NT EMERGENCY SERVICE

NT Emergency Management Planning Framework

NT Emergency Management Planning Framework

Document title	NT Emergency Management Planning Framework
Contact details	NT Emergency Service, Planning and Preparedness Command emergencymanagementplanning@pfes.nt.gov.au
Approved by	Chief Officer, NT Emergency Service
Date approved	4 March 2026
Document review	Every 3 years
TRM number	04-D26-6032

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	4 March 2026	Chief Officer, NT Emergency Service, Mr Wayne Snell	First version
1.2	12 August 2026	Manager Planning and Preparedness, Ms Gemma Bellenger	Updated TEMC emergency planning responsibilities to reflect current arrangements

Acronyms	Full form
AIDR	Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
AIIMS	Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System
BAU	Business As Usual
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
CA	Controlling Authority
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CM&C	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
DIC	Deputy Incident Controller
EM	Emergency Management
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
HMA	Hazard Management Authority
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Controller
IMT	Incident Management Team
LC	Local Controller
LEC	Local Emergency Committee

Acronyms	Full form
LRC	Local Recovery Coordinator
LRCC	Local Recovery Coordination Committee
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NTEMA	Northern Territory Emergency Management Arrangements
NTEMPF	Northern Territory Emergency Management Planning Framework
NTES	Northern Territory Emergency Service
NTFES	Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Service
NTFRS	Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTNHRMF	Northern Territory Natural Hazard Risk Management Framework
NTPF	Northern Territory Police Force
OILL	Observation, Insight, Lesson Identified, Lesson Learned
PPRR	Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery
REC	Regional Emergency Controller
RRC	Regional Recovery Coordinator
RRCC	Regional Recovery Coordination Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOG	Senior Officer Group
TEMC	Territory Emergency Management Council
TC	Territory Controller
TEP	Territory Emergency Plan
TRC	Territory Recovery Coordinator
UN	United Nations
VUCA	Volatile, Uncertain, Complex & Ambiguous (in the context of EM environments)

Term	Definition
Disaster	An event that requires a significant coordinated response using the combined resources of the Territory, non-government entities within the Territory, and resources from outside the Territory.
Disaster Management	See Emergency Management.
Disruption	An unplanned event that significantly interrupts the normal operation of a system, process, or business, preventing it from continuing as usual. (*ISO 22300:2018 Security and Resilience: Vocabulary*).

Emergency	An event that requires a significant coordinated response using the combined resources of the Territory and non-government entities within the Territory.
Emergency Management	A range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment; the organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies. Emergency management involves the plans, structures and arrangements which are established to bring together the normal endeavours of government, voluntary and private agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to deal with the whole spectrum of emergency needs including prevention, response and recovery. (Sometimes used interchangeably with the term disaster management).
Emergency Planning	Establishing plans, structures and arrangements for future emergency and recovery operations (NT Emergency Act 2013).
Event	An occurrence, whether natural or caused by human acts or omissions, that: (a) causes or threatens to cause: (i) loss of, or damage to, property; or (ii) loss of life or injury or distress to persons; or (b) in any way endangers the safety of the public.
Exposure	The extent to which an organisation (or community, asset, resource, systems, or geographic area) is subject to an event (or hazard).
Hazard	Any potential source of harm (or damage, loss, or suffering).
Incident	An event, occurrence or set of circumstances that has a definite spatial extent, a definite duration, calls for human intervention, has a set of concluding conditions that can be defined, and is or will be under the control of an individual who has the authority to make decisions about the means by which it will be brought to an end.
Plan Owner	The plan owner is the person, or position within an organisation, assigned responsibility for developing, maintaining, and reviewing a specific plan, ensuring it is fit for purpose, updated as needed, and implemented effectively.
Planning and Preparedness Command	Command (organisational unit) within NTES that provides support for EM Planning in the Northern Territory.
Plan Review	Activity undertaken to determine the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of a specified emergency management plan.
Redundancy	The ability to maintain operations without significant deterioration in quality or value through additional capacity or substitution (Infrastructure Australia *Resilience Principles*).
Risk	The effect of uncertainty on objectives.
Risk Analysis	Process to comprehend the nature of risk and to determine the level of risk. It provides the basis for risk evaluation and decisions about risk treatment.
Risk Assessment	A process that collects information via risk identification, analysis and evaluation to assign values (relative, qualitative, or quantitative) to risks for the purpose of informing priorities, developing or comparing courses of action, and informing decision making.
Risk Control	A measure to modify a risk (the results of risk treatment).
Risk Management	Coordinated activiti.es to direct and control an organisation (or community) with regard to risk.

Risk Management Framework	Set of components that provide the foundations and arrangements for designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving risk management processes throughout an organisation (or other entity such as a state or territory).
Risk Treatment	A strategy that involves deliberate action taken to reduce potential for loss, maintain risk at acceptable levels, or enhance potential for benefits, in a manner consistent with objectives, desired outcomes, and the management context.
State of Disaster	A state of disaster declared under Section 21 of the *NT Emergency Management Act 2013*.
State of Emergency	A state of emergency declared under Section 19 of the *NT Emergency Management Act 2013*.
Vulnerability	The properties of something that create susceptibility to a source of risk that can lead to a consequence.
WebEOC	Web- based Emergency Operations Centre (Web is the online platform used for the coordination of multiagency response to, and recovery from, an emergency event.

Sources

Definitions based on *Emergency Management Act 2013*, Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (AIDR) Emergency Management Glossary and AIDR Handbook Collection, Australian and International Standards on Security & Resilience and Business Continuity, NT Natural Hazard Risk Management Framework (NTNHRMF), and from various other sources and modified for NTEMPF context.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction *7*

2. The NT Emergency Management Planning Framework *11*

2.1. Context and background **11**

2.2. Purpose **11**

2.3. Scope **12**

2.4. Audience **12**

2.5. Vision and objectives **12**

2.6. Framework principles **13**

2.7. Alignment to national standards, frameworks and guidance **17**

2.8. Emergency management planning in the NT **18**

2.8.1. Emergency management legislation and guidance 19
2.8.2. NTEMPF integration with NTEMA 21
2.8.3. Emergency management planning roles and responsibilities 22
2.8.4. Councils & committees 27
2.8.5. Planning governance 28
2.8.6. Types of emergency plans 30
2.8.7. Supporting guidelines (Territory-wide guidelines and frameworks) 35
2.8.8. Australian Government emergency plans 35
2.8.9. Integrating NT emergency plans across sectors and agencies 36
2.8.10. Plan activation, escalation, and triggers 37
2.8.11. Financial arrangements 39
2.8.12. Security classification of plans 39
2.8.13. Emergency management planning training 39
2.8.14. Planning methodology 39
2.8.15. Continuous improvement 40

2.9. Framework governance **44**

2.9.1. Framework ownership 44
2.9.2. Framework review frequency and process 45
2.9.3. Evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework 45

1. Introduction

The NT Emergency Management Planning Framework (NTEMPF / Framework) serves as a guiding structure to create emergency management (EM) plans and coordinate emergency management planning, policies, procedures and enact legislation within the NT.

The Framework explains the principles, processes, and responsibilities needed in planning for effective emergency prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (PPRR). This Framework is the basis for all NT Government (NTG) EM plans, ensuring consistency and collaboration across different organisations. Non-government and private organisations are also encouraged to use the NTEMPF for enhanced collaboration.

The main goals of this Framework are to ensure planning efforts meet the needs of the community, organisations, and the NTG, and the Framework acts as the "blueprint" for creating, implementing and maintaining plans.

