



# STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

## **PART 1: OVERVIEW**



Government  
of South Australia



## FOREWORD

In South Australia, we have become all too familiar with the devastating loss that takes place when natural disasters occur. Bushfires, floods, heatwaves, intense storms and biosecurity incidents have a significant impact on individuals, families and communities and consequences for our people, economy, environment, and infrastructure.

Climate change will continue to increase the frequency and severity of such extreme weather events, leading to even greater impacts upon the South Australian people and government.

There are the emerging threats of terrorism and cyber breaches, each requiring new and effective approaches to safeguard our communities and the economy.

These threats remind us of the need to maintain an effective approach to preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering (PPRR) from emergencies. For example, responsible land-use planning can prevent or reduce the likelihood of hazards impacting communities, while a strategic approach to managing system security helps to mitigate cyber-attacks.

The South Australian Government is committed to ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to protect our communities and people through a coordinated approach.

The South Australian State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) sets out the state's comprehensive emergency management arrangements for enabling an effective prevention from - preparedness for - response to - and recovery from - an emergency.

The SEMP draws together the strategies and systems in place for dealing with emergencies, and clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of all government agencies and non-government organisations.

Governments, communities, businesses and individuals share the responsibility for adopting the approach outlined in the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience. Additionally, via the SEMP, each and every South Australian can play their part in developing resilience when it comes to emergencies.

**Dr Don Russell**  
Chair  
State Emergency

## INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of South Australia's emergency management arrangements, described in detail in the SEMP and summarised here in Part 1, is to preserve and save lives, as well as to protect the environment, property and infrastructure where possible.

South Australia's emergency management arrangements are guided by the key principles of emergency management – prevention, which seeks to eliminate or reduce risk; preparedness, which puts people, plans, training and equipment in place to cope should an emergency take place; response, which involves activating the plans in place; and recovery, which involves community restoration after an emergency occurs.

All sectors of the community have a collective responsibility when it comes to emergency management. The SEMP outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those who play a part in emergency management – from state and local government agencies, to communities and individuals.

Keeping the community informed is a key aspect in all areas of emergency management – before an emergency to help with prevention and preparedness; then while responding to the emergency; and after, in terms of recovery. The systems in place to achieve this are outlined in this plan.

The SEMP also outlines an 'all-hazards approach' to emergency management as a large range of hazards can cause similar problems, and similar arrangements are required to manage them.

The state's emergency risk management processes are detailed as well. These include the responsibilities allocated to agencies and committees in undertaking risk assessments relating to emergencies or potential emergencies. The purpose is to ensure that the impacts of any emergency are minimised.

Emergency management is not a static process. Reviews of emergencies take place regularly so that our state's arrangements are kept up to date thereby ensuring the safety of the community. The review process is also described in the SEMP.

