

# fact sheet

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## Evacuation Centres

### 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.

### When is an evacuation centre established?

Evacuation Centres are generally established at the request of emergency services agencies (ACT Policing, ACT Fire Brigade, ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Rural Fire Service and the ACT State Emergency Service). A Centre/s is opened in response to an emergency or potential threat to public safety such as:

- Natural disasters including bushfires or floods;
- Prolonged closure of residential areas in response to a situation that threatens the safety of the people or homes in the immediate area ; and
- Other emergency situations that require the provision of support and information for members of the community.

### Who is the 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 – e.g. 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 and are intended to provide basic shelter. As the accommodation is fairly basic, it is recommended that people seek shelter with family or friends if they are able to.

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## 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
- Food and drink
- First aid, including assistance with sourcing essential medication
- Information about the emergency, and advice on when it is safe to return home
- Care and support for unaccompanied minors until reunited with their parents/guardians
- Assistance with finding temporary accommodation

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.

## Where are evacuation centres located?

The need for an Evacuation Centre and where it should be located are determined by the type, size, location and expected duration of the emergency. A number of places across Canberra have been identified as sites for Evacuation Centres. When an emergency occurs, the Community Services Directorate decides on the most suitable location for a Centre after discussing the options with the emergency services agencies.

## Where do we find information when an emergency occurs

During an emergency the situation changes rapidly. Information about the location of the Evacuation Centre and the emergency situation will be available to members of the public through:

- Police and emergency services agencies that are present at the site of the emergency
- Canberra Connect on 13 22 81
- Radio stations and other media



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- Various websites, including:

[www.esa.act.gov.au](http://www.esa.act.gov.au)

[www.police.act.gov.au](http://www.police.act.gov.au)

and in the event of a large scale emergency:

[www.emergencyinformation.act.gov.au](http://www.emergencyinformation.act.gov.au)

## What can be done to prepare for emergencies/ evacuation

If you are directed to leave your home by a member of an emergency services agency and if time allows, ensure that you take those essential items you may require for the next 24 hours. Some items that you may wish to take with you include:

- An adequate supply of essential medication
- Toiletries and change of clothes
- Nappies, formula, blankets for babies
- Warm jacket during the cooler months
- Pets – either take them with you or ensure that they have adequate food and fresh drinking water
- Phone numbers, so that you can contact family/ friends
- Reading glasses
- Mobile phone charger

If you have prescribed medication that **must** be taken every day it is useful to carry an extra dose and details of the medication with you at all times.