The Framework:

- helps coordination by clarifying planning roles, responsibilities, and relationships among different agencies, sectors, and levels of government.
- encourages a collaborative, integrated and effective approach to EM planning through a common approach, language, and methodology.
- improves preparedness by identifying key components of plans, such as risk assessment, resource allocation, training, and exercises.
- supports scalability and flexibility, allowing plans to adapt to different sizes of incidents, from small emergencies to major disasters, and to accommodate evolving threats or changes in EM policy.
- promotes continuous improvement by integrating lessons learned from past incidents, exercises, and evaluations to refine EM planning; and
- aligns EM efforts with relevant laws, regulations, and standards, promoting accountability and legal compliance.

The Territory faces unique challenges, that include financial and physical resource limitations, a large geographic area, a relatively small population base, and centralisation of EM capacity within the Darwin region. The Framework considers these challenges to assist efficient and effective EM planning for the NT.

In EM planning, engaging with stakeholders is critical. The Framework encourages inclusion of community members, private sector partners, and all relevant stakeholders in planning and decision-making. This ensures plans meet diverse needs and capabilities.

Users of the Framework include any person or organisation responsible for EM planning within the NT, particularly those with defined roles in legislation or the Territory Emergency Plan (TEP). Users may include, but aren't limited to:

- EM planners from NTG, the private sector, non-government organisations (NGOs), or the community;
- Those with specific accountabilities under the law or TEP, such as a Controlling Authority (CA), a Hazard Management Authority (HMA) or a functional group including participating and supporting organisations.
- Those responsible under the legislation, TEP or this Framework for creating, reviewing, endorsing, approving or executing NTG emergency plans; and
- Any person, organisation or entity involved in EM within the NT.

The Framework structure is:

- Section 1 is a brief introduction
- Section 2 details the Framework and its connection to EM planning within the NT, and to the NT Emergency Management Arrangements (NTEMA). These arrangements explain key inputs into EM planning, including legislation, roles, responsibilities, and governance.

Further useful information is included in the NT EM plan governance matrix is shown below in Table 1. This can be used as a ready reckoner for EM plan types within the Territory, and links directly to the information on types of emergency plans.

For more information outside of this Framework, please contact the NT Emergency Service (NTES) Planning and Preparedness Command via emergencymanagementplanning@pfes.nt.gov.au.

Table 1: Summary of NT EM plan governance (repeated in Section 2.8.4: Types of Emergency Plans)

Plan type	Responsible Plan Sponsor	Accountable Plan Manager	Consult	Endorsers	Approver	Informed
Territory Emergency Plan (TEP)	Commissioner NTFES	Chief Officer NTES	NT EM practitioners	All who commit resources to the plan SOG	TEMC	NT EM practitioners Federal and State stakeholders Territorians
Regional emergency plan	Territory Controller	Regional Controller	NT EM practitioners	All who commit resources to the plan	Territory Controller	NT EM practitioners Territorians
Local emergency plan	Territory Controller	Local Controller	NT EM practitioners Local groups Territorians	All who commit resources to the plan	Territory Controller	NT EM practitioners Territorians
Agency internal plans	Agency CE / Commissioner	Officer Delegated by Responsible CE	NT EM practitioners Internal managers and staff	Internal to agency	Agency CE or delegate	Internal to agency
Hazard management plan	HMA CE or Commissioner	Officer Delegated by Responsible CE	NT EM practitioners Internal managers and staff	All who commit resources to the plan	HMA CE or Commissioner	NT EM practitioners
Functional group plan	Lead agency CE	Officer delegated by responsible CE	NT EM practitioners Lead agency stakeholders Participating/supporting organisations	All who commit resources to the plan	Lead agency CE	NT EM practitioners Lead agency stakeholders Participating/supporting organisations

Plan type	Responsible Plan Sponsor	Accountable Plan Manager	Consult	Endorsers	Approver	Informed
Regional recovery action plan	Territory Recovery Coordinator (CE CM&C)	Regional Recovery Coordinator	Local Recovery Coordinator NT EM practitioners Affected communities	Regional Recovery Coordination Committee (RRCC) All who commit resources to the plan	Territory Recovery Coordinator	RRCC & LRCCs NT EM practitioners Affected communities
Local recovery action plan	Territory Recovery Coordinator (CE CM&C)	Local Recovery Coordinator	Affected communities Regional Recovery Coordinator NT EM practitioners Local emergency committees (LECs)	Local Recovery Coordination Committee (LRCC) All who commit resources to the plan	Regional Recovery Coordinator	RRCC & LRCCs NT EM practitioners Affected communities

2. The NT Emergency Management Planning Framework

Emergency management plans are key to preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the various types of emergencies and disasters that could occur throughout the Territory.

This Framework gives structure to NT EM plans and the planning process, while explaining plan relationships to legislation, policies, and procedures within the Territory.

To support this Framework, the NTES has a step-by-step method to creating new plans or revising existing ones and ensures a common approach to EM plans that must work together. For further information please refer to the "*Planning Guide for NT Emergency Management Planners"* located on WebEOC.

The Framework also provides for continuous improvement, ensuring plans can be updated with the learnings from the most recent activation of arrangements within plans and exercise outcomes.

This Framework has a strong focus on collaboration and communication around emergency planning. No single person or agency can manage every emergency or disaster that happens within the Territory, it's a shared responsibility. Effective collaboration is vital to the best possible emergency management in the future, where hazards are likely to be both more frequent and more severe.

2.1. Context and background

Due to its geography, climate and sparse population the NT faces unique emergency management challenges. Territory emergency practitioners must plan for a large geographic area with limited resources.

These constraints, coupled with the concentration of much of the EM capacity within the Darwin area, create logistical and resourcing challenges. With limitations on both physical and human resourcing, good planning that enables rapid decision-making is needed. This framework aims to support this approach.

2.2. Purpose

The EM planning process is the collective and collaborative effort by which agreements are reached and documented between people and organisations to meet their communities' or entities' EM needs. (Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience [AIDR], 2025).

This framework is designed to support the Territory with effective EM plans, and to continuously improve the quality of emergency planning.

Effective emergency planning:

- Helps protect lives, livelihoods, critical infrastructure, property and the environment
- Enhances understanding of the risks and disruptions that a community or organisation may face
- Identifies and documents strategies for preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies
- contributes to reducing the likelihood and consequence of emergencies for individuals and communities.

Ultimately, the purpose of this Framework is to facilitate effective emergency planning to create a more prepared and resilient Territory.

2.3. Scope

The scope of this Framework includes EM plans and planning within the NT.

The scope does not include details about the NT Emergency Management Arrangements (NTEMA) outside planning functions. Those details can be found within legislation, the TEP, or agency guidelines and procedures. This may include details such as powers under legislation, and how to manage an emergency event through chains of command and coordination arrangements.

Authors and reviewers of emergency plans should make themselves familiar with these arrangements.

2.4. Audience

The audience for this Framework includes any person or organisation responsible for EM planning within the NT. While primarily written for those who write, review, activate and execute EM plans, the Framework will also help anyone involved in NT emergency management in general.

Primary users of the Framework may include:

- Controlling Authorities (CAs)
- Hazard Management Authorities (HMAs)
- Functional groups and supporting organisations
- Territory Emergency Management Council (TEMC)
- Any person, organisation or entity involved in EM within the Territory

The Framework also provides supporting documentation for those new to EM planning in the NT and includes links and references to other sources of information to assist EM planning.

