



Emergency Preparation for Primary Care

Flood

There are several significant waterways that run through the NWMPHN catchment, including sea, rivers, creeks, reservoirs and drainage systems.

Floods can be widespread or localised and caused by heavy rain or structure failure.

They can cause multiple disruptions, including land and building inundation, structure collapse, road closures, and damage to power supply equipment.

Flood waters are a direct threat to human health. They can cause drowning, injury and outbreaks of waterborne diseases.

Who is at risk?	Vulnerable populations include the elderly, infants and children, people with co-morbidities, those who live alone or who are socially isolated, and people with cognitive impairment.
Stay up to date with alerts and information	<p>The VicEmergency website lists current incidents and warnings, plus advice on how prepare, as well as relief and recovery information.</p> <p>You can also visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bureau of Meteorology current warnings• Road closures: VicRoads - VicTraffic
Flood information	<p>A lot of helpful advice on preparing for, surviving and cleaning up after flood events can be found here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Floods - Victorian State Government Department of Health• Bureau of Meteorology – preparing for a flood• RACGP - Evacuation centre resources
Safeguard your building	<p>Often flood waters can be tracked and their height predicted. This allows you time to prepare your site by placing essential items above floor level.</p> <p>If your business or home is a known flood-prone area, make sure you stock up on sealable crates, plastic bags and other durable storage options.</p> <p>Use free sandbags available to businesses and homes in impacted areas.</p>

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, water supply, gas	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?

General emergency planning and preparation	
Plan how to manage emergencies	<p>RACGP's Managing emergencies in general practice includes tips for practices to consider.</p> <p>For practitioners working in aged care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service continuity and emergency events in aged care - Australian Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) • Emergency preparedness in residential aged care - DoH <p>HealthPathways Melbourne has useful information on how to prepare for a flood emergency:</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 • Post Natural Disaster Health
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. 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

Communicate service closures or impacts	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.
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. For more information, see the ERPT. 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? • 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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NWMPHN Emergency Preparation for Primary Care - Flood


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This resource was adapted from the Primary Care Preparedness suite by Murray PHN.



Flood preparation checklist

This flood preparation checklist will help you to prepare your business for flooding.

	FLOOD PREPARED
	Understand your local risk to potential emergency events and ensure emergency documents and your overarching emergency plan are accessible.
	Hold regular meetings with staff to provide updates on emergency event status and plan.
	Identify at-risk patient cohort who may be vulnerable if impacted by floods, See RACGP's Factsheet-Flooding-and-its-impact.pdf
	Identify and have a plan for staying or evacuating.
	Charged mobile devices e.g. laptops and phones and have back-up charging devices.
	Have fresh water supply - bottled water.
	Does your organisation have:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency kit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic supplies and water
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • back-up mobile if phone lines go down or communication channel for patients and staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • back-up generator or plan if the power goes out
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • back-up if the server/ internet is down and unable to record or access patient files
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • radio available for updates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vaccine fridge plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telehealth or online medical appointment service model of care if unable to work from the clinic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appointment book printed in the event that appointments need to change to telehealth or the server is down
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of all staff and key provider contacts
	Identify all indoor items that need to be raised off the floor in the event of a flood.
	If practical, consider alternatives to carpet such as tiles.
	Relocate all low power points well above previous flood levels.
	Secure any objects in the practice that are likely to float.
	Provide copy of emergency response plan to staff and ensure they are trained in the event its enacted.
	Install flood proofing equipment (e.g. sandbags) if locking up the practice for an extended period of time.
	Do you know your insurance provider and if the policy covers a flood emergency event?