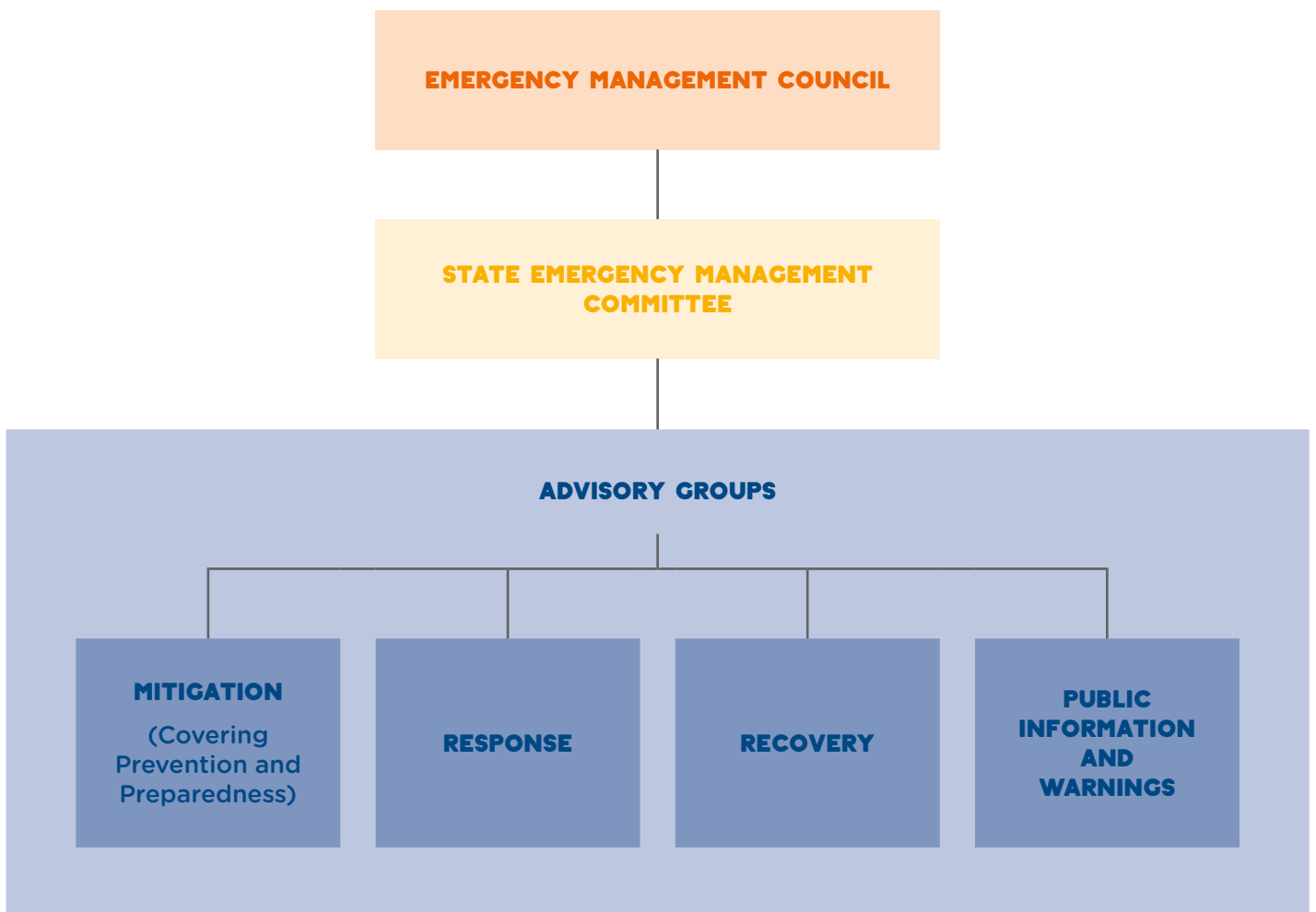
The SEMP also articulates the South Australia Government's response to the agreement made by the Council of Australian Governments to adopt a 'whole-of-nation resilience based approach to disaster management'. This approach is outlined in the [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience](#), which describes a national coordinated and cooperative effort to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies.

## **COORDINATED APPROACH**

The South Australian emergency management arrangements include a range of committees and structures designed to ensure that all agencies (government, non-government and community organisations) work collaboratively to manage emergencies.

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

South Australia has comprehensive emergency management governance arrangements. The Emergency Management Council (EMC) is a committee of Cabinet and is chaired by the Premier. The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) reports to the Emergency Management Council and is chaired by the Chief Executive, Department of the Premier and Cabinet. It oversees emergency management planning in the state, and is supported by Advisory groups, that provide assurance to SEMC.



## THE STATE CRISIS CENTRE

During an emergency the State Crisis Centre supports the Minister (the Premier). The State Crisis Centre links with the [Commonwealth Crisis Coordination Centre](#) to share information and seek support when required.

The State Crisis Centre is supported and managed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

## STATE COORDINATOR AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE

The Commissioner of Police is the State Coordinator and is tasked with managing response and recovery operations in accordance with the *Emergency Management Act 2004*.