2.5. Vision and objectives

The NTG's vision for emergency management, and therefore this framework, is to enhance EM planning within the Territory to better protect lives, livelihoods, critical infrastructure and the environment from all hazards.

The objectives of this Framework are to:

- Enhance EM planning through:
    - Improving emergency planning across all phases of the EM cycle, including Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR).
    - Enhancing the accessibility and use of EM plans throughout the Territory.
    - Explaining the EM planning governance arrangements and assisting in strategic planning.
    - Increasing the understanding of EM planning within the NT, including when to develop and activate plans, and when to escalate beyond the plan for further assistance.
    - Promoting the use of trigger points for action at strategic and operational levels.
    - Providing tools and templates to minimise repetition and increase the consistency and effectiveness of plans.
- Enhance collaboration and communication by:
    - Encouraging the communication of EM plans and planning efforts to the broader community.

    - Encouraging the community to use existing plans and make their own.
    - Strengthening collaborative relationships through EM planning.
    - Helping to coordinate efforts, integrate plans, and build trust between stakeholders.
- Enhance emergency management by:
    - Supporting emergency managers and decision makers.
    - Providing emergency managers with guidance and tools for developing emergency plans for PPRR.
    - Improving the use of EM resources and help clarify current and future needs.
    - Helping the NT adapt to a future with higher instances of multiple, concurrent, or larger hazards.
    - Reducing disaster risk within the Territory.

These objectives help to bring about a safer, more disaster resilient NT.

2.6. Framework principles

The principles of this Framework are based on the nationally supported emergency planning principles published by the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (AIDR).

The table below lists the AIDR EM planning principles and provides guidance on applying each principle within the NT.

Table 2: AIDR principles for EM in the NT

AIDR Principle	NT intent
Emergency planning is risk informed. Planning is based on a risk management study.	Planning is based on latest available risk information, including risk assessments completed with the Northern Territory Natural Hazard Risk Management Framework (NTNHRMF). This makes sure planning addresses all hazards, or is tailored to identified hazards, and provides an understanding of vulnerabilities and local priorities, supporting a risk-based approach to planning across all phases of the EM cycle. As a minimum, the information supplied in the NTNHRMF should provide a base for further risk assessment. A full copy of the NTNHRMF, which is also suitable for assessing non-natural hazards, can be obtained from the NTES Planning and Preparedness Command.

AIDR Principle	NT intent
Emergency planning reduces unknowns. Planning increases understanding of risks, vulnerabilities, and treatment options across the social, built, economic and natural environments.	Reduces unknowns by using the Consequence Categories within the NTNHRMF. These help to identify and understand risks across the social, built, economic, and natural environments. The risk framework guides the development of tailored treatment options, ensuring risks are effectively managed and resilience is strengthened across these critical areas. Emergency planning provides a better understanding of place-based risk and conditions, and local resources available to assist before, during and after emergencies.
Emergency planning is collaborative and inclusive. Planning involves consultation and engagement with those affected by the plan.	Collaborative and inclusive by engaging any stakeholder with actions within a plan, such as local councils, First Nations communities, government and non-government organisations, industry representatives and at-risk cohorts. This process (outlined in detail in the *Planning Guide for NT Emergency Management Planners)* ensures plans reflect the needs, knowledge, and priorities of those affected, particularly in remote and culturally significant areas, fostering shared responsibility and tailored resilience strategies.
Emergency planning is strategic. Planning develops strategic objectives, relationships and networks.	Strategic through forming a planning team to guide the process and by developing strategies and arrangements to achieve clear goals. This approach focuses on building strong relationships and networks, and reducing future disaster risk through planning, preparedness and resilience activities. While planning is strategic, some plans must also function operationally, describing tasks and actions for when a plan is activated.
Emergency planning is solutions oriented. Planning develops agreed approaches to managing risks and consequences.	Focuses on solutions by developing strategies and arrangements to manage risks, hazards and their consequences. It covers the entire PPRR cycle to create practical, agreed-upon approaches addressing local challenges. EM planning ensures all stakeholders are aligned on the actions needed to reduce emergency risk, and to minimise consequences during emergencies. A risk assessment under the NTNHRMF can help with this approach, identifying risk treatments designed to reduce risk and mitigate consequences. These risk reduction actions are then assigned to those able to provide the best solution.

AIDR Principle	NT intent
Emergency planning is iterative. Learning from each step informs next steps.	Iterative through embracing continuous improvement. Each step, from risk assessments to response efforts, gives valuable lessons to inform the next phase of planning. This process ensures strategies, arrangements, and plans are refined through a constant process of monitoring and review. Continuous improvement increases the capability of the plans to help manage future emergencies.
Emergency planning enables adaptive capacity. Planning develops frameworks that provide a base on which to build flexible and adaptive solutions.	Adaptive and flexible solutions must be in place to address the challenges of a large geographical area and centralised EM resources. As no two emergencies are the same, plans outline key arrangements, assets, and resources to help emergency managers make informed decisions. Plans should follow a strategic, principles-based approach, allowing for flexibility as situations change. Creating incident action plans, that fit within this planning framework, allows adaptation as events unfold. Long-term resilience planning can also promote climate resilience and disaster risk reduction, boosting the NT's ability to adapt to changing environments.
Emergency planning is a shared responsibility. Planning documents actions to be undertaken by a wide range of people/entities.	Shared responsibility of all individuals, agencies and organisations that may be impacted by, or asked to respond to, an emergency. Maturity in EM shared responsibility means that everyone understands their own responsibility in an emergency, and the responsibility of others. All stakeholders, including communities and individuals, are enabled to prevent, prepare for, and plan for how they will safely respond to and recover from an emergency situation. And they each understand their risk. PPRR tasks should be assigned to those best able to undertake them, with a clear understanding of everyone's roles. For shared responsibility to function well, collaboration and trust are key. This ensures all stakeholders are aware of risks and understand their roles in preparedness and response. Agencies, organisations, and individuals must be able to meet their assigned responsibilities before a plan is approved, to ensure effective action during an emergency. A list of publicly available emergency plans within the NT is available through the NTES Emergency Management website.

Additional principles beyond the AIDR principles that are important within the NT include:

NT Principle	NT intent
Adapting to climate change	Climate change should be considered within emergency planning, as climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction actions can often align. Understanding climate change impact on hazards requires emergency plans to be adaptable (e.g., increasing average temperature and number of heatwaves, rising sea levels, and increasingly extreme rainfall, droughts and fire behaviour).
Sustainability	EM plans should be as sustainable as possible, both in the sense of protecting the environment, but also in the impacts they have on emergency managers and responders, particularly during longer emergency events. Finding ways to protect staff health and welfare in prolonged events will mean more sustainable EM planning and practice.
The Framework supports that all-hazards & hazard-specific planning are complimentary approaches, and can exist in the same suite of plans, or sometimes in the same plan.	All hazards planning generally occurs prior to an event and provides a plan that addresses a form of disruption through either human-made or natural hazards. In general, these plans provide a strategic foundation for dealing with a number of hazards and are usually supplemented with operational plans (e.g. incident action plan) as the nature of the hazard or disruption becomes known. Hazard specific planning can occur prior to an event or as the nature of the hazard or disruption is better understood. Hazard-specific planning usually attempts a more operational approach, where responses to a specific hazard (either human-made or natural) are outlined in more detail. Hazard-specific plans may rely more heavily on existing process or procedures as a result. Both types of planning are supported by this Framework and are needed to help provide an appropriate set of emergency plans for the NT.

