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| Children's Education and Care Assurance |
| 30 January 2020**Bushfire, extreme heat and air quality information for ACT education and care services** **Emergency Management Planning** As you would be aware areas of the Canberra region are experiencing heavy smoke and bushfire threats. Children’s Education and Care Assurance (CECA) are encouraging providers, nominated supervisors and their teams to review their emergency and evacuation management policies and procedures to ensure that education and care services are well prepared to mitigate risks associated with bushfires.Education and care services are required to have policies and procedures in relation to emergencies and evacuations. See [Regulation 97](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2/div5) and [Regulations 168 to 172](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.7/div2/reg168) of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations.* **Providers must conduct a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that may impact on their service. Emergency and evacuation procedures must include:*** Instructions for what to do in the event of an emergency.
* An emergency and evacuation floor plan.
* Emergency evacuation floor plans are required to be prominently displayed near each exit of an early childhood education and care service’s premises, family day care residence and family day care venue.

**Emergency management policy and procedures, should consider:*** Consulting and keep up to date with relevant authorities for guidance and advice. For example, [ACT Emergency Services Agency](https://esa.act.gov.au/news-alerts) and [ACT Health](https://www.health.act.gov.au/).
* Identifying circumstances when decisions could be made to close the service and how closures will be communicated and managed.
* The approaches of other nearby facilities when developing your procedures for specific emergencies.
* Checking that your emergency contact details are up-to-date in your procedures and plans.
* An important step is to ensure that provider and services contact details are kept up to date by using the [National Quality Agenda IT System](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-quality-agenda-it-system).

**Monitoring Air Quality**Air quality ratings on the [ACT Health website](https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/environmental-monitoring/monitoring-and-regulating-air) provide an indicative view of the potential air quality issues within a broad geographic area. While this information is useful, it is not sufficient to guide local responses. For this reason, air quality monitoring is most reliably undertaken through direct observations, including by:* **Looking** – for visible signs of smoke or haze, check windows and doors are used appropriately, and ensure activities are not affecting the indoor air quality.
* **Smelling** – check for odours indicating that smoke may be present. Note specific areas/rooms that are affected.
* **Feeling** – Check air is flowing from vents.
* **Listening** – to the concerns of the children and staff. Do they experience any air quality related symptoms? Listen for unusual equipment noises that may indicate potential problems.

The air quality inside your service will also depend on the age, design and condition of the premises and the type and age of your air conditioning system. Some services have also invested in air purifiers. **To minimise the risk to children and staff:*** Stay indoors, with windows and doors closed.
* Stay in air-conditioned premises and switch the air-conditioner to ‘recycle’ or ‘recirculate’ to reduce the amount of smoke entering the building.
* Do not use evaporative cooling systems which draw air from outdoors.

Speak with families to ensure that medical plans for children with known conditions are up to date and that the correct medication is on hand. Ensure that all medical conditions are identified when enrolling new children. **Extreme Heat**In addition the temperature is [forecast](http://www.bom.gov.au/act/forecasts/canberra.shtml) to reach 40 degrees on Friday. Please review your extreme heat plan to ensure that you have appropriate strategies in place to keep staff and children safe and well. Information additional information related to bushfires, extreme heat, storms and air quality for ACT education and care services can be found attached. For enquires in relation to this notification please call CECA on (02) 6207 1114 or email CECA@ACT.gov.au.This email has been authorised by the ACT Regulatory Authority (CECA). CECA are responsible for administering the National Quality Framework within the ACT. |

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