South Australia Police is the coordinating agency for all emergencies.

## THE STATE EMERGENCY CENTRE

In an emergency situation, the State Emergency Centre brings together all relevant agencies and support staff to allow for a coordinated state level response.

The State Emergency Centre is operated and supported by the South Australia Police. Any control or support agency or functional support group can request the activation of the State Emergency Centre by contacting the State Coordinator.

## STATE RECOVERY OFFICE

The State Recovery Office is positioned within the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion and works across government and non-government sectors to ensure effective emergency recovery arrangements and capacity.

During an emergency, the State Recovery Office coordinates state level recovery functions; provides a management and administrative service to the State Recovery Committee; and supports local recovery efforts.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSION

The South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) has a strategic leadership role in whole-of-government emergency management, and in maintaining liaison with other bodies responsible for managing emergencies across the state and nationally.

## ZONE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Zone Emergency Management Committees (ZEMC) operate across eleven emergency management zones and are responsible for zone (regional) planning to support the SEMP. The ZEMC's use an all-hazards approach to emergency management from prevention through to recovery, including the development of zone emergency management plans.

## ZONE EMERGENCY SUPPORT TEAM

The Zone Emergency Support Team (ZEST) supports the resolution of an emergency by providing coordination of local resources.

## CONTROL AGENCIES

The Control Agency role is defined within Part 2. The control agency takes charge of the emergency and provides leadership to all other agencies responding. When an agency attends an emergency but is not in charge they are referred to as a support agency.

## FUNCTIONAL SUPPORT GROUP

A Functional Support Group (FSG) is a group of participating agencies (government and non-government) who perform a functional role to support response and recovery operations for all emergencies. Each FSG has a nominated lead agency which supports its operations.

## LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

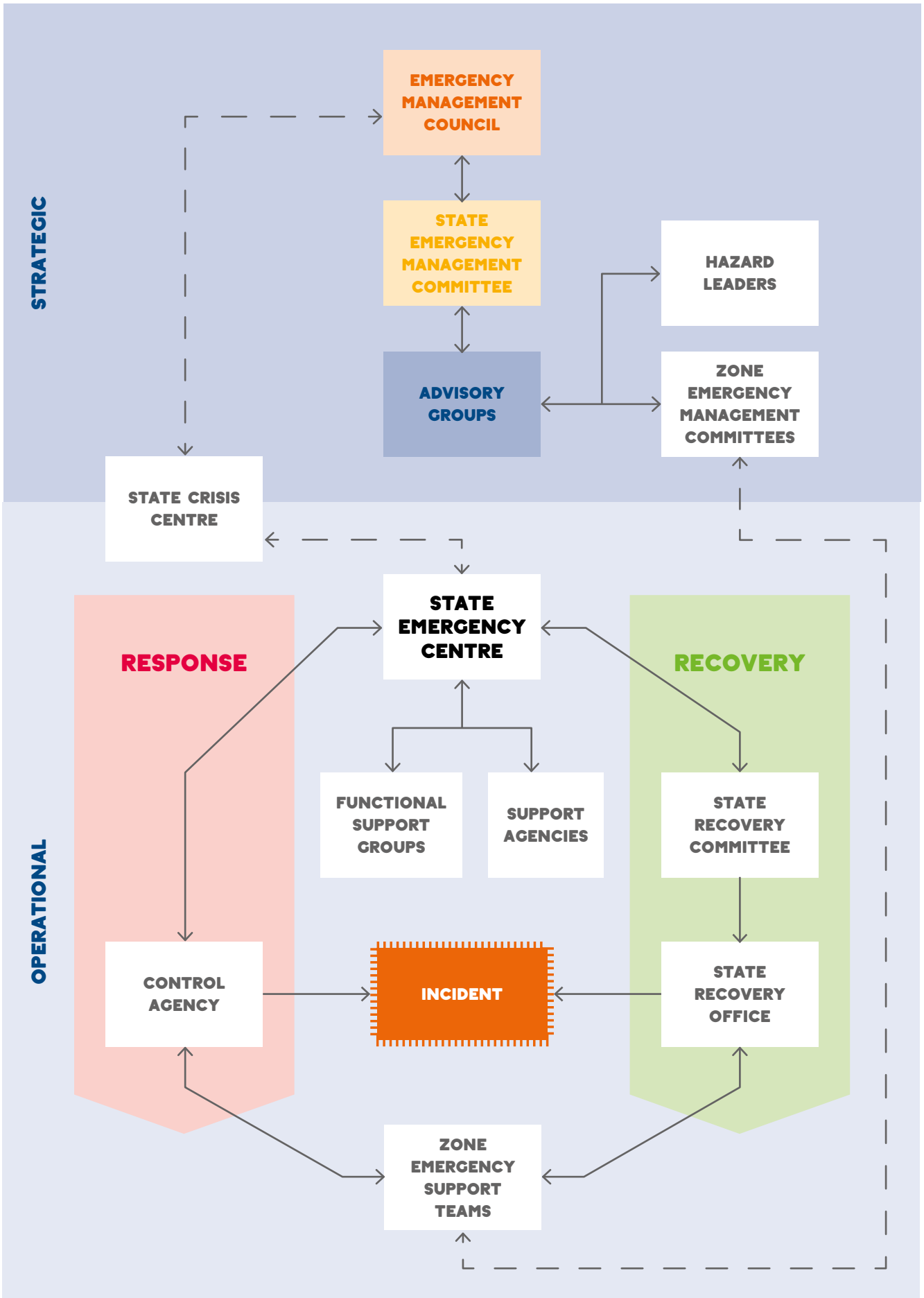
The *Emergency Management Act 2004* (the Act) provides the legislative framework for managing emergencies in South Australia. The Act establishes the strategies and systems to enable effective response to and recovery from an emergency event, as well as appropriate planning and preparedness to mitigate emergencies. In short, the Act ensures that South Australia has the capability to effectively manage any emergency, whether it is a natural event, a pandemic or a terrorist act, by making sure that the key elements of the state emergency management arrangements, including roles and responsibilities, are clearly articulated. These roles and responsibilities are contained within the SEMP.

## STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN SEMP AN OVERVIEW

The SEMP is a series of documents that provides an outline of emergency management in South Australia. The aim of the SEMP is to ensure that the state has effective arrangements in place to protect our communities and people. It provides a comprehensive, coordinated approach to emergencies across all sectors of the community, including state and local government, business, the non-government sector and individuals.

- **PART 1** – Overview
- **PART 2** – Arrangements
- **PART 3** – Guidelines and Frameworks
- **PART 4** – Plans

### OVERVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS





## **COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY**

South Australia recognises that effective emergency management requires a coordinated approach from the community, local government and state government to build community resilience, reduce the impact of emergencies and ensure a seamless transition to recovery after an emergency.

Increasing the involvement and awareness of local communities in emergency management is a critical step in improving preparedness for emergencies. All levels of government, households, business and volunteer organisations have a part to play in emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

All levels of government have a role in emergency management:

- **STATE:** The South Australian Government has primary responsibility for the protection of life, property and the environment in South Australia. The state government allocates resources, people and equipment and has developed plans and arrangements to, respond to, and recover from emergencies that threaten life or property.
- **LOCAL:** Local government support the emergency management arrangements in South Australia and have a particularly important role to play in mitigating risk, supporting emergency service agencies in response to an emergency and supporting the community during recovery. Local government also has a role to educate communities about emergencies and providing local knowledge to support responses to emergencies.
- **FEDERAL:** The Australian Government develops policies and delivers programs that maintain and strengthen Australia's national security and emergency management arrangements. South Australia has a strong working relationship with federal government agencies, including the Attorney-General's Department. Dependent on the scale of an emergency, the federal government will provide financial or other direct assistance to the state pursuant to existing governmental arrangements.

