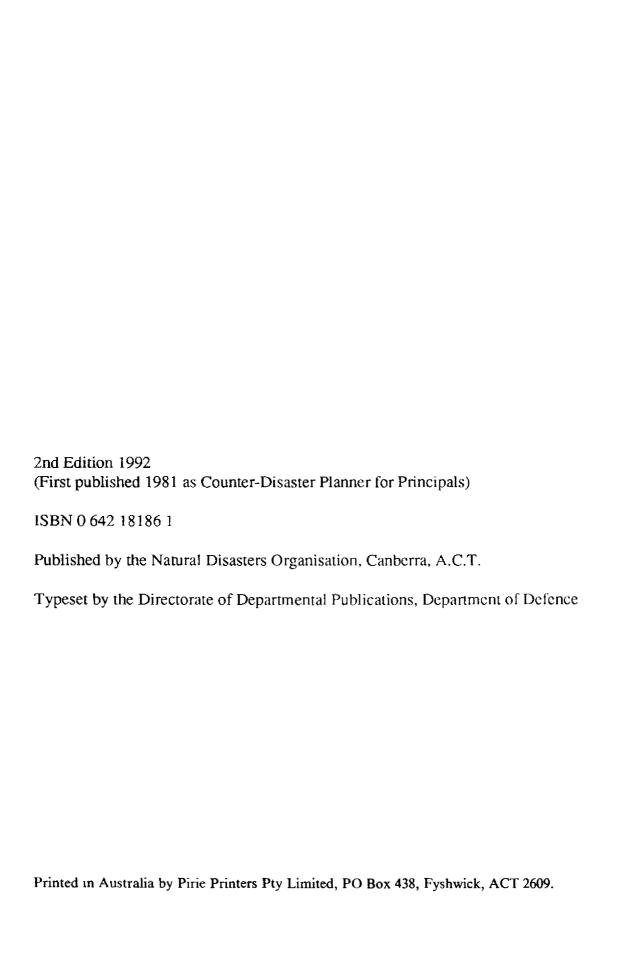# EMERGENCY/ DISASTER PLANNING

FOR

PRINCIPALS

FOREWORD

The purpose of this handbook is to provide principals of schools and other educational institutions with a concise reference to facilitate emergency management planning. It is the result of a comprehensive review of the 1981 publication 'Counter-Disaster Planner for Principals' which it updates and supersedes, reflecting increased understanding of hazards and improved emergency/disaster management techniques.

The book is intended for use by a range of educational institutions as a basis for emergency/disaster planning. It is suitable for use by pre-schools, kindergartens/infants, primary and secondary schools and TAFE institutions and has been distributed by the Natural Disasters Organisation, free of charge, to principals of all such institutions in Australia, through state/territory education authorities.

The aim of emergency planning is to ensure that the safety of students and staff is maintained, as far as possible, during an emergency or a disaster. Planning for emergencies provides a sense of predictability to the school community about how it will respond if they occur.

In the most unlikely event of military conflict within Australia, 'civil defence' emergency arrangements would be issued separately and are not included in this handbook.

The output of the emergency planning process should be a school or workplace emergency management plan which describes arrangements for: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery; who is responsible for its implementation; and how it is to be achieved.

This handbook has been produced by the Natural Disasters Organisation in consultation with state and territory education authorities. The Natural Disasters Organisation gratefully acknowledges the significant contribution to its development by the Office of Emergency Management, Department of School Education, Victoria.

As part of our Disaster Awareness Programme, the Natural Disasters Organisation publishes a range of free pamphlets, booklets and posters covering information on hazards and survival/property protection during major emergencies and disasters. Recent publications, which could be of particular interest to teachers and students of relevant subjects, are entitled 'Hazards, Disasters and Survival: Information for Schools and the Community' (40 page colour booklet) and 'Australia's Natural Hazard Zones' (large colour poster/map).

Awareness information and assistance with emergency/disaster planning are available through State and Territory Emergency Services, as listed on page 51.

iii

CONTENTS

CHAPTER SIX   EVACUATION PLANNING

CHAPTER SEVEN ASSESSING DANGER AND REACTING DURING EMERGENCIES

CHAPTER EIGHT SPECIAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE GUIDELINES

CHAPTER ONE

PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES

TERMINOLOGY

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY?

