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	Category of Procedure: Operational	Approval Date: 11/07/2023 Procedure Approver: Head of Children's Services
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YMCA SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Bushfire Procedure

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1. Purpose

Bushfires are an inherent part of Australia's environment. Bushfires can significantly impact lives, property, and the environment. Our Children's services will take measures to protect the health and safety of children, educators, and visitors should an incident occur whilst at the service. The service will use preventative steps to reduce risk and will ensure all accidents, injuries, incidents, and hazards are reported and responded to appropriately.

2. Scope

The scope of this procedure applies to all Board members, Sub Committee members, educators, and volunteers. This procedure applies to all YMCA Member Associations. For the purposes of this document, we refer to these as the YMCA. All Policies and Procedures must conform to this procedure.


3. Procedures

Bushfire Emergency Management Plan			
Date Developed:		Plan	
Plan reviewed:		Competed by:	
In consultation with:		Safety Officer	
		/ WHS:	
YMCA Centre Program Name:			
Local CFS:			
Is your centre/service/program in a hot spot or on the high-risk register?			
Who is this plan for?			

There may be other things you need to consider that are not included in this planning template. Prior to developing a Bushfire Survival Plan for your YMCA, make sure you consult with your council partner, who may already have developed planning documents for your centre. During peak bush fire season, the nominated supervisor will monitor fire ratings through relevant authorities on a daily or hourly basis and communicate with all stakeholders as required.


Your plan needs to outline what to do:

- Before the bushfire season – property preparation.
- During the bushfire season – further preparation.
- On days leading up to Severe, Extreme, and Code Red (Catastrophic) fire danger – Final preparations and leaving early.

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- Back-up plan.
- Your plan needs to be communicated to and integrated with your council partner's plans. - Contact your partner prior to developing your plan.

Pre-Season Preparation Requirements	Date to be completed
Keep grass cut short and maintained throughout the season.	
Reduce and clean up 'fine fuels.' Fine fuels are things such as long dry grass, fallen leaves and twigs. Anything smaller in diameter than your little finger is a fine fuel.	
Clear away dead undergrowth and fallen branches.	
Move wood piles away from the centre.	
Clean leaves, rubbish, and debris out of gutters.	
Place weather-stripping around the inside of doors and windows.	
Close underfloor spaces and seal all gaps, vents and roof spaces where embers could enter.	
Make fire screens to go over windows to prevent the glass from cracking in radiant heat.	
The mains water supply may not be a reliable source during a fire as the water pressure may drop. Make sure you have access to adequate water supplies, such as tanks, dams swimming pools or water reserves.	
Install and maintain a sprinkler system around the centre.	
Ensure all firefighting equipment such as fire hoses, fire extinguishers, fire blankets etc. are maintained, accessible and ready for use.	
Storing LPG gas tanks appropriately as they should be vented away from your facility.	
Firmly fix roofing	
Ensure dangerous goods are stored appropriately and neatly in designated chemical storage areas.	
Evacuations are rehearsed every 3 months	
Educators have read and can follow the bushfire policy and EMP	
Check emergency and evacuation floor plan of the OSHC service is clearly displayed near each exit of the service.	

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Centre resources are checked regularly such as phones, emergency bags, first aid kits etc.	
Communicate with staff, educators and families about bush fire preparation information and provisions	
Ensure all emergency exits are always clear and accessible.	
Other Comments:	


Section 2: FACILITY AND GROUNDS PREPARATION

Preparing your YMCA – Facility and Property Maintenance

Vegetation Management Requirements	Dates to be completed	Person Responsible	Tick when completed
Reducing leaf litter (dead leaves). Must be no more than 10cm in height.			
Removing or trimming shrubs. No shrubs over one metre next to or below the window line.			
Trimming tree branches overhanging your centre.			
Other Comments:			

Section 3: MONITORING THE CONDITIONS

Monitoring the Conditions	
Who is responsible for monitoring the weather and fire danger rating in the area?	
How often will you get updates on the weather and Fire Danger Rating?	
Where will this information be recorded?	
How will you get this information? TV, radio, newspaper, websites?	
If you do not have access to TV, radio, or the internet for constant updates how will you get information	

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If staff are extremely busy and don't have time to constantly update information is there another way, they can receive updates (e.g., Area Manager)	
Do you have portable, battery-operated radio that can be used as a back up to receive information?	
Communicating to families about not accepting children for care on days when there is a catastrophic danger rating	

Section 4: TRIGGER TO LEAVE

The safest option is to leave early on the day of Severe or Extreme fire-rated days if you are in a bushfire-prone area. On a Code Red (Catastrophic) rated fire danger day, the safest option is to leave the night before, or early in the morning. Waiting until you see flames is too late and extremely dangerous. Do not expect a fire truck.