## ROLE OF BUSINESS

Business can play a fundamental role in supporting a community's ability to deal with emergency situations, by maintaining the provision of resources, expertise and other services through effective

business continuity planning. Businesses – particularly those that provide critical services such as telecommunications, gas, water and power – can contribute to a community's resilience by understanding the potential risks they face and ensuring they can continue to provide services during or soon after an emergency.

## ROLE OF NON GOVERNMENT AND VOLUNTEERS

Many non-government and community organisations are in the front line when it comes to emergency management and support the emergency management arrangements in the State. Australians turn to these organisations and agencies in times of trouble, and it is their work that helps communities to deal with an emergency situation. The South Australian Government will continue to partner with these agencies and organisations to strengthen the state's emergency management arrangements.

## ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS

Effective emergency management involves community members playing their part in each stage of the process when it comes to preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies. This can be done by individuals understanding their exposure to risk by accessing information resources available through government, non-government agencies and community organisations in terms of planning and preparation for protecting life and property. It involves becoming aware of the potential threats in localities and environments and is increased by familiarising with local community emergency management arrangements. For many people, it also involves becoming a volunteer.

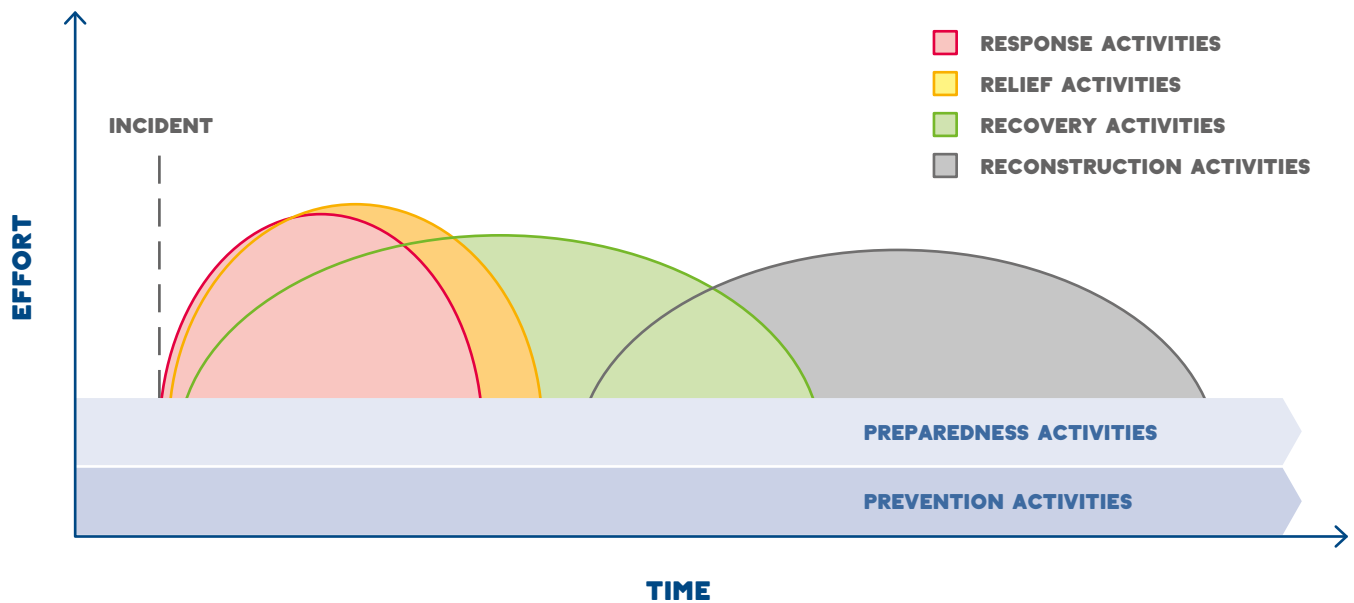
## **MANAGING HAZARDS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

The State Emergency Management Committee has identified nine key hazards or potential emergency situations in South Australia and has assigned specific agencies – known as ‘hazard leaders’ – to manage them.

**THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

<b>HAZARD</b>	<b>HAZARD LEADER</b>
Animal and Plant Disease	Primary Industries and Regions SA
Earthquake	Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
Extreme Weather	SA State Emergency Service
Fire - Rural	SA Country Fire Service
Fire - Urban	SA Metropolitan Fire Service
Flood	Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
Hazardous Materials	Safe Work SA
Human Disease	SA Health
Terrorism	SA Police

The South Australian emergency management arrangements use the 'all-hazards approach', which recognises that as a large range of hazards can have similar impacts similar arrangements are required to manage them - eg, for measures such as warning, evacuation, medical services and community recovery. The all-hazards approach involves arrangements for managing the large range of possible outcomes from an emergency.



South Australia's emergency management arrangements involve the following activities:

- **PREVENTION** - which seeks to eliminate or reduce the impact of hazards themselves and/or to reduce the susceptibility and increase the resilience of the community subject to the impact of those hazards
- **PREPAREDNESS** - which establishes arrangements and plans and provides education and information to prepare the community to effectively deal with emergencies
- **RESPONSE** - which activates preparedness arrangements and plans to put in place effective measures to deal with emergencies if and when they occur
- **RECOVERY** - which assists a community in the restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing, reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of the environment.

## CONTROL AGENCY RESPONSE

Control agencies are those agencies nominated in advance to take charge at an emergency. The control agencies are as follows:

TYPE OF EMERGENCY INCIDENT	CONTROL AGENCY
Aircraft accident	SA Police
Animal, plant & marine disease	Primary Industries and Regions SA
Bomb threat	SA Police
Earthquake	SA Police
Extreme Weather	SA State Emergency Service
Fire - Country	SA Country Fire Service
Fire - Urban	SA Metropolitan Fire Service
Flood	SA State Emergency Service
Food/drinking water contamination	SA Health
Fuel, gas and electricity shortages	Department of State Development
Hazardous materials emergencies	SA Country Fire Service or SA Metropolitan Fire Service
Human epidemic	SA Health
Information and communication technology (ICT) failure	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Marine transport accidents	SA Police
Marine Pollution	Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
Rail accident	SA Police
Riverbank collapse	SA Police
Road/transport accident	SA Police
Search and rescue – land and sea	SA Police
Search and rescue – structure (USAR)	SA Metropolitan Fire Service or SA State Emergency Service
Siege/Hostage	SA Police
Terrorist incident	SA Police

Authority for control carries with it the responsibility for tasking and directing other organisations according to the needs of the situation.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNINGS

Providing information to the community is a key aspect of emergency management. It can assist to prepare the community for an emergency and lead to safer environments and the development of appropriate community and individual plans. Providing information at the right time in the lead-up to an emergency can ensure that community and individual plans are implemented so as to reduce the risk to the community. Timely and accurate information provided to the community during an emergency can ensure that plans are applied appropriately, with the aim of minimising the loss of life and property. Providing information after an emergency can assist with the recovery of the community and reduce the ongoing effects of the emergency.

If an emergency has occurred or is occurring, the control agency will issue emergency information or warnings to communities. These warnings may include specific advice or directive actions that need to be taken. The South Australian Government manages the [Alert SA](#) website and the [Emergency Alert](#) service which may be used in an emergency to warn or alert the community.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Alert SA  
[alert.sa.gov.au](http://alert.sa.gov.au)

Emergency Alert  
[emergencyalert.gov.au](http://emergencyalert.gov.au)

South Australia Government Emergency Management  
[sa.gov.au/emergencies](http://sa.gov.au/emergencies)

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DISCLAIMER: Users should ensure that they have the current version before taking action based on this plan.

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