Throughout this book the word "emergency" is used to to encompass a range of events which could otherwise be described as incidents, accidents, catastrophes or disasters. An "emergency" therefore embraces the range of terms frequently used to describe a hazardous event which threatens the safety of people or property.

An emergency would usually result from the threat or impact of:

- assault/sexual assault/injury/fatality;

- outbreak of disease;

- vehicle accident;

- siege/hostage/disappearance or removal of a student;

- firearms/bomb threat,

- damage to buildings or equipment;

- fire in school building/bushfire;

- fumes/spill/leak/contamination by hazardous material;

- earthquake/collapse;

- cyclone, storm damage or flooding; or

- military conflict (see footnote (i)).

MINOR INCIDENT

Emergencies range in nature, intensity and duration. At one end of the continuum, an emergency may be small and localised affecting a single workplace. It may last minutes or hours and may be resolved by the workplace without the need for outside help. e.g. missing student.

MAJOR DISASTER

At the other end of the continuum, an emergency may assume disaster proportions, so large that it requires resources to be committed for days, weeks or months, and may require regional, state or even federal level co-ordination including assistance from all emergency services and other agencies. e.g. during a major bushfire or flood.

Note (i)
Detailed advice on civil defence emergancy arrangements would be issued during time of military threat

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Emergency management is a process which involves the workplace bringing together the arrangements for preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from an emergency. The emergency management plan is the output from this process.

PREVENTION/PREPAREDNESS MEASURES
These aim to reduce the likelihood of an emergency occurring by carrying out activities which remove or minimise potential risks (e.g. removing fire hazards, storing hazardous materials in accordance with regulations, ensuring students are familiar with bus safety procedures).

RESPONSE
This is the activity which is carried out immediately an emergency occurs and lasts until the risk to personal safety and/or property has been removed. The emergency services (police, ambulance, fire and State/Territory Emergency Service (S/TES) have legal responsibility for co-ordinating and controlling the response to most types of emergencies. The workplace maintains an ongoing responsibility for the safety and well-being of students and staff for the duration of the emergency.

RECOVERY
This is the process by which a workplace community returns to a proper level of functioning following an emergency. While recovery activity includes the restoration of services, equipment and buildings, a major concern of workplace planners is with activities which deal with the emotional health of those who may have been traumatised by their exposure to the emergency.

RECOVERY SUPPORT
Recovery support may include the provision of information and specialist services including psychological counselling support and resources. Recovery support may be required from the moment that an emergency begins and may run in parallel with response activity. In some circumstances, it may not be possible to initiate recovery activity until response measures have reduced the level of danger.

THE WORKPLACE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

An emergency plan is the document which provides the workplace with a workable set of arrangements for use each time an emergency occurs. It outlines how prevention, response and recovery activity will be co-ordinated within the workplace.

The plan describes simple arrangements for dealing with day-to-day or routine events (e.g playground injuries) up to and including detailed arrangements for coping with major emergencies (e.g.bus accident involving fatalities).

Planning for emergencies should include incidents which occur at workplace, during the conduct of outdoor activities, camps or excursions away from the workplace, and incidents which occur during the normal travel time to or from the workplace.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AND DUTY OF CARE

Administrators are obliged to plan for the safety of staff and students attending workplaces. Students between prescribed ages are compelled to attend school for defined periods during the day. As a consequence of this legal obligation, the workplace has a duty of care to ensure that all educational activity is conducted in safety.

This applies particularly during an emergency when those involved may be confused or disoriented and when reduced standards of vigilance may lead to disruption of normal supervision practices.

EMERGENCY ACTIONS

Immediate actions

1. **Record:**
   - location of the incident
   - nature of the incident
   - number and names of those involved
   - name of person reporting the emergency
   - time emergency reported
   - phone contact if incident remote from workplace

2. **Verify Details**

3. **Notify:**
   - principal or officer-in-charge
   - appropriate emergency services
   - appropriate education authority representative

Which emergency service to call?

Police for:
   - fatality
   - assault/sexual assault
   - siege/hostage/firearms
   - disappearance or removal of student
   - telephone threat/bomb threat
   - collapse/damage to building or equipment
   - motor vehicle collision/impact in workplace
   - impact by equipment/machinery/aircraft
   - natural hazards (also see below)

Doctor/Ambulance:
   - serious injury

Fire Services:
   - fire in building/grass or bushfire

State/Territory Emergency Service:
   - flood/severe storm/cyclone/earthquake

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROCESS OF EMERGENCY PLANNING

AIM OF PLANNING

The aim of emergency planning is to ensure that the safety of students and staff is maintained during an emergency. The emergency management plan is the means by which this is achieved.

