



# STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Part 3: Guidelines and Frameworks

Annex H: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DURING EMERGENCIES



**Government  
of South Australia**



## SEMP STRUCTURE

The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) is a four-part plan containing a range of documents that further detail strategies for dealing with emergencies in South Australia. The parts are described in more detail below.

### STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

#### PART 1: OVERVIEW

Provides a strategic overview of the state's arrangements for senior executive and community information.

#### PART 2: ARRANGEMENTS

Provides the overarching details of the arrangements and structures in place to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

#### PART 3: GUIDELINES AND FRAMEWORKS

Consists of the various guidelines and frameworks that have been developed to document known best practice for key aspects of emergency management. These guidelines and frameworks provide guidance regarding the development of arrangements, administrative functions and plans.

#### PART 4: PLANS

Consists of the standards required of the various levels of detailed plans for implementing the arrangements, including naming conventions, review guidance and templates. It also includes the suite of supporting plans for implementing the arrangements.

*Figure 1: The South Australian State Emergency Management Plan is actually a series of documents split over 4 Parts with a number of accompanying annexes.*

## SEMP REVIEW

The SEMC shall ensure that the SEMP is subject to a full review every five years. Ongoing updates and continual improvement is to occur in the interim period. Updates will be considered as below.

## SEMP UPDATES

Proposals to amend, review or update the SEMP are managed by the State Emergency Management Committee Secretariat within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Inquiries should be directed to:

#### State Emergency Management Committee Secretariat

Department of Premier and Cabinet

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**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DURING EMERGENCIES**

Emergencies have the potential to impact on the movement and safety of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In order to ensure community safety it is often necessary to alter the normal flow of traffic through or from an area affected by an emergency and its immediate surrounds.

The management of traffic at an emergency can be a complex task subject to a significant number of variables and many of these variables can continue to change during the course of the emergency. A continual risk assessment approach must be adopted by all people involved in traffic management.

Traffic management includes but is not limited to the restriction of access to an incident area, the closure of roads and the diversion of traffic on appropriate routes around an area affected by the emergency. A diversion route may be some distance from the actual emergency to ensure the safe and efficient regulation of traffic.

Traffic management often requires coordinated planning between the Control Agency, South Australia Police (SAPOL) and Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) Traffic Management Centre. SAPOL has the responsibility for assisting the public in emergency situations, regulating road use, and preventing vehicle collisions. DPTI Traffic Management Centre has responsibility for the provision of a safe and efficient road system and liaises with local governments who have responsibilities for their local road networks.

The return of communities in a timely manner following an emergency assists them to heal and recover, hence it is appropriate to enable certain classes of people into the emergency area where it is reasonably safe to do so and, doesn't adversely impact upon other legislative obligations.

The Principles that underpin traffic management during emergencies are:

- The safety of responders and the public is the highest priority in the management of traffic during an emergency
- Traffic management plans are to be implemented promptly and be flexible to accommodate any changing circumstances
- A continual risk assessment approach to traffic management must be adopted
- The Control Agency is responsible for traffic management at an emergency as part of their incident management arrangements
- The Control Agency can only undertake traffic management where it has the legislative authority to do so. If no legislative authority to undertake traffic management, the Control Agency may consult with the Coordinating Agency to determine an appropriate course of action
- The Control Agency may delegate traffic management responsibilities to another agency provided that agency has the necessary legislative authority and accepts the task
- For all emergencies SAPOL has an independent authority to close roads (including traffic diversion)

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- Any agency when developing traffic management plans and closing roads must consult with the DPTI Traffic Management Centre and the relevant local council as the local road authorities
- If heavy vehicles are to be detoured onto the local road network, the Control Agency is responsible for ensuring that the respective Council(s) is consulted, where practicable, prior to the heavy vehicle detour becoming operational
- The public is to be adequately informed of traffic management information with the provision of consistent information provided to all sources
- In consultation with the Control Agency, discretion is to be exercised (based on a continual risk assessment) to allow entry or re-entry to certain classes of people and vehicles at road closures where the entry is appropriate, reasonably safe to do so and doesn't adversely impact upon other legislative obligations. For example, access could be granted for:
  - emergency services
  - essential service crews
  - media representatives
  - people delivering relief and aid to residents and to animals
  - residents leaving and/or returning to their homes.
  - The restoration of normal traffic conditions is to occur as soon as practicable and reasonably safe to do so and, may involve the staged re-opening of roads.

### **Guidelines for Managing Road Closures during Emergencies**

The guidelines have been developed to provide guidance to Control Agencies that are responsible for determining the need for road closures or restricting access to an area during an emergency. They provide a risk based approach with the goal being to reopen roads to the community as soon as it is safe to do so.

#### **Introduction**

The State Emergency Management Plan sets out the policy/principles that underpin traffic management during emergencies. The principles reflect that the safety of responders and the public is the highest priority in the management of traffic during an emergency.