A good plan may not guarantee a good outcome, but does enable improved PPRR, better role and responsibility understanding, and better interoperability between agencies acting within the plan.

A plan that hasn't been previously agreed to by those involved, or indeed no plan, will usually result in much poorer EM outcomes. The overall intent of these planning principles is to help create a safer, more disaster resilient NT, through effective emergency planning, ultimately leading to more effective EM.

2.7. Alignment to national standards, frameworks and guidance

The Framework draws from many other sources of information to help emergency planners consider the wider picture when creating plans. These sources include:

- Information from the United Nations
- International standards (risk management via the NTNHRMF)
- National policies and guidance, and
- Territory legislation and strategic guidance.

The key publications that play an important role in informing and supporting this Framework are shown in Figure 1.

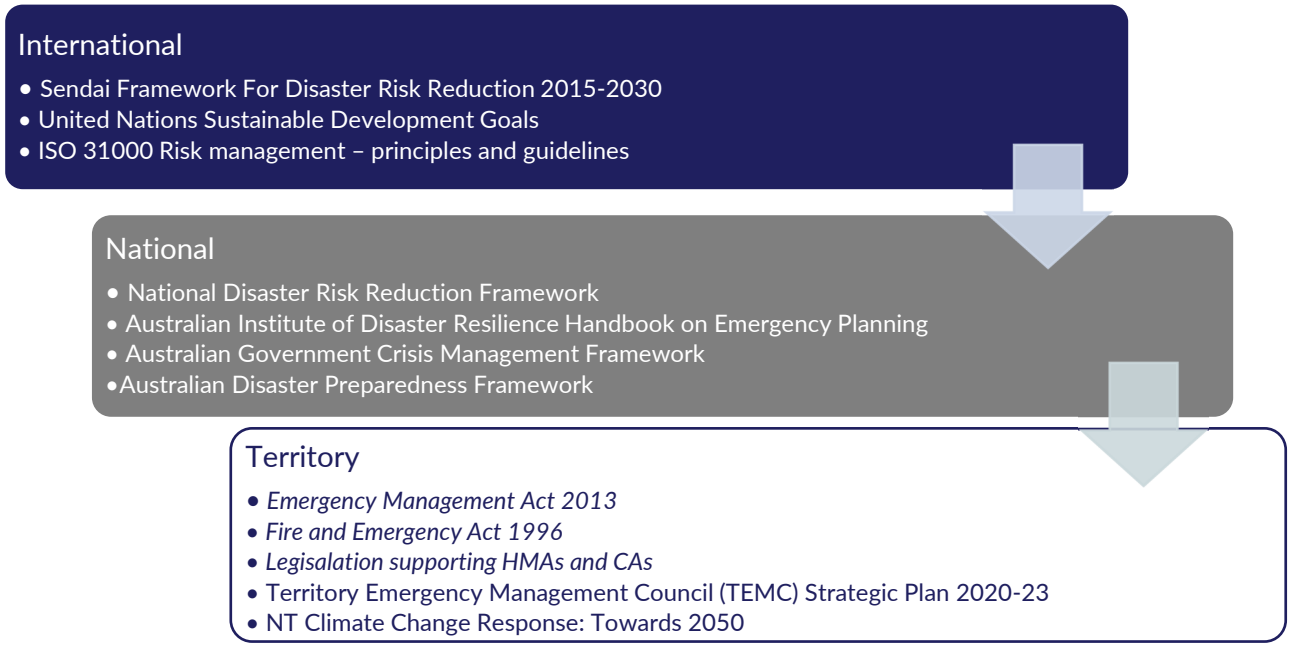


Figure 1: Key international, national and Territory EM strategies and guidance

2.8. Emergency management planning in the NT

This section of the Framework highlights the key legislative, policy, and strategic documents that guide EM planning in the Territory and how the Framework integrates with the NTEMA.

This Framework provides a link between the NT's EM legislation, arrangements, and plans as shown in Figure 2.

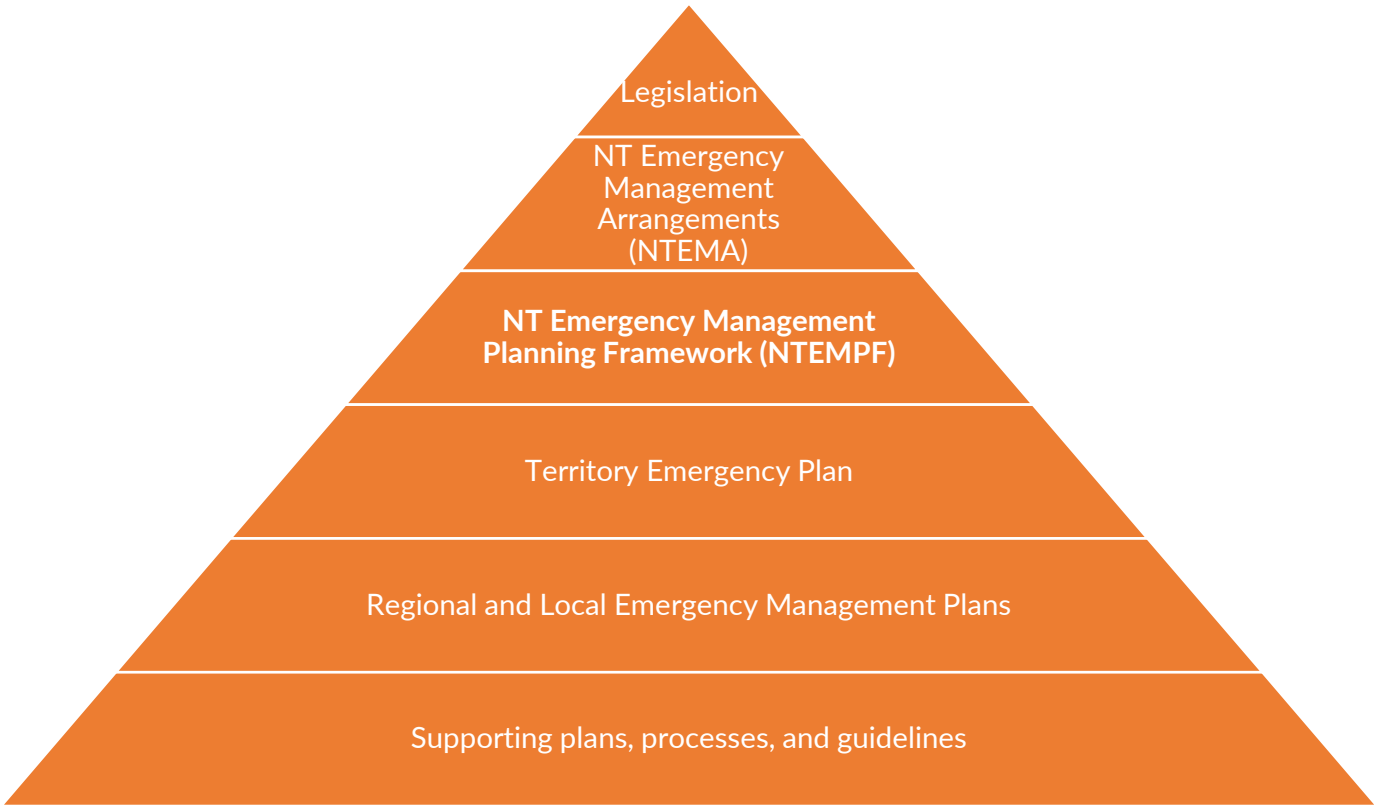


Figure 2: NT emergency management planning

The *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act) provides the overarching legislative framework for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery within the NT.