When developing a workplace emergency management plan, observance of the planning principles described in the following paragraphs will assist planning committees to develop a set of arrangements and procedures which will work during an emergency.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

SIMPLICITY
The plan should be concise. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly stated. Emergency procedures which staff should be expected to remember and implement should be kept to a minimum.

FLEXIBILITY
It should be flexible. Emergency procedures should still work if key personnel are unavailable on the day, or if a pre-planned route to an evacuation assembly area is cut-off by the hazard.

COMPREHENSIVE
It should be comprehensive. It should describe arrangements for preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from the effects of an emergency.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
The plan should describe the decision-making process which will be adopted when an emergency occurs. While each emergency will be different, the decision-making process should remain reasonably consistent.

CONSULTATION
The plan should be derived from consultation with the workplace community. The commitment of individuals to a plan is likely to be greatest when they have been involved in its development.

DISSEMINATION
The plan needs to be widely disseminated. All members of the workplace community should be familiar with the contents of the plan, and should be trained and regularly exercised in its procedures.

REVIEW

The plan needs to be reviewed on a regular basis, preferably annually, and following any significant emergency, to ensure that it remains workable.

CO-ORDINATION

Planning in the workplace should be co-ordinated with other agencies, such as the emergency services and local municipalities, who should have their own plans linked to the State/Territory Disaster Plans. Workplace emergency procedures should be consistent with procedures under these other plans.

POLICY

Policy issues should be resolved during the planning process. The death of a student inevitably raises issues concerning who will attend the funeral, whether a memorial service should be held and how media requests for information should be managed. The stress of the event can be reduced if these local policy issues have been considered in advance.

CONSISTENCY

The plan should be consistent with the policies of relevant education authorities and other requirements such as hazardous materials or occupational health and safety legislation. The plan should not permit a lesser degree of supervision of students during an emergency than regulations require.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The plan should describe the scope and limitations of staff and students responsibilities. The workplace is responsible for ensuring the ongoing safety of staff and students for the duration of the emergency. Staff and students should not be expected to place themselves in danger by combatting the emergency themselves.

CO-OPERATION

The plan should also emphasise the role of the workplace in providing support to the emergency service (i.e. police, ambulance, fire, S/TES) which is legally responsible for managing the emergency.

WORKPLACE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

A committee should be formed to develop a workplace emergency management plan. The committee may comprise any member of the workplace community, but should include the principal or officer in charge, staff who may have to respond during an emergency, and students where appropriate.

Committee members do not need to be experts in emergency management. If expert advice is needed it can be sought as required from emergency services. (N.B. S/TES Regional or Divisional Officers have a special emergency /disaster planning responsibility to assist institutions, industry and local government and should be consulted) Committee members need some understanding of policy and planning principles, similar to that required for the development of curriculum or a student welfare policy.

WRITING THE PLAN

WHERE TO BEGIN

One way to begin work on the plan is to prepare a written description of the workplace and its surroundings. This will provide a basis for identifying hazards to which the workplace might be exposed. Once hazards have been identified, it becomes possible to develop a prevention program to minimise them.

As not all emergencies can be prevented, the plan needs to describe arrangements for responding to those emergencies which do occur. It should describe key roles and responsibilities including who will be responsible for co-ordination, control and communication when responding to an emergency.

The impact of an emergency within the workplace is unlikely to disappear once emergency services have departed. The plan should, therefore, describe what actions will be taken to assist the recovery of those who may have been affected by their exposure to the emergency.

KEY SECTIONS OF THE PLAN

The plan should include a description of:

- workplace and its surroundings (including a site plan),
- potential hazards which have been identified;
- roles and responsibilities of all who may be involved;
- arrangements for alerting, notifying and reporting;
- arrangements for handicapped persons;
- process for making decisions and communicating them;
- methods of securing building(s), property, records and books;
- processes for obtaining resources during an emergency;
- provision and location of first-aid and welfare point(s);
- sources of funding to implement the plan;
- alternatives for evacuation routes and assembly areas;
- arrangements for checking of warning systems, signs and notices concerning evacuation procedures;
- arrangements for inspections to remove accumulations of rubbish/junk/paper/work materials;
- policy on use of lifts during an emergency;
- training requirements for staff and students (frequency of drills); and
- means by which the plan will be reviewed.