These guidelines have been developed to provide guidance to Control Agencies that are responsible for determining the need for road closures or restricting access to an area during an emergency (in the response phase). They provide a risk based approach with the goal being to reopen roads to the community as soon as it is safe to do so. It is acknowledged that actions taken to manage road closures will impact on the community, through the movement of people to and from their properties, homes and places of employment.

It is important for the Control Agency to ensure that the community has an understanding of when and why road closures may be established or restricted access may be applied. This

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includes an understanding of the “Primacy of Life” as the key principle and how this works for the community and how it impacts on what they can and cannot do in the circumstances.

All Control Agencies will utilise a continual risk based assessment applied to the development of road closure or restricted access plans, recognising these events can be complex with a significant number of variables that may change during the course of an emergency. The Control Agency will endeavour to return communities as soon as it is safe to do so. This is best achieved through the established Control Agency Incident Management Team where agencies can work together in understanding ongoing appreciations of the prevailing emergency situation. The Incident Management Team will work with South Australia Police, Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI), Local Government and other relevant agencies to effectively coordinate traffic flow in and out of the area of the emergency, with primary regard for public safety of emergency service workers and the community.

The aim is to restore to normal traffic conditions as soon as practicable and only when reasonably safe to do so. This may involve the staged reopening of roads.

**Controlled Access**

The ability for communities to recover from a disaster can be influenced by the ability of community members to access their property in a timely manner. There may also be a need for family and friends to support a community member who has chosen to remain with their property in the provision of food and other support. Also access may be required for provision of animal welfare e.g. feeding, watering, veterinary care etc.

The authority to control the movement of people and vehicles within and around the incident area is established by the powers of the Emergency Management Act 2004 and the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 for the Control Agency. Other applicable authorities for the control of traffic may be found under the Australian Road Rules or if the emergency is declared a major emergency or disaster under the Emergency Management Act 2004.

The Control Agency is responsible for identifying the requirement for road closures and/or restricted access to an area. Consistent with this, and based on an appreciation of the situation, the Control Agency may also direct that certain categories of people and vehicles are allowed entry or re-entry. Such a direction should only be made when the emergency situation risk has reduced to a moderate level (refer page 3) and when the circumstances are such that it is reasonable for certain categories of people and vehicles to be granted access without adversely impacting upon response and recovery operations and other legislative obligations. The Control Agency is to ensure that any direction is documented, reviewed and updated as required, and communicated to supporting agencies and the community.

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For example, access could be granted for (in no particular order):

- Emergency services
- Essential service crews
- Accredited Media representatives
- People delivering relief and aid to residents and to animals
- Residents and/or property owners leaving and/or returning to their homes

A tiered access system has been established to assist with directions allowing people access either into an area or out of an area and return. In all circumstances, access through a road closure or restricted access area, irrespective of the designated access level, will be subject to authorisation by the Control Agency in consultation with the relevant Functional Service(s) and Road authorities (DPTI and Councils) and the observation of any conditions imposed in allowing that access.

There are certain circumstances where the impact of emergencies on the community can be reduced by allowing certain categories of people and vehicles to travel on roads in the vicinity of the scene, including both before the emergency impacts and after the emergency has passed. Persons seeking access will need to provide justification and bona fide reasons for such access (e.g. resident returning home, owner of land or business in affected area). Any questions regarding the justification of persons seeking access will be referred to the Control Agency for a determination based on a balance of probability (i.e. more probable than not).

To assist the Control Agency in determining the appropriate level of access a Tiered Access System has been developed (refer attachment 'A'), the following is a summary:

**Tiered Access System:**

1. Emergency Services only
2. Essential Services Assessment and restoration activities, Media with an escort
3. Bona fide resident and/or land owner returning to actively protect/defend property, Media
4. Residents, Relief/Recovery Services
5. Road Open

**Bona Fide Definition:** A bona fide resident and/or land owner, is a person who can produce evidence that they live at an address (e.g. driver's licence or similar photo ID) or own property (e.g. photo ID and rates notice or similar) at an address within the area affected by the road closure and returning to actively protect/defend property.

**Media Access**

Media are permitted access through a road block at Tier 2 with an escort, such access will be subject to authorisation by, and in accordance with conditions set by the Incident Controller or delegated member under their control. The Incident Controller or delegate may

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authorise access for media personnel through a road block at Tier 2, under escort by approved Emergency Services personnel and any other conditions where they deem it safe and appropriate.

In all cases where media are permitted access, they must be in possession of appropriate accreditation, as approved by the Control Agency, and be equipped with and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment/clothing as may be directed by the Control Agency.

In determining whether to grant access to media at Tier 2, it is important for the Control Agency to consider the impact of the decision on residents who are being prevented from accessing their homes or property. Such a decision may give rise to heightened concerns and frustration when residents are refused access, whilst the media are being granted access before them.

**Risk Assessment**

The Control Agency shall continually apply a risk assessment process to both closing roads and then considering the opening. The general guidelines are:

- A. Identify the risks
- B. Analyse the risks
- C. Evaluate the risks
- D. Treat the risk/mitigate
- E. Monitor and review (continual process)

The risk assessment shall inform the development and implementation of the plan for road closures and opening or otherwise restricting access to the area. This plan must be continually monitored and updated as required.

