



ACT
Government

Chief Minister and Treasury

Policy Statement
Policy Number: WHS-02-2013
Issued: July 2013

ACT PUBLIC SERVICE

FIRE SAFETY & EMERGENCY PLANNING

1. PURPOSE

This document articulates the ACT Government policy in relation to fire safety and emergency planning in ACT Public Service (ACTPS) workplaces.

2. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Directorates and any person considered to be a worker for the ACT Government under the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act).

3. IMPLEMENTING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Directorates must have a comprehensive emergency plan in place which provides for procedures and practices that protect the health and safety of workers, clients and visitors in emergency situations and protect the ACT Government's assets. The plan must establish and maintain a system that provides for effective emergency management, has regard to compliance and appropriate training, and the need to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from emergencies. Where emergency related risks cannot be eliminated, clearly articulated responses and management strategies must be included in the plan, such as the use of personal protective equipment.

NB: If the building is co-tenanted, the development and implementation of an emergency plan should be discussed and agreed with all the tenants of the building.

At a minimum, Directorates are required to implement emergency planning processes and procedures in accordance with the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (Regulation), the Australian Standard AS 3745-2010 Planning for emergencies in facilities (the Standard), and the *Work Health and Safety (Managing the Work Environment and Facilities) Code of Practice 2011* (CoP).

The ACTPS Workplace Health and Safety Management System provides guidance and practical tools to assist Directorates develop and maintain emergency plans and processes.

4. PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES

A Directorate's emergency plan must, so far as is reasonably practicable include:

- emergency prevention, preparedness and mitigation arrangements;
- activities to prepare for and prevent emergencies, such as training, evacuation exercises, and maintenance of the plan;
- overall control and coordination arrangements for emergency response, including evacuation strategies for people with disability;
- how often emergency procedures should be tested; ¹
- where necessary the information, instruction, and training in relation to the implementation of the procedures by workers; ² and
- agreed roles and responsibilities of office holders and other people in preparation for, during, and after an emergency.

While members of the public are not subject to internal ACT Government policy, they are required to conform with any reasonable instruction that is given. Directorates must take into account the role of, and risks to, members of the public in relation to fire safety and emergency planning at ACT Government workplaces.³

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

For responsibilities under the WHS Act this policy must be read in conjunction with WHS-03-2013: Responsibilities under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

In addition to the general responsibilities under the WHS Act, the responsibilities specific to this policy are:

a) Directors-General

- establishment of an emergency planning committee (EPC); ⁴
- appropriately resourcing the Directorate's emergency planning; and
- ensuring workers and other people are aware of the procedures to be followed in an emergency situation.

b) Executive, Managers and Supervisors

- collaboration with and resourcing of the EPC and emergency control organisation(ECO);

¹ WHS Regulation 2011, s 43.

² WHS Regulation s 43.

³ *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* s29(c)

⁴ The EPC would generally comprise senior management, tenants, Chief Warden and specialist facility personnel, and where available, a person with disability. One member should be 'competent' as defined under clause 1.4.5 of the Standard e.g. necessary training, knowledge and skills to undertake the role.

- workers are provided with necessary induction training related to emergency response procedures;
- where relevant, workers exposed to emergency situations are provided with appropriate care and support.

c) Workers

- co-operate and comply with all safety precautions and emergency response requirements communicated by their manager, EPC, ECO, Health Safety Representative (HSR) or fire warden as far as they are reasonably able.

d) Emergency Planning Committee

The EPC is responsible for the establishment and continuity of the ECO and for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the emergency plan, emergency response procedures and related training.

In addition, EPC members must meet at least once annually and:

- consult with Directors-General, Executives, managers, supervisors and workers, and collaborate, where necessary, with building owners and occupants in relation to emergency planning and procedures;
- establish an emergency control organisation by the appointment of chief fire wardens, floor/area/fire wardens, and communication officers;
- develop an emergency plan;
- nominate a validity period for the emergency plan;
- ensure that the plan is readily identifiable and available to all staff;
- review the emergency plan and maintenance of the communications system;
- develop emergency response procedures;
- identify events that could reasonably cause emergency situations, identify types of emergencies that warrant specific response procedures and develop same;
- ensure that a permanent record of events is compiled and retained for each emergency;
- plan site-specific emergency evacuation exercises;
- provide ongoing training for the EPC and ECO;
- where necessary, provide appropriate induction and training in fire safety and emergency planning for designated workers;
- establish strategies to ensure visitors are made aware of emergency response procedures and the location of emergency exits and assembly points; and
- ensure the register of ECO members is current and accessible by all staff.

e) Emergency Control Organisation

Membership of the ECO must be responsive to the:

- size of the workforce and facility;
- amount of visitors; and
- warning equipment and number of fire engineered and life safety features such as fire doors.