Emergency Management Plan Check List

Location .... **Date** ....

	YES	Remarks

- Have emergency contact numbers been confirmed with the emergency services? ☐

- Are the emergency contact numbers prominently displayed on the front cover of the plan? ☐

- Does the plan clearly specify procedures for reporting emergencies to the emergency services and to the relevant education authority? ☐

- Are potential risks within and up to a kilometre from the workplace identified? ☐

- Are alternative evacuation assembly areas listed including one at least a kilometre from the workplace? ☐

- Does the plan identify how food, shelter, toilets will be provided during an extended evacuation? ☐

- Is a site plan included which displays emergency exits, access roads, water, gas, electricity supply points? ☐

- Does the site plan show the location of fire extinguishers/hose reels/hydrants/alarms? ☐

- Are the roles and responsibilities of key personnel clearly defined — principal as emergency co-ordinator, classroom teachers, office staff, students? ☐

- Are staff responsibilities to account for and supervise students during and following the emergency clearly described? ☐

- Does the plan describe how individuals will receive counselling or other specialist support? ☐

- Does the plan describe minor works or repairs required for fire prevention purposes and propose a timetable for their completion? ☐

- Does the plan describe how staff will be trained and when exercises will be conducted? ☐

- Has the plan been endorsed by the police, fire brigade or State/Territory Emergency Service? ☐

- Are arrangements for reviewing the plan described? ☐

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSING THE SITUATION AND IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL HAZARDS

SETTING THE SCENE

A description of the workplace and the environment in which it is located helps set the scene for development of the workplace emergency management plan. It also provides a useful starting point for identifying hazards.

WORKPLACE
This context statement should describe the workplace, buildings, grounds and immediate surroundings. It should include a site plan which identifies major features including buildings, access roads, assembly areas, water, gas and electricity supplies and firefighting equipment.

NEIGHBOURHOOD
The statement should extend beyond the workplace to include a description of the neighborhood in which it is located. This would indicate whether the workplace was located in an urban, residential or industrial environment, a rural or remote area.

ENVIRONMENT
Other information which could be useful in identifying hazards such as significant geographical, topographical or other features (e.g. mountain ranges, bushland, major roads, railway lines or rivers) could also be included. It is also useful to describe seasonal weather patterns which significantly affect the workplace (e.g.snow or high water levels in rivers during winter, water restrictions during summer).

EMERGENCY SERVICES
In order to create realistic workplace expectations concerning the time it will take for help to arrive during an emergency, it is useful to identify the locations of emergency services (police, ambulance, fire, S/TES) and other emergency support services (hospitals). Generally, the further the emergency services are from the workplace, the longer it will take for help to arrive.

IDENTIFYING HAZARDS

The context statement sets the scene for identifying potential hazards to which the workplace might be exposed. In most cases, a hazard assessment can be conducted by members of the workplace community during a walk or drive around the local area.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
Detailed knowledge about the operation and contents of each factory in an industrial estate is not required. It is sufficient to identify that a general risk may exist from fire or chemical related emergency.

Similarly, local knowledge of the seasonal danger from bushfire or flood is sufficient for planning purposes. Detailed statistics concerning the location of fires or the heights of previous floods would not normally be necessary to identify fire or flood as a hazard.

HAZARD ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Hazard identification can be simplified by separating the risk area into layers or zones. Identify hazards below ground (caves, mine shafts, major drains or wells), at or near surface level (fire, flood, vehicle accident), and in the air (aircraft flight path, toxic plume from an industrial fire).

Begin the hazard assessment in the school grounds (gas leak, fire, bomb threat) continue beyond the school (road or rail accident) and extend to a kilometre from the workplace (bushfire, toxic chemicals).

EXPERT ADVICE

This assessment of the area may raise questions about some hazards which workplace planners are unable to answer. Where expert advice is required, it should be sought from the emergency services, municipal officers or other experts, who may be able to provide information which the planning team is otherwise unable to obtain.

