

# fact sheet

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## Evacuation Centre – Information for Evacuees

### Who establishes an evacuation centre?

The Community Services Directorate is responsible for establishing Evacuation Centres as part of its Community Recovery role under the ACT emergency arrangements. Community recovery is the assistance given to individuals, families and communities to help them deal with, and recover from, the impacts of a disaster or emergency event.

### Who is the evacuation centre for?

An Evacuation Centre is established to provide shelter to people who are directly affected by an emergency situation and do not have anywhere else to go – eg they have been evacuated from their homes or cannot access their homes because of the incident.

Evacuation Centres are usually established in halls or school gymnasiums to provide basic shelter. As the accommodation is fairly basic, it is recommended that people seek shelter with family or friends or private accommodation if they are able to.

### What services are available?

Evacuation Centres are established to provide for the immediate and essential needs of the affected community in the short term. The type of assistance available may include:

- Shelter
- Refreshments
- First aid, including assistance with sourcing essential medication
- Personal support and information
- Care and support for unaccompanied minors until reunited with their parents/guardians
- Assistance with finding temporary accommodation

# fact sheet

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**Canberra Connect (132281) will have up to date information about the Evacuation Centre, the emergency event and when it is safe to return home.**

## **What agencies are present in the Centre?**

The Community Services Directorate usually manages the Evacuation Centre and has staff with a range of skills available to assist those who attend the Centre. Depending on the scale and duration of the emergency, DHCS may be supported in the Centre by its Community Partners including:

**Australian Red Cross** – registration of displaced people and personal support

**ACT Government Agencies such as Police and Education and Training Directorate**

**Salvation Army** – provision of food

**St John Ambulance** – provision of first aid

**St Vincent de Paul Society** – clothing and personal needs

**Domestic Animal Services** – management and temporary accommodation of pets

**ADRA** – assistance with temporary accommodation in a disaster

## **What happens in an Evacuation Centre?**

People who attend the Evacuation Centre may be asked to register their names and details with **Red Cross** – this helps in knowing who is at the centre and assisting to reunite evacuated people with friends and family. In some instances the police might ask people to attend or contact an Evacuation Centre to register their details.

- You may be asked to discuss your situation and your immediate needs, and be asked to provide proof of identity and verification that you live in the affected area.
- We understand that it can be a very stressful time for people and will try to minimise the number of times that you are asked for information. We will ask your permission to share some of your details with other agencies in the centre to avoid you having to repeat your story to everyone. We will respect your privacy at all times.
- If you require assistance with anything feel free to discuss with the DHCS representatives in the Centre – usually wearing a purple tabard or name badge.



# fact sheet

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- Once you have registered it may be more comfortable for you to go to family or friends or to private accommodation – you can contact Canberra Connect for up to date information about the emergency. You could be asked to sign in and out of the Centre – to assist us to keep track of people.

**It is not always possible to provide access to telephones or other communications.**

## **What are your responsibilities in an Evacuation Centre?**

- Consideration for others - situations affect everyone differently. Please be courteous and respect the needs, privacy and culture of other people at the Centre.
- The Community Services Directorate will care for any unaccompanied children at the Centre. If you are responsible for a child or children you are expected to ensure that they are supervised at all times.
- Smoking, consumption of alcohol and use of drugs are not permitted in the Evacuation Centre.
- The safety of everyone is of utmost importance in an Evacuation Centre. If you see a safety hazard please let a Community Services Directorate staff member know about it.
- Any food provided at an Evacuation Centre is purchased at short notice and cannot always accommodate individual allergies or preferences. If you have food allergies it is your responsibility to advise staff and avoid food that may cause a reaction.
- If you bring pets to the Centre you might be asked to leave them with Domestic Animal Services for temporary care and shelter.