

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY

Related Quality Area	QA2: Health and Safety
Related Policies	Lockdown Policy Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy Supervision Policy

PURPOSE

Emergency and evacuation situations in early education and care services may arise for a variety of reasons, often suddenly and unexpectedly. It is vital that if an emergency situation arises, it is staff are confident to manage the situation effectively and efficiently, maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children, families and visitors.

Ensuring that Educators and children know what to do in an emergency situation requires vigilant planning and practice. Regularly practicing the drills for emergency situations also provides an opportunity to help support and build on children's coping mechanisms and resilience.

Nightcliff Family Centre (the Centre) has a duty of care to maintain the safety and wellbeing of each child, educator, and all persons using or visiting the Service during an emergency or evacuation situation. We are committed to identifying risks and potential hazards of emergency and evacuation situations by conducting thorough risk assessments on an annual basis and continually plan for further risk minimisation and improvement to our policy and procedures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

We define an emergency as an unplanned, sudden or unexpected event or situation that requires immediate action to prevent harm, injury, or illness to persons, or damage to the Service's premises. Emergency situations may pose a risk to an individual's health and safety. It is important that Services identify potential emergencies that may be specific to their location and environment.

To ensure compliance with National Regulations and National Law, our Service will ensure that:

- the Approved Provider will conduct a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the Service annually
- emergency evacuation plans are displayed in prominent positions near each exit at the Centre premises including both the indoor and outdoor learning areas.
- the plan includes a floor plan for ease of reference with clearly defined assembly points and clearly marked exit routes from all locations within the Centre
- all staff are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures and regulatory requirements
- all staff are aware of emergency evacuation points
- emergency evacuation rehearsals (drills) will be practiced and reviewed every three months by the responsible person, all staff members, volunteers, and children present on the day
- all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in event of an emergency situation

- each drill will be documented
- our emergency telephone list (located next to the telephone) includes the numbers for:
 - Local fire station
 - Rural Fire Service
 - State Emergency Services

Circumstances under which an emergency evacuation will occur may include:

- Fire within the building or playground
- Fire in the surrounding area where the Service may be in danger. If you are unsure how close the fire is contact your local fire station or local Rural Fire Service. Alternatively find and download a Fire Service app such as Fires Near Me (NSW), as telephone services can be disrupted during fires.
- Flood (call State Emergency Service)
- Cyclone, severe storm or dust storm
- dangerous animal, insect or reptile
- Terrorist threat
- Other circumstances may include:
 - gas explosion, traffic accident, or any event which could render the building unsafe (eg: earthquake)

Procedures

- Our Service will maintain an up-to-date register of emergency telephone numbers for children. A copy of the current list will always be available in the emergency evacuation bag.
- Emergency telephone numbers for will be displayed prominently throughout the Centre in the kitchen, office, staff room and each area where children are educated and cared for.
- National Regulations state that Evacuation rehearsals are to be practiced every 3 months: However, to ensure best practice our Centre will conduct emergency evacuation drills once every two months so that all children and staff experience an evacuation on a regular basis.
- Spontaneous rehearsals also take place during the year to assist in refining risk management procedures and evacuation procedures
- A record will be kept ensuring that all children participate in the emergency evacuation rehearsal at least 4 times per year.
- Each time a planned or spontaneous emergency evacuation drill is performed it is to be timed and documented in the *Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record*.
- After reflection, notes on any areas that need improving or revising are to be documented in the *Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record*. Educators will discuss and implement strategies to make continuous improvement to procedures which will be documented in the Service's Staff Meeting minutes and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).
- In the event of limited Educators (e.g. early morning or late afternoon), staff members are to work together to perform the duties as per the evacuation plan (the roster must include a Responsible Person being on the premises at all times to take responsibility and delegate duties). This scenario will be discussed and documented in the Service's Staff Meeting Minutes (WHS).
- In the event of a fire within the Service resulting in damaged phone lines, a staff member will use the mobile phone to see assistance as per the Emergency Evacuation Plan.
- All fire extinguishers, fire blankets, fire hoses, and other emergency equipment located throughout the Service will be inspected and tested at six monthly intervals by an authorised

company as per the Australian Safety Standard AS 1851: *Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems and Equipment*.

- Extinguishers will be emptied, pressure tested, and refilled every five years.
- All tests performed on emergency equipment and the date on which it was tested will be recorded on a label or metal tag attached to the unit. Certificates to verify testing will be filed.
- The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for ensuring all educators, including casual/relief educators and staff members, are familiar with our Emergency Evacuation Policy and procedure.

EVACUATING INFANTS AND NON-AMBULATORY CHILDREN

The approved provider and nominated supervisor will:

- ensure infants and non-ambulatory children are included in ALL evacuation rehearsals
- ensure staff assess children's developmental milestones and physical mobility during an emergency to ensure children who cannot walk independently or require assistance will be identified and prioritised for evacuation
- reflect and assess evacuation rehearsals with all staff considering time taken to safely evacuate infants and non-ambulatory children
- ensure all equipment is easily accessible in an emergency situation
- ensure all staff have knowledge of how to use emergency equipment for transporting infants and non-ambulatory children.

CLOSURE OF THE CENTRE

There may be times when the normal operation of the Service is disrupted, and the Service is required to close temporarily during a planned or unplanned emergency occurrence. Situations that affect the normal operation include a local emergency which poses a risk to the health and safety of children attending the service, or where the service is inaccessible or is unsafe for children or staff or the emergency services/authority have directed the Service to close.

Situations where the Service may consider closure include:

- A period of local emergency, or emergency event
- Flooding
- Health emergency (i.e., pandemic)
- Bushfire
- Cyclone
- Unexpected absence of staff where ratios are unable to be met
- Severe outbreak of illness or disease
- Lack of access to operating phone/communication means
- Damage or vandalism to the service
- Chemical hazard

- Earthquake
- The approved provider or nominated supervisor will consult with emergency services/ local authorities regarding the closure of the service
- Our Service will ensure families are informed of emergency closures as soon as practicable to ensure immediate collection of children
- In the event of a planned closure, management will advise families as reasonably practicable through SMS/social media/phone calls/email to provide details of the planned closure including the period of closure
- Our Service will notify the regulatory authority of the Service closure within 24 hours of an incident

Important: The notification of a serious incident to a regulatory authority (within 24 hours) is required when emergency services have attended an education and care service in response to an emergency, rather than as a precaution or for any other reason.

JURISDICTION SPECIFICATIONS FOR EACH STATE

NORTHERN TERRITORY (NT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services: www.pfes.nt.gov.au

SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government – Emergency Services: <http://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/public-safety-and-law/emergency-services>

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Judy Rondon	Director	October 2022
POLICY REVIEWED	October 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	October 2024
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes or Additional information added • Sources checked for currency • Spell check 		
POLICY REVIEWED BY	Judy Rondon Hannah West	Director Chairperson	October 2025
POLICY REVIEWED	October 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE	October 2027
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new sections • Revised for spelling, grammar, template. All minor adjustments. 		