OTHER VENUES

Include venues regularly used for outdoor adventure activities, camps or excursions in the hazard assessment which can be conducted in the same manner as for the primary workplace.

Hazard Assessment Check List

Location .... **Date** ....

	YES	Remarks

Did the hazard assessment include:

• buildings, equipment, installations; ☐

• grounds and immediate surroundings; ☐

• sites up to one kilometre from the workplace; and ☐

• regularly used venues remote from the main site? ☐

Did the assessment consider potential hazards:

         • below ground
         (tunnels, mine shafts, drains); ☐

         • at or near ground level
         (buildings, installations); and ☐

         • above ground level
         (aircraft, airborne fumes)? ☐

Did the assessment consider:

• natural hazards including seasonal influences; ☐

• residential and industrial hazards; ☐

• urban and rural hazards; and ☐

• transport hazards (road, rail, air, marine)? ☐

Expert advice

• Was expert advice required to complete the
assessment? ☐

• If expert advice was required, was it obtained? ☐

CHAPTER FOUR

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS

The plan should describe who is responsible for assessing the danger and how any decisions are to be communicated within the workplace. Effective co-ordination, control and communication are essential tasks during an emergency and responsibility for carrying them out needs to be allocated in the plan.

The identification of roles and responsibilities will be determined to some extent by the type and size of the workplace and the number of staff available to share responsibilities.

DELEGATION
In a small workplace each staff member may have similar responsibilities, while in a larger workplace some may be delegated. One staff member may be responsible for overall supervision of evacuation and movement to assembly areas, another may be responsible for communicating with concerned relatives who arrive at the workplace.

CO-ORDINATION
The co-ordinator during an emergency would normally be the principal or officer-in-charge. The role of the co-ordinator is to ensure that all elements of the plan come together during an emergency. The co-ordinator is responsible for maintaining a broad overview of the emergency and the workplace response to it.

CONTROL
The plan should identify who is responsible for controlling the workplace response during an emergency. The controller is responsible for decision-making including the identification of safe areas and the direction of staff and student movements during evacuation. In a large workplace this responsibility maybe delegated to a senior staff member such as a deputy principal or second in charge.

COMMUNICATION
Responsibility for communication needs to be clearly allocated in the plan. During an emergency information will need to be communicated to personnel within the workplace, to the emergency services to education authorities, to relatives and in some cases to the media. The person responsible for communications needs to capable of providing regular, timely and accurate information.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

TEACHING STAFF

Teaching staff should normally retain responsibility for their students during an emergency. Staff with individual responsibilities for checking classrooms, storerooms, canteens and toilets should be clearly identified.

It should be possible to develop a general statement for teachers which describes what they are expected to do during an emergency. In a large workplace where large staff numbers permit greater flexibility, it may be possible to allocate specific responsibilities to individuals (e.g.first-aid, supervising evacuation of buildings, communicating with relatives, media enquiries).

OTHER STAFF

The responsibilities of other staff should also be described. Statements for switchboard operators, clerical and administrative staff, who often have key roles during emergencies, should clearly describe their emergency responsibilities and any re-allocation of responsibility for the completion of routine administrative tasks not associated with the emergency.

It is also important to brief, and account for, part-time and volunteer staff such as canteen workers and parents (assisting in canteen, library or classrooms).

EMERGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and responsibilties in a small workplace

In larger workplaces it may be possible to spread the allocation of duties

PRINCIPAL OR OFFICER-IN-CHARGE

Co-ordination

Assessment of the emergency and the danger
Establish an emergency co-ordination centre
Notification of emergency services
Liaison with emergency services
Establish a reception centre for parents
Identification and provision of resources

Control

Account for all staff and students
Supervision of students
Evacuation of workplace
Assembly of students

Deputy or senior staff member

Account for all staff and students
Supervision of students
Evacuation of workplace
Assembly of students

Communication

Informing parents
Communication with emergency services
Providing situation reports to department
Providing a message service

Switchboard, clerical and other staff

Informing parents by telephone
Communication with emergency services
Providing situation reports to department
Providing a message service

TEACHERS

Accounting for students - roll call
Evacuation: students, rooms, toilets, canteen
Assembly of students
Supervision of students

First Aid
Evacuation
Assembly
Reception Centre

Individual responsibilities

First Aid
Evacuation of building wings
Assembly area monitoring
Reception Centre