



# Health and Safety Guideline

## HSG 5.3 Emergency Response

### 1. Purpose

This document provides guidance on establishing the framework for emergency management to ensure that workers can effectively respond to emergencies and minimise adverse consequences.

### 2. Scope

This Guideline applies to all health, safety and wellbeing activities of staff, students, visitors (including volunteers and contractors), Council members, and other persons interacting with the University of Newcastle (workers); the operations of staff of University aligned Research Centres and controlled entities; and all activities conducted by or on behalf of the University of Newcastle on and outside of the University's campuses.

### 3. Guidelines

#### 3.1. Context for Emergency Management Plan and Emergency Management Framework

All members of the University community have a role in ensuring the safety and well-being of themselves and others during an emergency. The guideline is informed by the [Emergency Management Framework](#), which outlines the structures and processes in place for the management of emergencies at the University, and the University's [Emergency Management Plan](#), which together with the [Emergency Procedures Guide](#), contains strategies, procedures, and actions to be followed before, during, and after an emergency.

Together these documents aim to:

- Protect and ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals on the campus during emergencies, including students, faculty, staff, visitors, and other occupants.
- Establish clear lines of communication, roles, and responsibilities among relevant departments, emergency response teams, and external agencies to coordinate an effective response to emergencies.
- Identify potential hazards, assess their impact, and develop strategies and measures to mitigate the risks associated with these hazards.

- Establish evacuation procedures, assembly points, and safe routes for the orderly and efficient evacuation of individuals from buildings during emergencies. Additionally, provide guidelines for sheltering-in-place and lockdown procedures when necessary.
- Establish effective communication protocols to disseminate emergency information, warnings, and instructions to campus occupants, the Emergency Control Organisation (ECO), incident response teams, and relevant stakeholders. This includes utilising various communication channels such as mass notification systems, emergency warning intercom systems (EWIS), websites, social media, and other means.

The Emergency Management Framework uses a three-tier system to provide the right response for each situation, enable fast, consistent, and appropriate escalation, and ensure the right staff manage the response. The framework interacts with the University's other incident, critical incident, and business continuity documents such as:

- Incident Response Plans – plans for specific campuses, or specific hazards, eg, Flood Management Plan;
- Crisis Management Plans – plans that manage complex or severe incidents, eg, Student Critical Incidents;
- Business Continuity Plans; and
- Emergency Communication Plan.

The Emergency Management Officer has overall responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Emergency Management program in consultation with other stakeholders through the Emergency Planning Committee.

### **3.2. Roles**

During an emergency response, various teams play crucial roles in managing and mitigating the situation.

#### Emergency Control Organisation (ECO)

The ECO is comprised of the Chief Warden, Campus Security, Building Wardens, Emergency Wardens, First Aid Officers, and Mental Health First Aid Officers from across the campuses and is responsible for:

- Managing the initial response to an emergency, particularly evacuations if required or administration of first aid, until other support arrives.
- Ensuring that emergency procedures are followed, and occupants are directed to safety.

- Conduct headcounts, with the assistance of managers and supervisors, and account for all individuals during evacuation.
- Facilitating communication and coordination with occupants during an emergency response.
- Assist emergency services and provide necessary information, where required.

#### Incident Management Team (IMT)

The IMT is comprised of senior managers drawn from various departments across the University with the relevant skills and experience to manage an incident that requires an operational response. The team is responsible for:

- Activating when incidents require operational coordination beyond the ECOs capability.
- Assessing the nature, scale and severity of the incident.
- Identifying and allocating necessary resources.
- Establishing incident priorities and objectives.
- Providing situational updates to the Critical Incident Team and Executive Committee.

#### Critical Incident Team (CIT)

The CIT is comprised of senior executives and key-decision makers and is responsible for:

- Activating in response to crisis incidents
- Assessing potential impacts and providing strategic direction.
- Making decisions on resource allocation, communication strategies, and campus operations, and providing direction to the IMT.
- Communicating with internal and external stakeholders.

#### Emergency Communications Team (ECT)

The ECT is drawn from staff in the Future Students, Communication and Engagement unit to coordinate all communications with staff, students, stakeholders, and the media. They are responsible for:

- Liaising with IMT and CIT regarding critical communications.
- Developing audience and channel specific mass communication in an emergency.
- Coordinating all channel communications.