What is your trigger to leave the centre / to close the centre?	
Is everyone aware of the trigger to leave? Management, Council Partners, all staff members?	
Who will make the decision to close the centre and leave?	
How will that decision be communicated to: - Employees - Contract partner - YMCA State Office - Area Manager - CEO	
Where will the staff/patrons go? Is there a planned destination?	
How will you get where you are going?	
Have you identified alternate routes out of the area?	
Do you have printed copies of evacuation routes available? Include surrounding towns and community relief spots.	
How will you evacuate the centre?	

*Notify the Regulatory Authority in the event of any closures or damage to premises within 24

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hours or as soon as possible via the NQA ITS or email if there is no access to phones.

Section 5: WARDEN SYSTEM AND WARDEN RESPONSIBILITIES:

CHIEF WARDEN ROLE

A Chief Warden must be a person who is normally on the site nearly all the time. When a person is selected in accordance with the criteria of AS3745 [see 2.4.2] for the role of Chief Warden it must be clearly identified to all staff who the person is, and there must be no doubt as to who is to act in that capacity when the designated Chief Warden is off-site. A specific protocol should be developed to ensure the transition to the role of temporary Chief Warden is followed.

The role of the **Chief Warden is to be taken by the most senior person on site**, always a Duty Manager/Director. It could involve a person moving up in the overall Emergency Management Hierarchy from their normal position i.e., Deputy Chief Warden or in certain circumstances an Area Warden.


DEPUTY CHIEF WARDEN HIERARCHY

In the instance that the director is unable to perform the role of the Chief Warden, it is essential that the coordinating role be undertaken by another member of staff. As such, the hierarchy for Deputy Chief Wardens has been developed for use should this situation occur.

As a last possible resort, other staff on duty shall assume the role of Chief Warden if the Director and other qualified staff are unable to do so (refer to the Deputy Chief Warden Hierarchy).

WARDEN RESPONSIBILITIES

ECO DUTIES
The primary role of members of the ECO is to ensure that life safety takes precedence over asset protection. Each officer in the ECO shall have clearly defined duties and responsibilities, as follows
CHIEF WARDEN
On becoming aware of an emergency, the chief warden shall take the following actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ascertain the nature of the emergency and determine appropriate action. 2. Ensure that the appropriate emergency service has been notified. 3. Ensure that floor or area wardens are advised of the situation. 4. If necessary, initiate evacuation and control entry to the affected areas. 5. Ensure the progress of the evacuation and any action taken is recorded in an incident log. 6. Brief the emergency services personnel upon arrival on the type, scope, and location of the emergency and the status of the evacuation and, thereafter, act on the senior

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officer's instructions.

DEPUTY CHIEF WARDEN

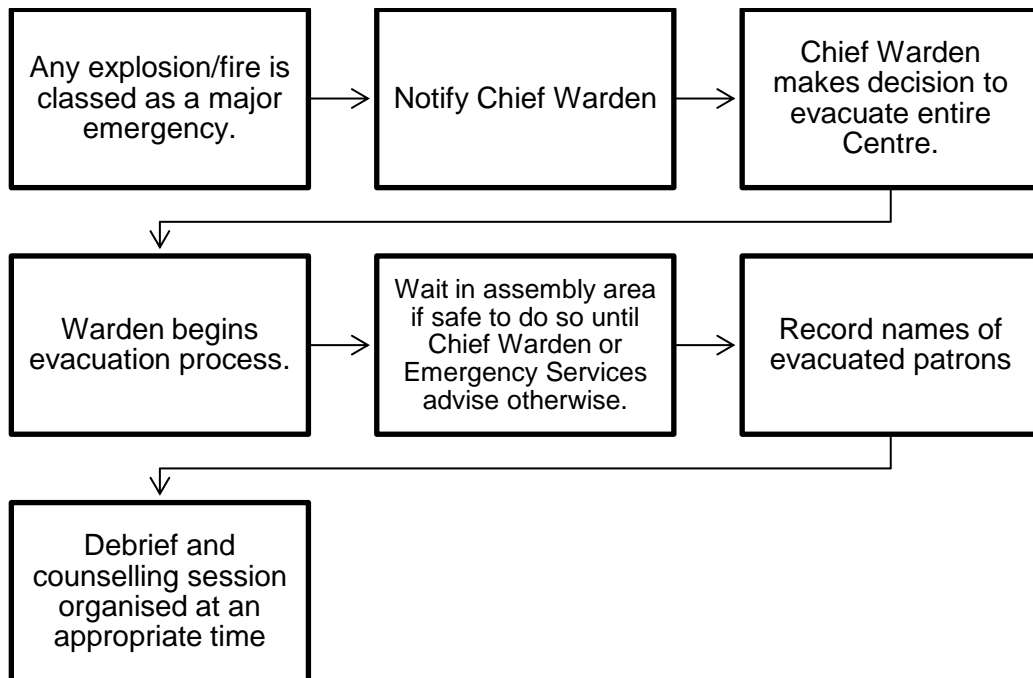
The deputy chief warden shall assume the responsibilities normally carried out by the chief warden if the chief warden is unavailable, and otherwise assist as required.


