

Emergency and Disaster Management Policy and Procedure

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd provides safe, consistent, and responsive supports to all participants before, during, and after emergencies and disasters. It is designed to promote preparedness, safeguard participant wellbeing, and maintain continuity of service during times of disruption or heightened risk.

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd recognises that participants may be particularly vulnerable during crises and is committed to ensuring they feel secure, informed, and supported. This policy sets out how we build participant confidence, service continuity, and organisational resilience in response to emergencies such as pandemics, natural disasters, and other critical events.

2.0 Scope

The policy applies to all participants, staff, and representatives of SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd across all service environments. It ensures participants are supported to prepare for emergencies and staff are trained to respond appropriately.

3.0 Policy

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd is committed to safeguarding participants and ensuring continuity of support during emergencies and disasters. In alignment with the NDIS Practice Standards, our response to emergencies reflects participant rights to safety, dignity, choice, control, and culturally appropriate support.

To uphold this commitment, SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will:

- Maintain an Contingency Emergency and Disaster Plan outlining roles, responsibilities, and processes for responding to emergencies that may impact service delivery
- Comply with all applicable government guidelines, public health directions, and emergency directives before, during, and after an emergency event
- Conduct risk assessments to identify participants most at risk during an emergency and develop Personal Emergency Preparation Plans (PEPPs) tailored to individual needs
- Ensure continuity of support plans are regularly reviewed, documented, and integrated into participant support planning processes
- Communicate transparently and promptly with participants, families, staff, and other relevant stakeholders regarding emergency arrangements, changes to supports, or service disruptions

- Allocate key workers consistently to support participants where possible, reducing distress and maintaining rapport during periods of uncertainty
- Train all staff in emergency protocols, participant safeguarding during crises, infection control (where applicable), and incident reporting processes
- Record all emergency planning documents, participant refusals, and contingency actions in individual support plans and participant files

Where a participant refuses a Personal Emergency Preparation Plan, the following actions will be taken:

- Staff will explain the purpose of the PEPP, focusing on safety, service continuity, and the unpredictable nature of emergencies
- The participant will be offered the opportunity to sign a refusal section within the PEPP
- If the participant indicates that a current PEPP exists with another provider, the Third-Party Information Release Consent Form will be completed and signed
- All related documentation will be stored in the participant's file, with the refusal or external plan noted in the Support Plan
- Staff will be trained in any third-party emergency plans as part of participant onboarding and these will be reviewed annually

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd recognises that proactive, trauma-informed, and participant-centred emergency planning is vital to safeguarding individuals, maintaining trust, and upholding the quality of supports during challenging times. Emergencies and disasters are approached as shared responsibilities, with a focus on preparedness, responsiveness, and respectful engagement at every stage.

4.0 Procedure

In alignment with our Information Management Policy and Procedure, all participant data is securely backed up and protected. During emergencies, SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will ensure continuity of access to essential data and maintain participant privacy and confidentiality.

Where an emergency or disaster leads to participant harm or disruption of critical supports, this will be treated as a reportable incident under the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018, and managed according to our Incident Management Policy and Procedure.

4.1 Preparing for disasters and emergencies

A disaster is any phenomenon, natural or human-made, that has the potential to cause extensive destruction of life and property. An emergency is a grave risk to health, life or the environment. The mere mention of either of these two words makes the community, particularly our participants, extremely nervous. Having all parties know and understand the plan is the key to being ready for disaster. Our

organisation management will consult with participants, support networks, and staff to periodically review plans, so their management is relevant to the current situation.

Some disasters and emergencies SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd may face include:

- flood
- fire
- heatwave
- snowstorm
- storms or cyclones
- pandemic

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will:

- consult with participants to create a Personal Emergency Preparation incorporating all aspects - before, during and after any emergency and disaster
- stay informed regarding all state/territory and federal government directives and act upon these directives appropriately
- advise other organisations who work with SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd of our disaster procedures and processes
- communicate with participants and relevant networks in a manner determined in the support plan
- identify personnel who are critical in the delivery of essential frontline services
- identify SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd participants and their stakeholders whose services may be impacted by the situation
- train staff in the implementation of any strategies
- implement this policy in conjunction with our Risk Management Policy and Procedure, our Information Management Policy and Procedure and our Human Resource Policy and Procedure
- ensure Personal Emergency Preparation Plan explain and guide how the organisation will respond to and oversee the response to an emergency or disaster
- develop Personal Emergency Preparation Plan through consulting with participants and their support networks to create plans for preparing for and responding to disasters that may include
 - making changes to participant supports
 - adapting, and rapidly responding to changes to participant supports and other interruptions
 - communicating changes to participant supports to workers and participants and their support networks
 - informing participant and their support network in the manner set out in their plan
 - exit strategies (e.g. disaster)
 - continuity of supports, including potential staff replacements and options (e.g. disaster or emergency), see Continuity of Supports Policy and Procedure
 - supports during emergency or disaster

