

Principles of evacuation planning

Speed read

- Evacuation planning occurs as part of the broader emergency planning process.
- Develop an evacuation plan with, and that considers, the context and capability of the individuals, organisations and communities at risk.
- Plan evacuations in conjunction with state and territory legislation and local arrangements

Key points

Inclusive community engagement:

- Community representatives can provide valuable local knowledge and context especially if they have lived experience in emergencies and evacuations and good knowledge of community networks, capacities, and resources. Take time to understand the diversity of community capacities and needs to improve evacuation outcomes.
- Hazard-specific plans are likely to be more detailed and should involve input from a diverse range of stakeholders, including hazard specific organisations and special interest groups

Consideration should be given to the needs of groups, including but not limited to the following:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- culturally and linguistically diverse groups (CALD)
- people with disability, chronic illness or mental health issues
- women
- people with diverse gender and sexual orientations
- infants, children and young people, including kinship arrangements and unaccompanied minors
- pregnant and breastfeeding women
- seniors
- new migrants
- asylum seekers and refugees
- those living in socially or physically isolated, or high-risk circumstances or locations
- those experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, unemployment or poverty
- people living with or escaping family violence
- tourists, holiday makers and visitors
- international students and people on temporary work visas
- people living on state or territory borders
- those without access to independent transport

Engage Indigenous communities in evacuation planning. First Nations communities can be governed differently to other lands and townships, due to factors such as land tenure, cultural and heritage rights. Community-controlled organisations provide crucial guidance on local evacuation plans and should be involved in the planning process.

Gendered needs in evacuation planning. Social, structural, psychological, financial, interpersonal, and physical issues relate to gender and disaster – and a capacity to respond to these issues. Consider, identify, prevent and respond to gender-based disaster impacts.

Evacuation planning occurs as part of the broader emergency management process. Consider these elements in relation to evacuation planning:

- Legislation - authority to recommend or direct communities to evacuate is in emergency management legislation, and subject to specific triggers
- Clear responsibility for evacuation plans and management - evacuation plans should detail who is responsible for carrying out each stage of the evacuation process
- Risk management study – consider and document risks of evacuating and not evacuating
- Resources and services – and contingency plans to address potential resource shortfalls
- Management arrangements and systems - develop specific management arrangements, addressing each of the five stages of evacuation.
- Document and promote, monitor and review, and exercise the evacuation plan

Take action

- See Evacuation Planning Quick Guide – Introduction for a brief summary on types of evacuations and evacuation approaches, and Chapter 1 of [Evacuation planning](#) (AIDR, 2023)
- Engage with communities early in evacuation planning processes – read [Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience](#) (AIDR 2020)

More information

- [Evacuation Planning](#), Chapter 2 (AIDR 2023)
- [Emergency Planning](#) (AIDR 2020)
- [Gender and Emergency Management Guidelines](#) (Gender and Disaster Australia, 2023)
- [National Indigenous Australians Agency – Housing and community safety](#)