



PRIMARY CARE PREPAREDNESS

FLOOD

January 2024

Information for clinicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RACGP - The role and inclusion of general practitioners in evacuation centres• Service continuity and emergency events in aged care Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care• Evacuation decision making Guidelines for Health and Aged Care Facilities (nsw.gov.au)• Emergency preparedness in residential aged care services (health.vic.gov.au)
Update your emergency response documents	<p>Preferably use the Emergency Response Planning Tool (free to general practices until December 2024) and ensure staff are familiar with it.</p> <p>If using a paper system, store a copy off site.</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>
Consider a plan for staying and evacuation	<p>General Practice Management During a Disaster - Community HealthPathways Murray</p> <p>Preparing a General Practice for a Disaster - Community HealthPathways Murray has useful information on how to prepare before a disaster happens.</p>
Stay up to date with alerts and information	<p>Victoria: https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/</p> <p>NSW: https://hazardwatch.gov.au/</p> <p>Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology: http://www.bom.gov.au/</p> <p>Road closures: VicRoads - VicTraffic or Live Traffic NSW</p>
Safeguard your building	<p>Prepare your site by placing items above floor level where you can e.g. access wooden crates from hardware stores.</p> <p>Use free sandbags available to businesses and homes in impacted areas.</p>
Protect your data	<p>Ensure that your practice software is backed up, ideally to the cloud or remote drive, to reduce the risk of data loss.</p> <p>Upload patient information to My Health Record.</p>
Plan for power outages, water supply, gas	<p>Consider alternate power sources in the event of power outages for cold chain management, or clinical record access. Could you relocate vaccine/ medicines or access a generator if needed?</p>
Ensure emergency contact details are up to date	<p>So that Murray PHN can assist in coordinating support with government agencies during an emergency, make sure to let us know who your emergency contacts are via your Quality Improvement Consultant or: primarycareresponse@murrayphn.org.au</p>
Communicate service closures or impacts	<p>Use social media and other platforms. Prepare a message or email to patients using appointment confirmation system or Pen CS if needed. Consider sending other important alerts, for example to patients with asthma during epidemic thunderstorm asthma days.</p>

	<p>Use Pen CS and CAT Plus recipes to identify relevant patient groups and send an SMS message to those patients who have not opted out. You will need to set up your account and ensure you have enough credits in the system to send messages.</p> <p>Inform Murray PHN of service closures or impacts: primarycarerresponse@murrayphn.org.au</p>
Plan staffing	<p>In the event of no or reduced access to your site or staff absences, consider alternate models of work, alternate sites and equipment needs (ERPT can guide you through these considerations):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it safe for practitioners to work remotely from home? Explore if there are alternate health services or locations that they could work from. • Does the practice have a telehealth platform that practitioners can use remotely? • Are the practitioners set up with ePrescribing so patients can obtain scripts immediately and remotely? Ensure paper scripts/prescribing pads are also available if internet is not available. • Does the practice have an alternate 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 off site to facilitate remote models of care? • Ensure clinicians can create pathology and imaging requests if working remotely. • Murray PHN's digital health team can assist with electronic prescriptions and telehealth platforms.
Plan how to manage emergencies	<p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP - Managing emergencies in general practice and • RACGP - Managing emergencies • RACGP - Resources to support general practices prepare and respond to emergencies
Join the emergency volunteer list	<p>If you have capacity to provide support in an emergency event, register your interest using the online form.</p>
Do emergency exercise training	<p>Undertake mock training incidents to ensure staff are competent and aware of their roles in the event of an emergency.</p>
Other useful links and resources to share with patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a flood - power outages • After a flood - drinking water • Private water source in flood affected areas • After flood - returning home safely • After a flood mould and your health factsheet • After a flood - how to protect yourself from mosquito borne diseases • Septic tanks in-flood affected areas
Keep up to date with HealthPathways information	<p>Preparing Patients for a Disaster - Community HealthPathways Murray Post-natural Disaster Health - Community HealthPathways Murray</p>

Contact us

For more information or support, email primarycarerresponse@murrayphn.org.au

Flood preparation checklist

This flood preparation checklist will help you to prepare your business for flooding. Using the above resource list, complete the list of actions below to ensure your business is as prepared for a flood as possible.

	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: Factsheet-Flooding-and-its-impact.pdf (racgp.org.au)
	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:
	- emergency kit
	- basic supplies and water
	- back-up mobile if phone lines go down or communication channel for patients and staff
	- back-up generator or plan if the power goes out
	- back-up if the server/ internet is down and unable to record or access patient files
	- radio available for updates
	- vaccine fridge plan
	- telehealth or online medical appointment service model of care if unable to work from the clinic
	- appointment book printed in the event that appointments need to change to telehealth or the server is down
	- 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 for flood emergency event?