- actions to be taken by staff
- actions to be taken by management
- implement the Personal Emergency Preparation Plan as per the consultation if required
- attach any Personal Emergency Preparation Plan on the service agreement and add them to the participant's file
- Test and adjust the Personal Emergency Preparation Plan in the context of a particular disaster by:
 - undertaking a trial run of the Personal Emergency Preparation Plan, where the plan will be:
 - acted out
 - reviewed with participants, networks and staff
 - adjusted to meet the needs, preferences and goals of the participant
 - documented strategies in the plan made, and staff informed
 - reviewing each plan when a potential disaster is evident (e.g. fire, pandemic)
 - adjusting plan due to changes in circumstances
 - ensuring continuity of supports is in place
 - communicating with the participant and support networks in a manner that allows for an understanding of what will occur before, during and after the emergency or disaster
- review the Personal Emergency Preparation Plan in consultation with the participant and relevant support networks during the annual risk assessment of the support plan review to enable adjustments due to the changing nature of any disaster or emergency
- gain oversight of participants' plans during management meetings to gain a whole organisation's strategy

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will maintain active relationships with local emergency services, councils, and community organisations, ensuring access to community resources (e.g., evacuation centres, emergency shelters) as needed. Staff will be trained to liaise with these services during crises

All communication with participants and their representatives will be delivered in accessible formats (e.g., Easy Read, translated languages, communication devices, interpreters) to ensure understanding and reduce distress.

Staff will be trained to identify participants requiring communication assistance and ensure appropriate adjustments are made.

In the event of an emergency or disaster, SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will utilise multiple communication methods, including:

- Phone calls, SMS alerts, and emails to participants, their families, and staff
- Communication apps (if applicable) for staff and participants
- Emergency contact networks for participants without direct access to technology

- All communications will be documented, and alternative communication methods will be used if primary systems are unavailable

4.2. Supporting the supporters

Vicarious trauma is a real and grave health concern for staff and volunteers of community service organisations such as ours, mainly when working with disaster-affected individuals and communities.

Our SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will determine the best means to support our staff in a disaster situation and implement all appropriate measures as detailed in our Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure.

4.3 Consumer preparedness

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd understands that it is more likely that our participants will be adversely impacted by an emergency or disaster than others in the community.

We acknowledge that we may not provide the same service to our participants during or immediately after an emergency or disaster. All participants must be supported by SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd to prepare for changes due to a disaster or an emergency.

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will:

- inform participants of the current situation and how the provision of their services and workers may be impacted
- Consult with participants and support networks on the plan's development and any adjustments or changes in circumstances. Always ensuring that they are informed of what will occur before, during and after any disaster or emergency
- continue to provide participants with the same key workers if they are available
- replace key workers with experienced workers who have the knowledge and skills to provide appropriate care to the participant
- inform the participant of any service changes and outline the reason/s for these changes
- communicate with participants to ensure that their needs, preferences and goals are met
- seek support within the local care community if our staff are unavailable, and ensure that any new workers are appropriately experienced, trained, and hold necessary checks

4.4 Staff preparedness

Our team is our greatest asset; our focus is that they and their loved ones remain safe during an emergency or disaster. All Personal Emergency Preparation Plans and organisational emergency procedures will be tested at least annually, or following any emergency event. Testing will include scenario-based drills with staff and, where appropriate, participants and support networks, and the outcomes will inform future plan improvements.

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SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will help prepare our staff for an emergency or disaster by implementing the following:

- inform staff of the situation and what is required by them via email, online messaging, Zoom meetings or similar
- train workers in all required measures and strategies identified in the plan, e.g. infection control, social distancing and evacuation
- seek feedback from participants regarding their services to adjust information distribution, if necessary
- seek feedback from staff about actions undertaken, issues or concerns, and what worked well.
- inform staff of our participant's requirements outlined in their support plan
- test each plan to ensure that it will function before implementation
- adjust the plan accordingly
- inform management of the changes to plans to allow for organisational management adjustments

5.0 Related documents

- Contingency Emergency and Disaster Plan
- Personal Emergency Preparation Plan
- Service Agreement
- Staff Training Plan
- Staff Training Record
- Support Plan
- Easy Read - Planning With You
- Training Attendance Register – In house
- Annual Organisational Training Register and Review
- Business Continuity Policy and Procedure
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure
- Information Management Policy and Procedure
- Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure
- Work Health Safety and Environmental Management Policy and Procedure

6.0 References

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021