

	Policy
	Policy Category: Health & Safety
	Date Created: September 2019
	Date reviewed: 15 July 2025
	Policy Name: Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy

The purpose of this operational policy is to keep children and adults safe from fire and other emergency events by meeting Licensing Criteria HS4,7 and 8. Safety at the centre is paramount. Planning evacuation procedures and alternative care arrangements should the centre be involved in an emergency, will minimise the risk of injury and stress to children during this time.

Position Statement

In the event of any emergency or crisis, the safety of children and adults at our centre is paramount. Our centre is prepared to respond to a range of emergencies. We have clear procedures in place so that teacher and children are clear what to do and are equipped with emergency supplies.

Issue Outline

Emergency refers to a sudden or unforeseen occurrence of potential danger to persons or property requiring immediate action. Emergencies range from natural and man made disasters including flooding, fire, earthquake and chemical spills. There are other emergency situations such as sighting of a dangerous and or armed person.

An emergency can also be a traumatic event such as a sudden death or serious injury of a child or teacher, witnessing serious injury or death of a child, young person, teacher or whanau member, a lost or missing child.

Evacuation and or emergency response procedures will minimise the risk of injury and stress to children and adults and creates confidence in teachers, families and children about handling emergencies.

Detail

We are fully prepared for any emergencies that might happen at any given time and on any given day. This is supported by ensuring that there will always be at least one teacher who holds a current first aid certificate, (HS25). At Rotorua Childcare all our teachers hold first aid certificates.

We carry out lockdown, fire evacuation and earthquake drills at least every 3 months and record these. We ring Watchdog prior to carrying out an evacuation drill. The Fire Service approves our fire evacuation plans. These are reviewed annually.

We also have procedures to ensure that if there is any threat such as a dangerous person (intruder/trespasser) where all children will be assembled indoors and remain so until the threat is removed. A 'lock down' situation is Police terminology where an intervention by Police requests that a service 'locks down' by assembling all those present in the centre and staying indoors (movement in and out is restricted) until given the okay to resume usual activities.

We keep a record of our fire evacuation and earthquake drills.

We have an emergency/evacuation plan that is clearly displayed and all children and adults are trained in emergency procedures. This is developed in consultation with the local civil defence emergency representative/s, and teachers. The emergency/evacuation plan covers preparation, response, and recovery contingencies.

We have a portable civil defence kit includes:

- enough food and water for everyone at the centre for at least 24 hours
- essential medicines
- a current emergency contact list for staff, families and emergency services
- supplies in accordance with civil defence guidelines.

We keep our emergency contact list up to date.

Children are collected by authorised adults only – we keep a record of this. Children who are not collected by their parents, caregivers or other authorised adults are supervised at the centre (if it is safe to remain) for up to 24 hours. After 24 hours we will take direction from the emergency response unit.

Roles/Responsibilities

Centre Manager (Team leader if Manager is absent)

- Trains teachers and children about emergency and traumatic event response procedures
- Asks teachers to gather children and assemble in the designated safety meeting place (depending on the emergency)
- Makes decision whether to vacate if possible
- Checks sleep areas, bathroom and outdoor areas
- Collects the roll and parent contact list
- Ensures emergency and evacuation procedures are clearly marked
- Ensure that heavy furniture, fixtures, and equipment that could fall or topple and cause serious injury are secured
- Ensure that everyone knows where the designated assembly area is and will change it if this will unnecessarily place children at further risk
- Conducts head count.

All Teachers

- Teachers first responsibility is to the children at the centre
- Keep calm and ensure children are assembled in the designated safety meeting place (depending on the emergency)
- Follow the agreed emergency procedure
- Instruct children to follow your lead. As much as possible, without endangering yourself, assist them.

Alignment with Other Policies

- Health & Safety Policies
- Emergency procedures
- Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Hazard Register

- Incident, illness and accident record, incident investigation form.

Relevant Background (including legislation/regulation references)

ECE services are required to meet a range of legislative requirements, including provisions of the Fire Service Act 1975, the Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006, the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and the Building Act 2004.

Licensing Criteria 2008, Health and Safety, Emergencies documentation required:

- **HS4:** A current Fire Evacuation Scheme approved by the NZ Fire Service
- **HS7:** A procedure for dealing with emergencies. The procedure is consistent with National and Regional Civil Defence guidelines
- **HS5:** Designated assembly areas for evacuation purposes do not unnecessarily place children at further risk
- **HS6:** Heavy furniture, fixtures, and equipment that could fall or topple and cause serious injury or damage are secured
- **HS8:** Adults providing education and care are familiar with relevant emergency drills and regularly carry these out with the children; and a record of the emergency drills carried out with children.

Other legislation:

- The Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006
- The Fire Service Act 1975.

Impacts of Policy on Teachers, Parents and Children

This policy ensures parents have confidence in their children's safety during and after emergencies, and know what the care arrangements are if they are unable to get to the centre. It ensures that children and staff are confident of managing during an emergency.

Further Information Sources

Local Civil Defence and Emergency Management offices can supply lists of local hazards e.g. tsunami areas, toxic chemical sites etc.

The NZ Fire Service provides advice on legislation and development of a fire evacuation scheme <http://www.fire.org.nz/business-fire-safety/building-design/pages/Online-evacuation-scheme-planning-information.html>

The Ministry of Civil Defence website has a free downloadable resource Early Childhood - Emergency Procedures. You can find it in the Resources section <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz>

Worksafe New Zealand also have resources <http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/all-guidance-items/hsno/guidance-docs-epa/emergency-procedures-template-pdf>

Traumatic incidents: The Ministry of Education have Traumatic Incident teams based in all Special Education offices around the country. They can be contacted at any time through the local Special Education office or by phoning 0800 TI Team (0800 848 326).

Pandemics: The latest updates on infectious diseases and health issues that might affect our community are to be found on the Ministry of Health website www.health.govt.nz.

Alignment with our Centre's Philosophy

This policy ensures a safe environment, a crucial part of creating and maintaining the well-being of children in our care.

Implications and/or Risks

Strong emergency management procedures allow an organisation to cope with, and recover and rebuild after an emergency. The manager ensures plans are carried out.

Implementation

Clear procedures have been developed and staff trained to follow them. We ensure equipment is maintained, plans are current and we organise drills. All staff know their roles.

Review

Review annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

Authorised:	
Date:	
Review Date:	JULY 2026
Consultation Undertaken:	Storypark, notice boards foyer and staff room, emailed to RCC Board