# 1. Statement

The Department of Health (the Department) must develop and maintain effective risk-based policies, programs, plans and procedures to ensure system-wide preparedness, and capability to respond to, coordinate and manage health-related aspects of disasters and emergency incidents.

# 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Department develops and maintains capability, supported by effective risk-based plans and arrangements, to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and emergency incidents.

# 3. Scope

The principles and requirements in this policy align with the Disasters and Emergency Incidents Health Service Directive and the Queensland Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management's Emergency Management Assurance Framework. This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and consultants within the Department.

# 4. Principles

## Leadership

- The Department is responsible for leading and coordinating health related aspects of disasters and emergency incidents across the state.
- Leadership at all levels of the Department is demonstrated through responsible and effective governance and strategic planning that supports this responsibility.
- A culture of excellence across the disaster and emergency incident management sector that is driven by the Department's executive.
- Responsibility for disaster and emergency incident preparedness, planning, response, and recovery is ingrained at all levels of organisational culture.

## Public Safety

- The safety of the community is the primary driver for continuous improvement of disaster and emergency incident management activities.
- The safety and security of staff, patients, and the broader community is the foundation for disaster and emergency incident plans and arrangements.
- Engagement with disaster management groups ensures focus on community safety while sharing the responsibility for disaster management through stakeholder engagement.

## Partnerships

- Contribute to strong partnerships and collaboration to improve outcomes and resilience and promote clear responsibilities across the disaster and emergency incident management sector.

## Performance

- Measurable indicators of productivity and effectiveness, including continuous improvement promoting a culture of excellence in disaster and emergency incident management.

# 5. Requirements

The Disasters and Emergency Incidents Standard associated with this policy further outlines how these requirements are to be achieved.

## Governance

5.1 Roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of entities involved in health-related disaster and emergency incident management and operations are documented, agreed, and enacted.

5.2 Decisions at all levels are documented and underpin effective management and operational activities and actions.

## Doctrine

5.3 Effective disaster and emergency incident plans and arrangements:
- are as consistent as practicable with required legislation, plans and standards
- provide for the responsibility and functions of the Department as outlined in the Queensland State Disaster Management Plan
- consider and align with plans for continuity of critical business functions, where practicable.

## People

5.4 The Department is prepared for and has the capability and capacity to undertake activities relating to disaster and emergency incident operations.

5.5 Ensure staff have the relevant training, skills and experience and the Department enables the allocation and coordination of staff during disaster and emergency incidents.

## Enablers

5.6 Communication, information and resource management systems and procedures are:
- consistent and compatible with state-level disaster management arrangements, documented and shared with all relevant internal and external stakeholders.
- developed and implemented through cooperative partnerships within and between the divisions and branches of the Department, HHS and with state-level disaster management groups and other stakeholders.

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## Continuous improvement

5.7  The content and effectiveness of plans and arrangements are monitored, evaluated, and reviewed annually through exercise or activation.

5.8  Lessons identified through debrief, post event or exercise evaluation are shared and inform improvement activities.

# 6. Human rights

Human rights are not engaged by this policy.

# 7. Legislation

- *Disaster Management Act 2003 [Qld]*
- *Disaster Management Regulation 2014* [Qld]
- *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* [Qld]
- *Public Health Act 2005* [Qld]
- *Public Safety Preservation Act 1986* [Qld]
- *Human Rights Act 2019* [Qld]

# 8. Supporting documents

- Disasters and Emergency Incidents Standard (QH-IMP-315-2)
- QH-HSD-046 'Management of a public health event of state significance'
- Queensland Health Disaster and Emergency Incident Plan (2023) and sub-plans
- Queensland Health Incident Management System Guideline (2023)
- Queensland Health Disaster and Emergency Incident Training Framework (2022)
- Queensland Health Operational Briefing and Debriefing Guideline (2020)
- Queensland State Disaster Management Plan (Interim version 2023)
- Queensland Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2020
- Emergency Management Assurance Framework (IGEM)

# 9. Definitions

| Term | Definition | Source |
|------|-----------|--------|
| Capability | How an entity uses training and exercising to help embed culture change and improve performance | Queensland Emergency Management Assurance Framework (Accountabilities) |

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| Term | Definition | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Critical business Function | A business function, or part of a function (process) without which the organisation will suffer significant impact. If a critical business function or process is non-operational, the organisation could suffer serious legal, financial, or reputational damage | Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland |
| Continuous Improvement | Continuous Improvement refers to how entities monitor, evaluate, measure, and improve disaster management activities.<br><br>• An established lessons management process is being undertaken<br>• The capabilities required have been identified, documented, and aligned to recognised and accepted training methodology<br>• A variety of exercising and testing methods are being conducted and evaluated<br>• Insights are included in a lessons management process<br>• Lessons identified are shared with other entities, and with the community when relevant<br><br>Improvements are made based on insights gained through testing, exercises, and operational activity | Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (Accountabilities) |
| Disaster | A serious disruption to a community caused by the impact of an event that requires a significant coordinated response by the state and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption.<br><br>Serious disruption means:<br>• loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans<br>• widespread or severe property loss or damage<br>• widespread or severe damage to the environment | *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Section 13) |
| Disaster (Event) | • A cyclone, earthquake, flood, storm, storm tide, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption or other natural happening<br>• an explosion or fire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill, or a gas leak<br>• an infestation, plague, or epidemic<br>• a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructure<br>• an attack against the state, or<br>• another event similar to an event mentioned.<br><br>An event may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions. | *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Section 16) |

