



Emergency Preparation for Primary Care

Earthquake

Small earthquakes in Victoria are regularly reported. On occasion, moderate earthquakes have caused community concern and resulted in minor damage and short-term disruptions. The chance of a large earthquake, causing significant casualties and injuries, is remote, but not zero. For all quake intensities, it is important for health services to be prepared to respond.

What to do in the event of an earthquake	The Victorian State Emergency Services (SES) has information on how to plan and stay safe and how to know your hazards .
Stay up to date with alerts and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earthquake notifications are provided by Geoscience Australia• The VicEmergency website lists current incidents and warnings, plus advice on how to prepare, as well as relief and recovery information. <p>You can also visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Australian Government’s Bureau of Meteorology homepage, which lists all weather, quake and tsunami warnings• VicRoads - VicTraffic provides real-time information on road closures.
General emergency planning and preparation	
Plan how to manage emergencies	RACGP’s Managing emergencies in general practice includes tips for practices to consider.
Update your emergency response documents	<p>The RACGP - Emergency Response Planning Tool (ERPT) is a cloud based, practical online tool that assists general practices to better prepare for, respond to and recover from the impacts of emergencies and pandemics.</p> <p>It guides users through a series of planning templates where critical information about the practice can be entered and saved. The information is used to create an emergency response plan which is individually tailored to the general practice. The customised plan is then saved and stored in the cloud and can also be printed as a hard copy resource at any time.</p> <p>This will not only help you to stay focused and respond under pressure but get your business back up and running more quickly.</p> <p>Access to the ERPT requires an annual subscription.</p>

	<p>There are a number of alternative options available to assist users to develop an Emergency Response Plan. Listed are just a few:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with your accreditation provider or on your accreditation portal for general practice specific templates. • Emergency plan template – Safe Work Australia • Develop an emergency plan – Business.gov.au
Consider a preparation plan	<p>HealthPathways Melbourne has useful information on how to prepare for disasters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing Patients for a Disaster • Preparing a General Practice for a Disaster • General Practice Management During a Disaster
Other useful links and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP evacuation centre resources • Service continuity and emergency events in aged care - DoHAC • Victoria emergency preparedness in residential aged care services – DoHAC • My Health Record – Australian Digital Health Agency
Protect your data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that your practice software is backed up, ideally to the cloud or remote drive, to reduce the risk of data loss. • Upload patient information to My Health Record.
Plan for power outages, loss of water supply and gas	<p>To ensure cold chain management and clinical record access in the event of outages, consider alternative power sources. Could you relocate vaccines and medicines, or access a generator if needed?</p>
Communicate service closures or impacts	<p>Use social media and other platforms. Prepare a message or email to patients using your usual channels, appointment confirmation system or POLAR data extraction tool.</p>
Plan staffing	<p>In the event of no or reduced access to your site -- or if significant numbers of staff are absent -- consider alternative models of work, including sites and equipment needs.</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it safe for practitioners to work from home? Are there other health services or locations from which they work? • Does the practice have a telehealth platform that practitioners can use from remote locations? • Are the practitioners set up with ePrescribing so patients can obtain scripts immediately? Do they all have paper scripts and prescribing pads for use if no internet is available? • Does the practice have an alternative contact number, or can you temporarily divert your practice number, so patients can call if the building is closed, and the phone system is inaccessible? • Can admin and clinical staff access your practice management and clinical software systems offsite to facilitate remote models of care?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are clinicians able to create pathology and imaging requests if working remotely? • Have information available for the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) to share with patients.
Join the emergency volunteer list	If you have capacity to support in an emergency event, record your interest using the Emergency Response Register .

Contact us

For more information or support email primarycare@nwmphn.org.au

We acknowledge the peoples of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our work in the community takes place. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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