### **3.3. Exercises and Training**

Training equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to effectively respond to emergencies. With training, individuals and teams become more efficient, can effectively assess the situation, make informed decisions, and take appropriate action. Rapid response

time is crucial in emergency situations to save lives and limit damage. Exercises embed the knowledge and skills acquired through training and enable:

- coordination and communication;
- specialised skills to address diverse emergency scenarios;
- resource optimisation;
- risk mitigation; and
- continuous improvement.

Minimum training requirements are detailed [in Health, Safety and Wellbeing Training Needs Analysis Matrix \(PLN-EL04.05\)](#).

### **3.4. Communication**

The University uses emergency communication channels to provide early warning and real time messaging in the event of an emergency situation. The combination of one or more mediums of communication ensures emergency messages reach as many people as possible in a timely manner.

### **3.5. Monitoring and Review**

The Emergency Planning Committee takes a proactive approach in reviewing the effectiveness of the emergency management program. The continuous improvement of the program allows for:

- changing environment and threats;
- learning from experience;
- maintaining skill and knowledge;
- technological advancements;
- stakeholder confidence;
- regulatory changes;
- resource allocation;
- testing assumptions;
- addressing gaps;
- fostering a culture of preparedness; and
- integration with other plans.

## **4. Definitions**

In the context of the Health and Safety Management System Framework:

Chief Warden	A University member of staff, usually the Security Manager, who is appointed to coordinate and manage the initial response to local incidents and emergencies.
Emergency	A sudden, unexpected event that requires an immediate response from internal and external emergency services. Emergency management is the development of effective incident response systems focused on controlling the event.
Emergency Control Organisation	A structured organisation of people within a facility who direct and control the implementation of emergency response procedures.
Emergency Management Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the University's Emergency Management Plan (EMP) and develops plans to monitor and respond to hazards and incidents.</li> <li>• Coordinate emergency response testing and training.</li> <li>• Acts as a liaison for the ECO and ensures they have the necessary resources to effectively respond to emergencies.</li> <li>• Support the Emergency Planning Committee (EPC) and Critical Incident Team (CIT) activities.</li> <li>• Maintain records and registers.</li> </ul>
Emergency Warden	Staff nominated as responsible for facilitating a fast and efficient initial response to emergency situations within a defined area.
Executive Committee	Consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Pro Vice-Chancellors, the Chief Operating Officer, Chief People and Culture Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, the University Secretary, and the President of Academic Senate.
First Aid Officer	<p>A person who has been appointed as a first aid officer and who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holds a current first aid certificate or occupational first aid certificate issued after successfully completing a SafeWork NSW approved first aid course, or</li> <li>• is qualified as a Level 3 or greater NSW ambulance officer, or</li> <li>• is qualified a medical practitioner, or</li> <li>• is a registered nurse.</li> </ul>
Hazard	An event, situation or condition that is capable of causing or resulting in loss of life, prejudice to the safety, or harm to the health of persons or animals; or destruction of, or damage to property or any part of the environment.
Incident	The occurrence or imminent occurrence of a hazard.
Leader / Supervisor	Any member of the University who is responsible for supervising staff and/or undergraduate or postgraduate students and/or for leading research projects.
Mental Health First Aid Officer	A person who has been completed the relevant training and been appointed as a mental health first aid officer to assist individuals who are developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis, until professional help is received.
Worker	Includes an employee, conjoint, student on work experience, contractor, sub-contractor, and volunteer. A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for the University or another person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) an employee, or</li> <li>(b) a contractor or subcontractor, or</li> </ul>

	(c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or (d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or (e) an outworker, or (f) an apprentice or trainee, or (g) a student gaining work experience, or (h) a volunteer, or (i) a person of a prescribed class.
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## 5. Responsibilities

A comprehensive list of health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities is provided in Guideline [HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities](#) in addition to the above in section 3.2.

## 6. References & Related Documents

The following documentation is referenced in, or applicable to this Guideline:

[HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[Health, Safety and Wellbeing Training Needs Analysis Matrix \(PLN-EL04.05\)](#)

[University of Newcastle Emergency Management Framework](#)

[University of Newcastle Emergency Management Plan](#)

[University of Newcastle Emergency Procedures Guide](#)

## 7. Amendment History

Version	Date of Issue	Approval	Section(s) Modified	Details of Amendment
1, 2	October 2016	Manager Health and Safety	-	Original versions with latest amendment for HSG 7.4 Emergency Response
3	July 2023	CPCO	All	1. Renumbered from HSG 7.4 to HSG 5.3 Emergency Response 2. Updated content in all sections 3. Added new/renamed Related Documents 4. Added Amendment History 5. Amended document control header and footer

## 8. Appendices

Nil