The ECO must include a Chief Warden and, if deemed necessary by the EPC, a deputy Chief Warden, a communications officer, floor/area wardens and deputies, and fire wardens and deputies. The Standard sets out the responsibilities that sit with each of these roles.

f) Other persons

In implementing this policy, Directorates must put strategies in place that ensure other persons, such as visitors to the workplace, are made aware of:

- their responsibilities in the event of an emergency;
- emergency response procedures in a place within the Directorate; and
- the location of emergency exits and assembly points.

6. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records in relation to fire safety and emergency management must be maintained, archived, and disposed of in accordance with the:

- *Territory Records Act 2002* and subordinate laws and associated instruments established under the Act; and
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

7. GLOSSARY

“Emergency” means an event that arises internally, or from external sources, which requires an immediate response as it may adversely affect the occupants or visitors in a facility,

“Emergency control organisation (ECO)” means persons appointed by the EPC to direct and control the implementation of the facility’s emergency response procedures.

“Emergency plan” means the written documentation of the emergency arrangements for a facility, generally made during the planning process.

“Emergency planning committee (EPC)” means a committee responsible for establishing an emergency plan and setting up an ECO.

“Emergency response exercise” means a site-specific exercise implemented to determine the effectiveness of the emergency response procedures.

“Emergency response procedures” means a documented scheme of assigned responsibilities, actions and procedures to respond to and manage emergencies.

“Evacuation” means the orderly movement of people from a place of danger.

“Facility” means a building, structure or workplace that is, or may be, occupied by people.

“Fire safety” means a generic term covering all matters related to safety against fire.

“Fire protection” means the items in premises designed to: minimise risk and control fire, ensure the safety of occupants, and facilitate evacuation and the role of fire fighters.

“Occupant” means a person attending a facility on a permanent or temporary basis.

“Worker” refers to:

- public employees of the ACTPS (as defined in the PSM Act);
- contractors or sub-contractors;
- an employee of a contractor or subcontractor;
- an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the business;
- an outworker;
- an apprentice or trainee, or undertaking student gaining work experience;
- volunteers; and
- person of a prescribed class for the purposes of the WHS Act.

“Workplace” means a place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work (includes vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other mobile structure).

8. REFERENCES

AFP, ‘Bombs, Defusing the Threat’ (useful for the consideration of bomb emergency procedures)

<http://www.afp.gov.au/~media/afp/pdf/b/bombs-defusing-the-threat.ashx>

ACT Education and Training Directorate 2011-2012 Bushfire Package – updated annually
ACT Emergency Plan (2012)

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/isysquery/search.aspACTPS>

Workplace Health and Safety Management Framework

<http://sharedservices/actgovt/WHS/SafetyMgt/>

Australian Standard AS 3745-2010: Planning for Emergencies in Facilities⁵

Australian Standard 1851-2005: Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems and Equipment
Building Act 2004

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-11/default.asp>

Dangerous Substances Act 2004

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-7/default.asp>

⁵ A copy of the standard can be obtained from http://lalibrary.act.gov.au/forms/request_for_australian_standards_online

Dangerous Substances (Explosives) Regulation 2004
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2004-10/default.asp>

Dangerous Substances (General) Regulation 2004
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2004-56/default.asp>

Emergencies Act 2004
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-28/default.asp>

Emergency Regulation 2004
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2004-26/current/pdf/2004-26.pdf>

Work Health and Safety (Managing the Work Environment and Facilities) Code of Practice 2011
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2011-751/default.asp>

Work Health and Safety Act 2011
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-35/default.asp>

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2011-36/default.asp>

9. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed after three (3) years unless there is a requirement for earlier review.

10. APPROVAL AUTHORITY

This policy is approved by Andrew Kefford, Commissioner for Public Administration, 26 July 2013.

Document Name: WHS Policy – Fire Safety and Emergency Planning
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Feedback to: IPMPolicyFeedback@act.gov.au
Issue Date: July 2013
Review Date: July 2016