Considering all relevant legislation in plans ensures both the Framework and plans are legally sound and strategically aligned, and should include:

- *Bushfires Management Act 2016*
- *Control of Roads Act 1953*
- *Environment Protection Act 2019*
- *Essential Goods and Services Act 1981*
- *Fire and Emergency Act 1996*
- *Fisheries Act 1988*
- *Information Act 2002*
- *Livestock Act 2008*
- *Marine Pollution Act 1999*
- *Plant Health Act 2008*
- *Public and Environmental Health Act 2011*

- *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998*
- *Weeds Management Act 2001*

Commonwealth legislation must also be considered, such as:

- *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*
- *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Australia) for biosecurity hazards.
- *Cyber Security Act 2024* (Australia)
- *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* (Australia)

The NTEMA are outlined within the TEP which details the arrangements specific to the NT, and the national inputs to the NTEMA.

The EM plans required within the NT are also outlined within the TEP. They include the NTG based plans (Territory, regional and local emergency plans), as well as hazard management and functional group plans.

Supporting plans, processes and guidelines are held within organisations to underpin these plans. These may be focused on EM specifically or may be business-as-usual (BAU) functions providing services that assist EM.

Organisations and individuals, such as NGOs, private businesses, and households are also encouraged to create their own emergency plans to help them be better prepared, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

2.8.1. Emergency management legislation and guidance

2.8.1.1. Emergency Management Act 2013

The Act provides the legislative authority for emergency planning within the Territory across the four emergency management phases of PPRR. The Act outlines the NTG's authority and requirement to plan, and the obligations of the plans, including regular reviews. It also describes roles and responsibilities within EM, including the responsibilities for specific roles within EM planning.

The Act highlights legislative requirements for escalation of emergency events to disasters, as defined under the Act. This focuses on emergency powers, granted to authorised EM officers during an emergency or disaster.

2.8.1.2. Other relevant legislation, including Australian Government legislation and frameworks

EM plans under this Framework mainly derive their authority from the Act and the TEP, but also from other relevant legislation as listed in Section 2.8.

Although the NTG has primary responsibility for EM in the NT, Australian Government legislation:

- Provides requirements for PPRR for specific hazards, particularly those that may impact national security
- Defines the arrangements for the NT to seek assistance from the Australian Government in a crisis or emergency

Relevant Australian Government legislation includes:

- *Emergencies Act 2004*
- *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020*
- *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018*
- *Cyber Security Act 2024*
- Relevant *Defence legislation including Defence Act 1903* and *The Defence (Special Undertakings) Act 1952*

Relevant frameworks and policies from the Australian Government include:

- Australian Government Crisis Management Framework which includes Defence Assistance to Civilian Communities (DACC) Initiative
- National Coordination Mechanism

Authors of EM plans, particularly hazard-specific plans, should know the relevant legislation, frameworks and policies, and any EM provisions within. They then need to consider both the NTG and Commonwealth laws, under which their organisation operates. The list of legislation within this Framework is not exhaustive, and when developing a new EM plan for the NTG, authors must review legislation as part of establishing a project plan. The TEP includes sources of legislation that should be considered for all NT EM plans.

2.8.1.3. Comprehensive approach

The comprehensive EM approach recognises the four phases (PPRR) that help reduce or eliminate the impact of hazards and enhance the resilience of communities and the environment. These activities include:

Prevention/mitigation - seeks to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of an event impacting individuals or organisations, and/or to reduce the vulnerability and build the resilience of the community.

Preparedness - establishes arrangements and plans and provides education and information to prepare agencies and the community to deal effectively with emergency events.

Response - activates plans/activities to effectively manage emergency events.

Recovery - restores the built, social, economic and natural environments of communities affected by an emergency event, and where possible, build back better.

An all-hazards approach, often used in strategic EM plans, considers and manages the large range of hazards and their possible effects on the community. This concept is useful given a large range of hazards impact communities in similar ways and may include a focus on addressing the consequences of a hazard regardless of the specific cause.

Many hazards need specific response and recovery measures and usually need specific prevention and mitigation measures. Hazard-specific plans and arrangements are designed to detail these measures.

Operational plans, such as an incident action plan (IAP), may focus on a single event, hazard, or phase within the comprehensive approach.

2.8.1.4. Integrated approach

The integrated approach to EM ensures engagement occurs with the whole EM community, including government (including Local Government), all relevant organisations, the business sector and the community.

The EM context for specific agencies and organisation varies by the type of plan and may include:

- ensuring the continuity of its business or service
- protecting its own interest and personnel
- protecting the community and environment from risks arising from the activities of the organisation
- protecting the community and environment from credible risks

When developing EM plans, start with the plan objectives, and then define an integrated approach to including all relevant stakeholders within the planning. Further information on this approach is outlined in the *Planning Guide for NT Emergency Management Planners*.

2.8.2. NTEMPF integration with NTEMA

This Framework covers NT EM planning (developing, testing and using plans), but does not include the NTEMA – being the activation and execution of powers under the legislation, the functioning of NTG agencies or their interoperability. The NTEMA are detailed within the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, and the TEP.

Plans developed under this Framework should tightly integrate with the NTEMA to ensure all relevant detail is included, and response/recovery activities mesh as well as possible with the NTEMA.

Key integration points of this framework are:

- Alignment with roles and responsibilities: the Framework supports the defined roles and responsibilities in the NTEMA, so agencies and organisations understand their duties and how they work together before, during and after emergencies.
- Scalable and flexible approach: the Framework gives guidance for developing plans that are scalable to the magnitude of incidents, and consistent with the arrangements' all-hazards approach. This allows management of emergencies ranging from local events to Territory-wide disasters.
- Shared resources and coordination: the Framework promotes effective use of shared resources, such as personnel, equipment, and information, by directly linking planning efforts to the coordination mechanisms in the arrangements.
- Governance and accountability: the Framework includes governance structures from the arrangements, such as the TEMC, making sure plans are reviewed and endorsed at the right levels.
- Continuous improvement and lessons learned: the Framework includes ways to incorporate lessons learned from incidents managed under the arrangements, promoting iterative improvement of the plans and procedures under this Framework.

This integration makes EM efforts in the NT more effective and interoperable, ensuring a unified approach to PPRR.

2.8.2.1. TEMC Strategic Plan

The TEMC Strategic Plan (2026) is a key document for steering EM arrangements in the Territory towards building safer and more resilient communities. The plan outlines the priorities, strategies and targets for building community and promotes good practice in EM that aligns with the National Principles of Emergency Management.

The TEMC Strategic Plan has informed the principles that underpin this Framework and is currently under review.

2.8.3. Emergency management planning roles and responsibilities

This section describes relevant positions, agencies, and councils/committees and their role in EM planning in the Northern Territory.

The Act and the TEP are the basis for NT EM positions, organisations/agencies, and councils/committees, functions and powers.

Table 3 below shows a summary of this information for EM planning including positions, authorities, organisations and agencies, and councils and committees.