The risk context should be 'An assessment of the risk of serious injury or death to Persons on the road (s) being assessed'.

The threats to be considered should include:

- 1. the primary hazard – the nature of the emergency (e.g. fire, flood, earthquake)
- 2. secondary hazards – eg fallen or falling trees, fallen/live power lines, abandoned/crashed vehicles on road, other obstructions, diminished visibility from smoke

The assessed risk level should be used to inform the decision to open roads as follows:

High	Tier 1 Emergency Services only
Significant	Tier 2 Essential Services Assessment and restoration activities, Media with an escort

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Moderate Tier 3 Bona fide resident and/or land owner returning to actively protect/defend property, Media  
Low Tier 4 Residents, Relief/Recovery Services  
Insignificant Tier 5 Road Open

A range of information/intelligence should be sought by the Control Agency to assist with the overall decision making relating to road closures and access restrictions. In order for this to be achieved, the Control Agency should liaise with support agencies and all stakeholders, including where possible information from the community, the Local Council or community leader(s).

Decisions regarding the opening of roads must be recorded by the Control Agency in the Incident Log to become part of the overall incident records, including the considerations contributing to the decision being made and outcome achieved. The Control Agency is to ensure the decisions are communicated to support agencies and the community.

**Process for Reopening roads**

The Control Agency should liaise with all key stakeholders and collect a range of intelligence from various sources to assist in the decision making process prior to reopening any roads that have been closed. This includes emergency service responders and resources in the field, Essential Services, Councils, Community Leaders/groups, Police and other emergency services. With this intelligence the Control Agency can then apply the risk assessment process to inform the decision making for amending the road closure status.

The following prompts are provided as a summary of what should be considered by the Control Agency prior to a road status being altered/opened. In particular going from Tier 1 to Tier 2, the Control Agency needs to provide advice to the essential services of risks/hazards to be aware of to allow them to undertake necessary actions:

- Has the level of risk posed by the emergency reduced
- Liaise with Bureau of Meteorology
- Liaise with Department of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure (DPTI) and/or Council(s) regarding
  - Any constraints to use the roads in question – e.g. restrictions of heavy vehicles (over mass, over dimensional, known bridge/structure load limits or road width limits
  - Implication of people and vehicles access upon wider network vehicle and traffic management
  - Inspection of road(s)
  - Is road surface sound and trafficable
  - Alternate entry and exit routes
  - What is the status of road furniture i.e. Guardrails, signs, guideposts etc.
  - Is there a risk that a bridge or culvert structure may be fire damaged/affected and its load bearing capacity is diminished or unknown

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- Consider requirement for temporary speed restrictions, traffic controls and associated signs
- What is the risk of falling trees
- Management of fallen trees
- Are other hazards present, this may include downed power lines etc. and what restoration is required
- Day versus night risks (this is an important point – without signs or guideposts, night time access places a bigger risk to people/vehicles)
- Is road surface ok
- Advice to users that it is open with/without restrictions and what precautions may be required due to residual risk and potential hazards in the areas
- Have the roads actually been traversed by emergency services personnel

### **Mapping**

To support the provision of information to the community, the Control Agency may develop and release maps showing the status of roads affected by the emergency, these maps should utilise the following symbology principles:

Those roads marked with red are closed due to safety issues - Tier 1

Those roads marked with orange indicate access is being assessed and may be open to access - Tier 2

Those roads marked with yellow indicate access is allowed for approved access - Tier 3;

Those roads marked with green are open to access - Tier 4, caution may be required whilst travelling these roads, speed and other restrictions may apply; and

Those roads marked without any colour are open with no restrictions on access – Tier 5

It is crucial that the Control Agency maintains an accurate and up-to-date map of the status of road closures and restrictions.

### **Communication**

Information regarding road closures will be provided by the Control Agency through a range of information sources, including the SA Police website, Control Agency websites, DPTI website, social media, main stream media, community meetings etc. Fact sheets regarding the return to home process (e.g. such as the CFS after the Fire fact sheet) will be available to assist the community.

It may be necessary for the Control Agency to provide a summary of advice regarding the residual risk the community needs to be aware of when returning to areas affected by fire, these may include:

- Dangerous trees which may have been burnt or partially burnt that may be unstable
- Powerlines that have been brought down or may be brought down, these should be considered live

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- Road conditions
- Potential for the fire to flare up
- High water across the road
- Unstable ground
- Wandering stock or animals
- Smoke which may reduce visibility
- Emergency Service vehicles and personnel working and/or moving through the area

**Legislation**

The following legislation provides the powers (to an officer of the Country Fire Service) to direct or prohibit the movement of persons, animals or vehicles, Section 97 Exercise of powers at scene of fire or other emergency, Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005. Other powers include the Australian Road Rules, Regulation 304 directions by a Police Officer.

The Emergency Management Act 2004 also sets out the powers of the State Co-ordinator and authorised officers Section 25.

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