

Emergency planning for residential aged care services

The Victorian Government is keen to work collaboratively with the aged care sector to support planning and preparedness for emergency situations.

While we recognise the Commonwealth Government as the primary funder and regulator for residential aged care services, the Victorian State Government has responsibility for coordinating statewide emergency responses. The State Government also regulates Supported Residential Services (SRS).

The Department of Health has developed a Bushfire Ready Resource which is a practical kit for residential aged care providers. The Bushfire Ready Resource is aimed at supporting providers to better understand obligations and responsibilities for planning and responding to a bushfire emergency, particularly in relation to potential relocation or evacuation.

A number of regional emergency management forums are planned over November and December where a practical workshop approach will be taken to assist providers in emergency preparedness. We strongly encourage your attendance at these forums.

The Bushfire Ready Resource is available on the website – www.health.vic.gov.au/bushfire and will be sent to residential aged care providers and Supported Residential Services in December 2009.

2009-10 summer season

There is increased attention being focused on bushfire emergency preparedness and heatwave response for the forthcoming summer months.

There are reported predictions of high temperatures and high fire risk potential in Victoria.

There are 52 areas in Victoria that have been specifically identified as high risk, and other areas may equally be affected.

This means that all residential services need to be prepared and have considered the Department of Human Services and Department of Health Bushfire response: client and services policy 2009-10, particularly in relation to code red days.

The Department of Health is developing a statewide heatwave plan and a number of targeted resources will be available before the end of 2009.

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Key messages around emergency management

- Ensure you understand your responsibilities and obligations in the event of an emergency.
- Make sure that plans consider the local planning arrangements in each local government area. It is important to talk with your local council about appropriate responses and key contacts in the event of an emergency.
- Your plans need to consider:
 - when, where and how residents would need to be relocated in the event of emergency
 - your role in making decisions about this
 - how you ensure this happens in a considered, timely and safe manner.
- Ensure your residents and staff are informed about how your services will respond in the event of an emergency including the likelihood of relocation, and the implications of these decisions.
- Ensure your plans are well considered, understood and practised by the managers and staff in your services should they need to implement these plans.

While your organisation will have emergency management plans and protocols already in place, you may need to review these in relation to bushfire risk and heatwave conditions.

For more information

- **FireReady Kit**
This very useful resource has been produced by the CFA to help you understand your bushfire risk, prepare your property and develop a Bushfire Survival Plan. You can find it at: <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/residents/summer/firereadykit.htm>
- Department of Health Bushfire response: clients and services policy, 2009-10 at http://www.health.vic.gov.au/bushfire/downloads/br_dh.pdf
- Department of Human Services response: clients and services policy 2009-10 at http://www.health.vic.gov.au/bushfire/downloads/br_dhs.pdf
- Better Health Channel, Preventing heat stress - http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Heat_stress_and_heat-related_illness?open&source=homepage&linktype=Alert-More&ppnl=Alert&ppos=More
- Better Health Channel , Managing heat stress and older people - http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Heat_stress_and_the_elderly?open&source=homepage&linktype=Alert-More&ppnl=Alert&ppos=More

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This document is also available in pdf format at www.health.vic.gov.au/bushfire