Table 3: Roles and responsibilities (further detail provided below)

Role	Type	EM planning responsibilities
Territory Controller (TC)	Role	Controls and directs emergency operations in the NT Ensures an emergency plan is prepared for each region and locality, and consider these plans for approval
Commissioner NTFES	Position	Ensures an emergency plan is prepared for the Territory (Territory Emergency Plan) Reviews the TEP at least once every 12 months Determine the policy and procedures of the NTES Coordinate any Commonwealth support provided to the Territory for emergency planning, emergency operations and recovery operations To ensure emergency plans are prepared for the Territory Advise and assist Regional and Local Controllers in the performance of their functions
Territory Recovery Coordinator (TRC)	Role	To coordinate and direct recovery operations in the Territory Appoint Regional Recovery Coordinator
Regional Controller (RC)	Role	Supervises emergency operations in a region Ensure the Territory Controller instructions, policies and procedures are complied with
Regional Recovery Coordinator (RRC)	Role	Direct and coordinate recovery operations in accordance with any approved recovery plan Ensure the TRC instructions, policies and procedures are complied with Appoints and directs the Local Recovery Coordinator
Local Emergency Controllers (LC)	Role	Assists the Territory Controller with the development and review of local emergency plans Supervise emergency operations in the locality Has input into regional emergency plans as a statutory member of the Regional Emergency Committee

Role	Type	EM planning responsibilities
Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC)	Role	Assists the RRC or TRC in the development and implementation of the local recovery action plan
Incident Controllers (ICs)	Role	Understands the relevant approved plans available to them to help control an incident Responsible for the management of all incident control activities including overseeing development and approval of Incident Action Plans Reports to the Controlling Authority regularly on the progress of incident management Undertakes activities as directed by the Controlling Authority or the Territory Controller for emergencies under the legislation
Northern Territory Emergency Service (NTES)	Organisation	Supports Commissioner in development of emergency plan for the Territory. Oversee the governance of the NT emergency plans. Support rescue operations, emergency operations and recovery operations, whether or not a state of disaster, state of emergency or emergency situation exists To advise, assist, educate and train members of the public and organisations, including agencies and volunteer organisations, in emergency planning and operations.
Controlling Authority (CA)	Authority	Commands, controls and coordinates resources to manage technical aspects of response operations and supress immediate consequences, and is responsible for appointing the Incident Controller Activate and implement the approved emergency plan. Must consult with agencies and organisations where the CA has allocated roles and responsibilities
Hazard Management Authority (HMA)	Authority	Coordinating and preparing plans and capabilities to respond to a specific hazard

Role	Type	EM planning responsibilities
Territory Emergency Management Council (TEMC)	Council	Advise, assist and, if necessary, direct the Territory Controller, the Territory Recovery Coordinator and the NTFES Commissioner in the exercise of their powers and the performance of their functions Advise the Minister in relation to emergency planning, emergency operations and recovery operations in the Territory Approves the TEP and may receive other emergency plans in the NT to note
Regional Emergency Committee (REC)	Committee	To direct resources for emergency operations in the region Must be consulted in the creation or revisions of regional emergency plans
Regional Recovery Coordination Committee (RRCC)	Committee	Advises and assists the Regional Recovery Coordinator in their role, including the establishment and implementation of a regional recovery plan
Local Emergency Committee (LEC)	Committee	If established, should be consulted when creating or reviewing a local emergency plan, including endorsement for any coordination of resources within their control
Local Recovery Coordination Committee (LRCC)	Committee	If established, advises and assists the Local Recovery Coordinator in their role, including the establishment and implementation of a recovery plan
Senior Officers Group (SOG)	Group	Provides support and advice to the TEMC on strategic and operational matters (which includes review and recommendation of emergency and hazard plans) Members advise their agency leadership on EM matters including EM planning
Functional groups	Group	Lead the development, review and execution of functional group plans Lead functional group members should be consulted on plan review and creation and endorse plans where the Plan commits agency or organisational resources Consulted when another NT EM plan references activation of the functional group
Territory Administrator	Position	Responsible for declaring a State of Disaster under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*

Role	Type	EM planning responsibilities
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services	Position	Responsible for declaring a State of Emergency or Emergency Situation under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*
Commissioner NTFES	Position	Ensure that an emergency plan is prepared for the Territory
Territory Controller	Position	Must ensure that an emergency plan is prepared for each region and locality.
Chief Officer NTES	Position	Operational responsibility for the NTES Executive officer of TEMC
Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of NTG Agency	Position	During a declared emergency, must act in accordance with any relevant approved emergency plan

2.8.4. Councils & committees

2.8.4.1 Territory Emergency Management Council

The Territory Emergency Management Council (TEMC) directs resources for emergency response and recovery operations and may advise the TC or TRC in relation to planning or exercising their powers.

The TEMC considers amendments to the TEP for approval, and may note other hazard-specific, functional group plans, and other emergency plans in the NT.

Members and roles of the TEMC are authorised within the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and outlined in the TEP.

2.8.4.2 Regional Emergency Committee

A Regional Emergency Committee (REC) advises and assists the RC of a region (Northern or Southern). Membership includes the RC and LCs, representatives from NTES, HMAs, functional groups, a nominated person from each local government council in the region, and a representative from the non-government welfare agencies. The REC must be consulted in the creation or revisions of regional level emergency plans.

Members and roles of the REC are outlined in the Act and the regional emergency plans.

2.8.4.3 Regional Recovery Coordination Committee

A Regional Recovery Coordination Committee (RRCC) is established when a Regional Recovery Coordinator (RRC) is appointed for a region to advise and assist them in their role. The RRCC also helps establish and implement recovery plans.

Members and roles of the RRCC are outlined in the Act and the relevant regional recovery plan.

While Recovery is coordinated at the regional level by the RRCC, it is led and delivered at the local level by the Local Recovery Coordination Committee (LRCC).

2.8.4.4 Local Emergency Committee

A Local Emergency Committee (LEC) advises and assists the LC of a locality. It is established on the direction of the TC. If an LEC is established, they should be consulted when creating or reviewing a local emergency plan, including endorsement for the coordination of any resources in their control.

Members and roles of the LEC, are authorised by the Act and outlined in the local emergency plans.

A *Local Emergency Committee – Terms of Reference 2025* document is available through the NTES.

2.8.4.5 Local Recovery Coordination Committee

A Local Recovery Coordination Committee (LRCC) may be established when an LRC is appointed for a locality to advise and assist them in their role. The LRCC also helps establish and implement recovery plans.

Members and roles of the LRCC are outlined in the Act and the relevant local recovery plan.

While Recovery is coordinated at the regional level, it is implemented at the local level through the LRCC, enabling a community-led approach.

2.8.4.6 Senior Officers Group (SOG)

The Senior Officers Group (SOG) is co-chaired by representatives from the NTES and the CM&C.

The role of the SOG is to provide support and advice to the TEMC on strategic and operational matters to ensure responsibilities defined by the Act are met. The SOG undertakes a preliminary review of all hazard management and functional group plans prior to submission to TEMC.

SOG members may also advise their agency leadership on strategic and operational matters that may affect EM planning.

2.8.5. Planning governance

Governance for emergency plans within the NT lies with the plan owner. Plan owners are described in Table1: Types of plans within NT EM planning.

The approval process for emergency plans follows a structured approach:

1. **Development or review and drafting** – Plans or plan reviews are initiated by the plan sponsor and assigned to the plan owner. Triggers for plan reviews can be from legislation, policy, emergency event after action reports, as an outcome from an exercise or review, or at the discretion of the plan owner.
2. **Consultation** – Stakeholders (e.g., emergency committees, community groups, First Nations representatives) provide input through any reasonable means of consultation, including surveys, workshops and forums.
3. **Review and revision** – Feedback considered and either integrated to refine and improve the plan or not accepted and where practical the contributors are advised.
4. **Endorsement and approval** – The plan undergoes endorsement by those who must commit resources to the plan to ensure compliance with standards and legislation.
5. **Implementation, training and exercising** – Stakeholders are informed, plans are distributed, and those with responsibilities under the plan receive training/exercised to ensure effective execution.
6. **Monitoring and review** – Plans are periodically updated to reflect evolving risks and requirements, with review cycles detailed within each plan. Review cycles should be determined with plan stakeholders, with a final decision by the plan owner.