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| Term | Definition | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Disaster (and emergency incident) management | Arrangements about managing the potential adverse effects of a disaster event, including mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery | *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Section 14) |
| Disaster (and emergency incident) operation) | Activities undertaken before, during, or after a disaster event happens to help reduce the level of serious disruption to the community | *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Section 15) |
| Doctrine | Doctrine refers to the ideas, strategies and guiding principles contained in the documents that guide disaster management. These align with legislation, reflect good practice, and include guidelines, policies, plans and procedures.<br><br>• Roles and responsibilities are based on relevant doctrine<br>• The action or activity is based on relevant doctrine<br>• Doctrine is agreed and shared between entities<br><br>Common language being used, and common terminology is agreed and consistent with doctrine. | Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (Accountabilities) |
| Effective (relating to disaster and emergency incident management, operations, and plans). | • **Scalable** – able to be applied to any size or type of event<br>• **Comprehensive** – consider prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery phases of disaster management<br>• **Interoperable** – able to operate seamlessly between entities<br>• **Value for money** – enable the best outcome and performance for money spent<br>• **Adaptive** – flexible to the needs of all stakeholders<br><br>Note: Effectiveness can only be determined during application of a plan or arrangement through exercise or activation. | Queensland Emergency Management Assurance Framework (Good practice attributes) |
| Enablers | Enablers refer to the resources that assist entities in undertaking disaster management activities. This includes both the physical equipment and assets, and the systems, data, and technologies.<br><br>• Enablers are in place, are fit for purpose, and are being used in line with agreed protocols<br>• Enablers are accessible to the relevant entities, including the community if necessary<br>• Enablers meet the needs and requirements of all relevant entities<br>• Benchmarks for the performance of enablers have been established and are being met<br>• Alternatives or backups are in place | Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (Accountabilities) |

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| Term | Definition | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Emergency Incident | Any emergency incident that is not considered a disaster under *the Disaster Management Act 2003*, but that:<br>• is confined to activation of a single Health Emergency Operations Centre in a single HHS<br>• results in moderate or medium impact on normal operations<br>• is able to be resolved through the use of local or first response resources<br>• may involve the State Health Emergency Coordination Centre moving to 'alert' or 'lean forward' level of activation, dependent on situation reporting | Queensland Health Disaster and Emergency Incident Plan |
| Event | Occurrence or change of a particular set of circumstances<br><br>• An event can be one or more occurrences, and can have several causes<br>• An event can consist of something not happening<br><br>An event can sometimes be referred toas an incident or accident. | ISO Guideline 73:2009 Risk Management Vocabulary |
| Governance | Governance refers to how entities administer their disaster management responsibilities and ensure decision making is appropriate, clear, and consistent.<br><br>• Roles and responsibilities have been identified, agreed to, and documented<br>• Entities have been authorised to carry out their delegated responsibilities<br>• The authorising environment for decisions and approvals has been identified and agreed to, and is being utilised<br>• Arrangements are in place for reporting on and monitoring the outcomes of decisions and actions<br><br>Decisions are recorded as they are made, and their implementation is monitored | Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (Accountabilities) |

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| Term | Definition | Source |
|------|-----------|--------|
| People | People refers to the relationships and networks, training, skills, and experience that enable the individuals who undertake disaster management to do so effectively.<br><br>• Enabling networks and relationships between individuals and entities, both formal and informal, have been established and maintained<br>• Training requirements are documented, and the necessary skills and knowledge are being met<br>• Opportunities are provided for on-the-job training and development<br>• Upskilling and cross-training provide a reserve of personnel | |
| Performance | Productivity and effectiveness measured by a combination of quality, quantity, cost, time, and human relationships | Queensland Emergency Management Assurance Framework (Accountabilities) |
| Risk | Effect of uncertainty on objectives<br><br>• An effect is a deviation from the expected – positive and/or negative<br>• Objectives can have different aspects (such as financial, health and safety, and environmental goals) and can apply at different levels (such as strategic, organization-wide, project, product, and process)<br>• Risk is often characterized by reference to potential **events** and **consequences** or a combination of these<br>• Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances) and the associated likelihood of occurrence. | ISO Guideline 73:2009 Risk Management Vocabulary |

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# 10. Approval and implementation

| Policy Custodian | Policy Contact Details | Approval Date | Approver |
|---|---|---|---|
| A/Executive Director, Disaster Management Branch | DMB@health.qld.gov.au | 29 February 2024 | Chief Health Officer |

## Version control

| Version | Date | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| V2 | February 2024 | Since 2018 revision: transferred to new template, including new human rights section, new "People" section in Requirements to align with Disaster and Emergency Incident Health Service Directive. |

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