



PRIMARY CARE PREPAREDNESS

EARTHQUAKES

February 2024

Small earthquakes in Victoria and New South Wales are regularly reported. On occasion, moderate-sized earthquakes have caused community concern and resulted in minor damage and short-term disruptions. While large earthquakes are more likely to result in casualties and injuries, such as people being trapped and requiring rescue, it is important for health services, such as general practice clinics, are prepared to respond in times of emergency.

Information for clinicians, plan how to manage emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RACGP - Managing emergencies in general practice• RACGP - Managing emergencies• RACGP - Resources to support general practices prepare and respond to emergencies• 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. This will not only help you to stay focused and respond under pressure but get your business back up and running more quickly.</p>
Preparing for a disaster	<p>The Preparing a General Practice for a Disaster HealthPathway has useful information on how to prepare before a disaster happens.</p>
Useful link and resources of what to do in the event of an earthquake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earthquakes how to stay safe.• Earthquakes know your hazards.• Earthquake notifications are provided by Geoscience Australia• What should i do if an earthquake happens
Stay up-to-date with alerts and information	<p>VIC: https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/ 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>
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, loss of water supply and 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	So that Murray PHN can assist in coordinating support with government agencies during an emergency ensure to let us know who your emergency contacts are via your Quality Improvement Consultant or primarycareresponse@murrayphn.org.au
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.</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.</p> <p>You will need to set up your account and ensure you have enough credits in the system to send the messages.</p> <p>Inform Murray PHN of service closures or impacts: primarycareresponse@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"> • Are the practitioners set up with ePrescribing so patients can obtain scripts immediately and remotely? Ensure paper scripts/prescribing pads are also available in the event that no internet is 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 are able to create pathology and imaging requests if working remotely. <p>Have information available for VVED to share with patients.</p>
Join the emergency volunteer list	If you have capacity to support in an emergency event, register your interest using the online form .
Do emergency exercise training	Undertake mock training incidents to ensure staff are competent and aware of their roles in the event of an emergency.

Other useful links

- [Where to get information in an emergency in Victoria](#)
- [The role and Inclusion of general practitioners in evacuation centres](#)
- [Service continuity and emergency events in aged care](#)
- [NSW evacuation decision guidelines for private health and residential care facilities](#)
- [Victoria emergency preparedness in residential aged care services](#)

Resources to share with patients

- [My Health Record](#)
- [Alternative after hours and emergency care options](#)
- Road closures - Victoria: <https://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au/> NSW: <https://www.livetraffic.com/>
- [Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings](#)

Contact us

For more information or support email primarycareresponse@murrayphn.org.au