A NT EM plan governance matrix is shown at the start of this Framework in Table1, and covers the categories of EM plans in the NT, including who is responsible and accountable for plan creation and review, who should be consulted on plans or plan changes, who endorses and approves, and who should be informed once a plan or plan review is complete.

2.8.5.1 Plan Sponsor (Accountable for Plan)

The Plan Sponsor is the person within an organisation responsible for producing an emergency management plan. They may not write the plan themselves, but they are responsible for the plan being in place and should have oversight of the planning process.

For example, for the TEP, the Commissioner NTFES is responsible for a plan being in place. The Commissioner delegates the writing and consultation of the plan to staff within the NTES but retains oversight of the process and needs to review and understand the finished plan before approval.

2.8.5.2 Plan Manager (Administration for Plan)

The Plan Manager is the person who manages the process of writing or revising an emergency plan. They may delegate tasks within the plan to others but must maintain close supervision of the plan creation or revision process to ensure the plan matches the outcomes required by the plan sponsor.

For example, for the TEP, the NTES Chief Officer manages creation or revision of the plan, delegating appropriate tasks to the Manager Planning and Preparedness, including consultation with other key stakeholders and contributors.

2.8.5.3 Consulted

Those impacted by the plan, including those who are likely to implement actions under the plan, must be consulted to ensure they are capable of fulfilling their expected functions within the plan. This is particularly true for changes to an existing plan where more or less is expected from a participating organisation. This is likely to happen during plan drafting and amendment, which allows those consulted to have some say in the final shape of the emergency plan.

For example, for the TEP, all CAs, HMAs, and functional groups would expect to be consulted on any changes to their roles or commitments under the plan before the plan went for endorsement.

2.8.5.4 Endorsers

Those who will commit resources (whether human, financial, or physical resources) should endorse the plan. A record of endorsement will assist the plan approver to have confidence that the plan can be implemented in an emergency, when a rapid implementation is likely to be expected.

For example, for the TEP, any agency or organisation that is going to commit resources to actions under the plan should endorse the plan. The representative from the organisation should have sufficient authority to commit organisation resources in an emergency event.

2.8.5.5 Approver

The plan approver must have sufficient authority to commit resources of the relevant agency and participating organisations. This includes an Incident Controller, who is expected to command and control resources from their own organisation but also coordinate resources from potentially many other organisations that they contribute toward the desired outcomes from the plan.

For example, for the TEP, the TEMC approves the plan, and has representatives from the government agencies and departments that contribute the resources to enable the TEP to achieve its aims. Agency CEs responsible for functional groups or HMA are to table the plan at TEMC to note prior to final approval by the relevant CE/Commissioner.

2.8.5.6 Informed

Those who may be impacted by the plan should be informed when the plan is created or changed. This can be done dynamically (e.g. in training sessions) or passively (e.g. by publishing the plan on a website).

For example, for the TEP, the plan is published via the NTPF/NTFES website after each review.

2.8.6. Types of emergency plans

The NT is exposed to many types of hazards, emergency events and disasters. A comprehensive set of plans allows for better PPRR and reduces the impact to the people of the NT.

For a list of current plans, and how they relate to each other in the NT, please see the TEP.

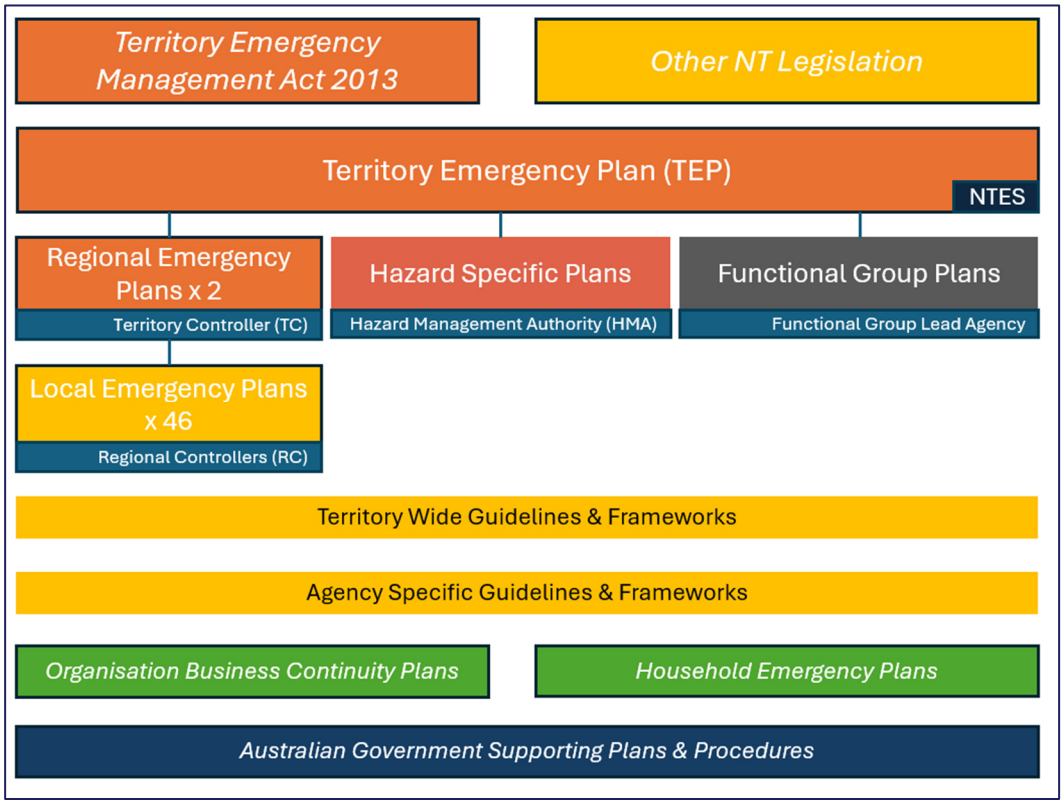
Within the NT, there are four broad categories of EM plans:

- Statutory plans, required by legislation. In the NT, these are primarily geographic plans that address all hazards in a specific geographic area
- Hazard-specific plans detail how to manage an event or incident caused by a specific hazard within the PPRR phases.
- Functional group plans detail how a function is delivered within the NTEMA, most frequently as a service to an IC or RC.
- Agency plans detail how an agency continues to provide services during an event

The plans differ in approach within each of these categories. For example, the TEP covers a very large area and is more strategic, while a local emergency plan covers a smaller area and is more operational.

Outside of the legislated NTEMA, there is an additional category of private emergency plans for businesses, non-government agencies, and householders who take the excellent step to establish emergency plans. Private emergency plans may cover any of the elements listed above, including how a private organisation responds to continue operating in an emergency event, or how a household protects their lives and property. While official NTG plans are listed within NTG planning arrangements, private emergency plans may stand alone or interface with official NTG plans through public information provided.

The TEP contains details of geographic plans (regional and local), agencies designated as HMAs, and a list of functional groups and functional group lead agencies.