Area Wardens

On hearing an alarm or on becoming aware of an emergency, the area wardens shall take the following actions:

1. Implement the emergency procedures for their area.
2. Ensure that the appropriate emergency service has been notified.
3. Direct assisting staff to check areas for any abnormal situation.
4. Commence evacuation if the circumstances in their area warrant this.
5. Communicate with the chief warden by whatever means available and act on instructions.
6. Advise the chief warden as soon as possible of the circumstances and action is taken.
7. Act as the leader of groups moving to nominated assembly areas.
8. Co-opt persons as required to assist a warden during an emergency.
9. Confirm that the activities of wardens have been completed and report this to the chief warden.

Fire/Explosion Flow Chart:



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What to take - Relocation Kit

Relocation Kit (Emergency Evacuation Backpacks) What to take	Tick when completed
Protective clothing	
Water	
Woollen blankets	
Medications	
Mobile phones and charger	
Emergency contact details	
Fully stocked First Aid kit	
Do you have protective clothing for all staff members – what else do you need?	
Practice retrieving the Emergency kit – do all staff know what to bring?	
What else will I need to bring? Ask your contract partner, area manager and employees.	
Where will the Emergency Kit be stored?	

* **NOTE:** Each staff member is responsible for their own areas.

Section 7: ACTIONS LEADING UP TO PREDICTED SEVERE, EXTREME, CODE RED (CATASTROPHIC) FIRE DANGER RATED DAYS

Always consider the circumstances of the day.

Who will be at the children's service on the predicted fire danger days?


Will staff rostered for work on the day be required to undertake personal duties to protect homes and family members?

Does staff have transport organised?

Before you leave:

What else do you need to do before you go?	
Who will you tell where you have gone and where to find you?	Principal of School, Regional Area Manager, Area Manager, Staff
What radio station will you be tuned into?	ABC 891am – Emergency Broadcast Partner

If you are waiting until alerted to a fire in the area it will involve some risk. Once the fire is in your area it may become difficult to leave as road conditions will be dangerous. There may be road closures, smoke, fallen trees, and embers.

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If you are waiting for a warning, remember to listen out for all your surrounding towns that if affected by fire would be your trigger to leave. Your suburb or town may not be mentioned and by the time it is, it may be too late to leave the area.

It is also possible that there is no official warning, and do not expect a fire truck.

Before you leave if it is safe to do so:	Tick when completed
Close doors and windows	
Add any final relocation kit items: - Medications - Prescriptions - Mobile Phones Park cars including relocation kit	
Turn off the mains gas supply	
Leave the front door open for emergency services access	
Turn off electrical equipment	


Section 8: YOUR BACK UP PLAN

What is your plan to shelter if unsafe to leave your property?	
List any well-prepared houses or buildings in your area that could be a safer place to shelter in a bushfire if you are caught out:	
Do you have a designated neighbourhood Safe Place in your area that could be used as a last resort?	
How will you know it is safe to return?	
Is there are several fire danger days in a row how will this affect your plan?	

Section 9: PLAN APPROVAL

Area Manager Name:		WHS Manager:	
Signed:		Signed:	
Date:		Date:	
HSR/HSO Name:		Contract Partner:	
Signed:		Signed:	
Date:		Date:	

4. Definitions

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Fire danger rating (FDR)

Provides an indication of the possible consequences of a fire. This rating is standardised across all Australian states and territories. The higher the fire danger rating, the more dangerous the conditions. Ratings range from:

FDR are maintained and updated by emergency services in each state or territory.

Bush fire-prone area

An area of land that can support a bushfire or is likely to be subject to bushfire attack. Bush fire-prone maps are prepared by local councils and governments within each state and territory. Baseline data for bushfire-prone areas are referred to as Bushfire Attack Level (BAL).

Emergency Management Plan (EMP)

Identifies the nature and range of possible emergencies and hazards to which children and staff may be exposed and the response and procedure in the event of an emergency. Effective planning and preparation of the EMP within the workplace ensures optimal response to emergencies should they occur. A risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that impact the service form the basis of the EMP.

5. Key Relevant Documents

- Incident Report Form
- Incident and injury policy and procedure
- Supervision Policy
- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Education and Care National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

6. Monitoring Evaluation and Review

This procedure will be reviewed every two years or earlier for reasonable cause or upon the request of the YMCA South Australia Board.

7. Version History

Version	Date	Description of changes	Effective Date	Review Date
2.0	11/07/2023	Updated and reviewed.	11/08/2023	July 2025
3.0	26/05/2025	Updated for clarity.	26/05/2025	May 2027