning and Infrastructure Services will:

- identify the department shelter group leader to oversee the activation of emergency shelters during an emergency situation
- ensure that designated department shelter buildings are adequately resourced.

Executive Directors with the line management of schools will:

- ensure that schools adhere to the requirements of this policy.

As the designated shelter manager, principals will:

- assume the role of designated shelter manager in an emergency
- manage the operations of their shelter in line with the [Emergency Management Sub Plan - Emergency Shelter Group \(all regions\)](#)
- liaise with NT Police or St John Ambulance volunteers to provide access to appropriate areas of their school for them to carry out their duties in an emergency situation
- manage school assets, including those assets that are emergency shelters
- ensure a shelter manager is identified at all times throughout the year, including during school holiday periods or periods of recreation leave from the school

- manage and adequately maintain all school assets during shelter operations
- coordinate shelter volunteers and assign appropriate roles to staff to assist with providing information to shelter occupants; maintain hygiene of the premises; collection of stores; monitor and record communications; and to assist with administrative duties such as rostering of volunteers.

Should the principal not be able to perform the duties of a shelter manager, they will arrange for an appropriate manager and ensure that the nominee has working knowledge of their responsibilities during an emergency situation. These appointments must be approved by the relevant Executive Director and forwarded to the department's Emergency Management Committee for noting. This process also applies where principals wish to engage service providers or volunteers to solely undertake shelter management tasks.

The shelter group leader will:

- have overall responsibility for coordinating the region's emergency shelters and report directly to the territory/region counter disaster controller when a major emergency occurs.

6. RELATED POLICY, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

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| <p>Legislation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Management Act (NT) • Education Act (NT) • Territory Emergency Plan |
| <p>Departmental policy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Management Framework (staff access only) • Emergency Management- Plans for schools guidelines • Temporary School Closures policy • Emergency Management - school preparedness policy • Cyclone Action list (staff access only) |
| <p>Relevant resources and links</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Standard 3745-2010, Emergency control organisation and procedures for buildings, structures and workplaces • Australian Standard AS/NZS ISP 31000:2009, Risk Management Fact Sheet • Australian Emergency Management Institute, Disaster Resilience Education for Schools • Northern Territory Emergency Service publications and forms (includes link to the Bureau of Meteorology's cyclone track and threat map) • Shelters in the NT (Northern Territory Emergency Services) • Cyclone Action guides (Northern Territory Emergency Services) |

7. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources can be found on the department's [Work Health and Safety](#) site.