Emergency Management Planning

Do Schools need to comply?

Yes - under the provisions of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA).

Conditions of compliance:

Under South Australian occupational health, safety and welfare law, employers have an obligation to provide and maintain a safe workplace. This obligation extends to all people at the workplace, whether they are employees or not. Developing an Emergency Management Plan (EMP) contributes to the duty of providing a safe working environment. Schools also have an obligation under registration requirements.

Schools should develop and maintain an EMP that describes actions to be taken before, during and following an emergency to ensure the ongoing safety of staff, students and others.

Schools should ensure that staff, students and the school community know what the plan contains, and through the provision of appropriate training, what they are required to do during an emergency.

School responsibility to plan for the safety of staff and students involved in school activities extends beyond planning for events occurring under normal circumstances. All school activities, regardless of where they are to be conducted, must be planned in such a way as to ensure that the safety of staff and students is maintained, and that students are adequately supervised, even during an emergency.

If you have to comply, what do you have to do?

A school EMP should include:

- the range of emergencies covered
- a site plan
- a general description of the school and its environment
- an assessment of risks and hazards facing the school
- roles and responsibilities of staff and others
- procedures for reporting emergencies
- procedures to be followed by staff and students during an emergency
- lockdown arrangements
- evacuation arrangements
- alternative evacuation assembly areas
- emergency services contact numbers
- measures to prevent or reduce the impact of emergencies that do occur
- arrangements for establishing recovery programs following emergencies
- consultation with relevant emergency services concerning appropriateness of the content.
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Schools should also plan for influenza pandemic and fire related emergencies (particularly if the school is in a high risk area for wildfire or intends undertaking school activities in a high risk area).

Emergency procedures in school emergency management plans should be exercised on a regular basis, preferably once a term, under a variety of emergency scenarios.

Exercises should test:

- notification and reporting procedures
- roles and responsibilities of nominated personnel
- offsite and onsite evacuation and lock down alternatives
- communications within the school and to the school community
- emergency services liaison.

Schools should be aware that fire services and police can assist in training exercises and trial evacuations by acting as observers as well as assisting in the review of school emergency procedures.

What are the consequences if you don’t comply?

You may be in breach of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) and registration requirements of the Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA).

See also:


Useful links:

SafeWork SA
SA Health