2.8.6.1 The Territory Emergency Plan

The TEP describes the principles for EM in the Northern Territory, based on the Act. It identifies responsibilities for response and recovery operations, as well as the lead NTG agency for controlling a response to an emergency event. It outlines:

- EM regions and boundaries
- Localities requiring a local emergency plan
- Controlling Authorities and Hazard Management Authorities for identified hazards
- Functional groups and their lead agencies
- Mechanisms for engaging with the Australian Government EM Arrangements and relationships with other jurisdictions.

The TEP is a strategic plan, detailing the Territory-wide arrangements, rather than outlining individual event actions.

The Territory Emergency Plan is published on the NTES website.

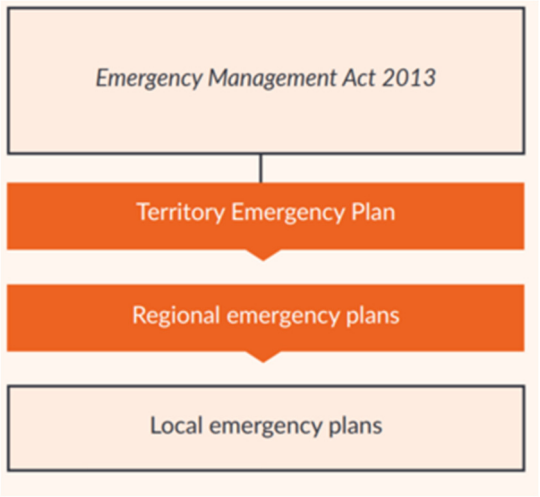


Figure 4- NT Emergency management plans

2.8.6.2 Regional emergency plans

The regional emergency plans describe the all-hazard approach within each region. Regional plans are based on gazetted EM regions outlined in the TEP and provide the foundational documents for many response activities within the NT.

Building on the Act and the TEP, the regional emergency plans:

- Describe the regional context
- Outline the risk assessment for that region
- Detail the prevention and preparedness arrangements for each region
- Identify roles and responsibilities including the Regional Controller and the Regional Emergency Committee
- Identify plan activation stages and triggers for activation stage changes
- Identify the agencies and resources available within the region for PPRR
- Identify the requirement for recovery and how to transition from response to recovery
- Provide an evacuation guideline and a summary of response and recovery activities

Most emergency events are managed at the regional level, and these are considered tactical plans.

2.8.6.3 Local emergency plans

Local emergency plans provide a basis for coordinated PPRR activities in the identified locality.

Building on the Act and the TEP, the local emergency plans:

- Give locality context including climate, geography, local sites of importance, and critical infrastructure
- Outline the risk assessment against hazards that may impact the locality
- Detail the prevention and preparedness arrangements for the locality
- Detail the response and recovery arrangements

- Identify plan activation stages and triggers for activation stage changes
- Include a functions table based on resources available to assist the locality
- Detail prevention and mitigation strategies
- Detail action plans for identified hazards
- Provide a locally adapted evacuation and sheltering guideline
- Provide a summary of response and recovery activities

Although most emergency events are managed at the regional level, local plans are operational plans. They give detail an incident controller at regional level can use within an emergency event that affects a locality.

2.8.6.4 Hazard-specific plans

Hazard-specific plans and protocols outline the PPRR arrangements for the management of incidents arising from a specific hazard.

HMAs outline control, coordination and support during hazard-specific emergencies through the hazard-specific plan, such as major power outage or human disease (e.g. a pandemic). Each hazard-specific plan is assigned to the HMA that holds the responsibility for developing and maintaining the plan.

Hazard-specific plans may reference both NT and national legislation, where legislative requirements are provided from the Australian Government (e.g. cyber security, biosecurity, aerodrome emergencies).

Hazard-specific plans should provide information on different levels of response, including an agency BAU response, escalation of an event, emergency or disaster at the Territory level, triggering the NTEMA.

Hazard-specific plans should also outline specific roles and responsibilities that may exist outside of an all-hazards arrangement for the NT. This may be when Australian Government legislation requires a specific role or responsibility, or where liaison with the Australian Government is required.

Hazard specific planning can occur prior to an event or as the nature of the hazard or disruption is better understood, as an incident action plan.

A list of developed hazard-specific plans within the NT is provided within the TEP.

2.8.6.5 Functional group plans

Functional group plans detail the structure, governance, roles and responsibilities of each functional group.

Functional groups act as a method for supporting a coordinated approach to operations that are outside the capacity or capability of a CA and HMA in an emergency. Functional groups have specific expertise, capability and capacity to provide functions and services to support response and recovery operations.

Functional group plans detail how a function is delivered within the NTEMA. When a functional group is activated, a member of the group will liaise with the Incident Management Team.

Functional groups are not typically part of the NTG structure. Therefore, plans detail activating, leading, coordinating, and providing services into the NTEMA, and include funding arrangements and guidelines with member organisations.

All organisations participating and contributing to a functional group should have input into the Functional Group plan. Those who can activate functional group plans, including Controlling Authorities and Hazard Management Authorities, should be part of the plan approvals process.

A list of functional group plans required within the NTEMA is provided in the TEP. Functional group plans must fulfil and address the responsibilities assigned within the TEP.

2.8.6.6 Incident action plans

Incident action plans (IAPs) are situational plans developed once the nature of an incident is understood. In some jurisdictions, this is called immediate planning rather than deliberate planning (which is planning ahead of a disruption or incident).

IAPs rely on the underpinning information within deliberate emergency plans (such as the TEP), to provide a tailored response to a specific emergency event or disaster. Templates for IAPs, and the IAPs themselves, are stored within WebEOC.

2.8.6.7 Contingency plans

A contingency plan is developed to assist with managing a gap in capability to ensure services are maintained. Contingency planning can be undertaken as deliberate planning or, more frequently, as immediate planning if a gap is identified during an activation.

2.8.6.8 Local recovery coordination plans

Local recovery coordination plans (local recovery plans) are based on regional recovery coordination plans and are adapted once the impacts of a disruption to a single community are understood.

The decision to use a local or regional recovery plan rests with the Territory Recovery Coordinator.

Local recovery plans rely on the underpinning information within structured emergency plans (prepared ahead of time, such as the TEP and hazard specific plans), to provide tailored recovery from a specific emergency event or disaster. Templates for recovery plans, and the recovery plans themselves, are stored within WebEOC.

Within the Territory, recovery is locally coordinated, regionally managed, and directed at the whole-of-Territory-level.

2.8.6.9 Regional recovery coordination plans

Regional recovery coordination plans (regional recovery plans) are situational plans developed once the impacts of a disruption to multiple communities are understood.

The decision to use a local or regional recovery plan rests with the Territory Recover Coordinator.

Regional recovery plans rely on the underpinning information within structured emergency plans (prepared ahead of time, such as the TEP and hazard specific plans), to provide tailored recovery from a specific emergency event or disaster. Templates for recovery plans, and the recovery plans themselves, are stored within WebEOC.

Within the Territory, recovery is locally coordinated, regionally managed, and directed at the whole-of-Territory-level.

2.8.6.10 Agency or organisation internal plans

Agencies and organisations, whether involved in the NTEMA formally or not, should have their own internal plans for managing incidents, emergencies, or organisational disruptions as required under the *Work Health Safety Act (NUL) 2011* and regulations or industry specific standards.

These may include BAU operating procedures and business continuity (or service continuity) plans detailing how the agency or organisation will continue functioning and providing services in the event of a disruption. They may also include internal emergency plans providing a plan specifically for emergencies ranging from a single structural fire to a Territory-wide natural hazard weather event.

Organisations may find the templates and checklists available within the NTEMA useful in developing their plans, but should adapt them for their own approvals, governance, and operational processes.

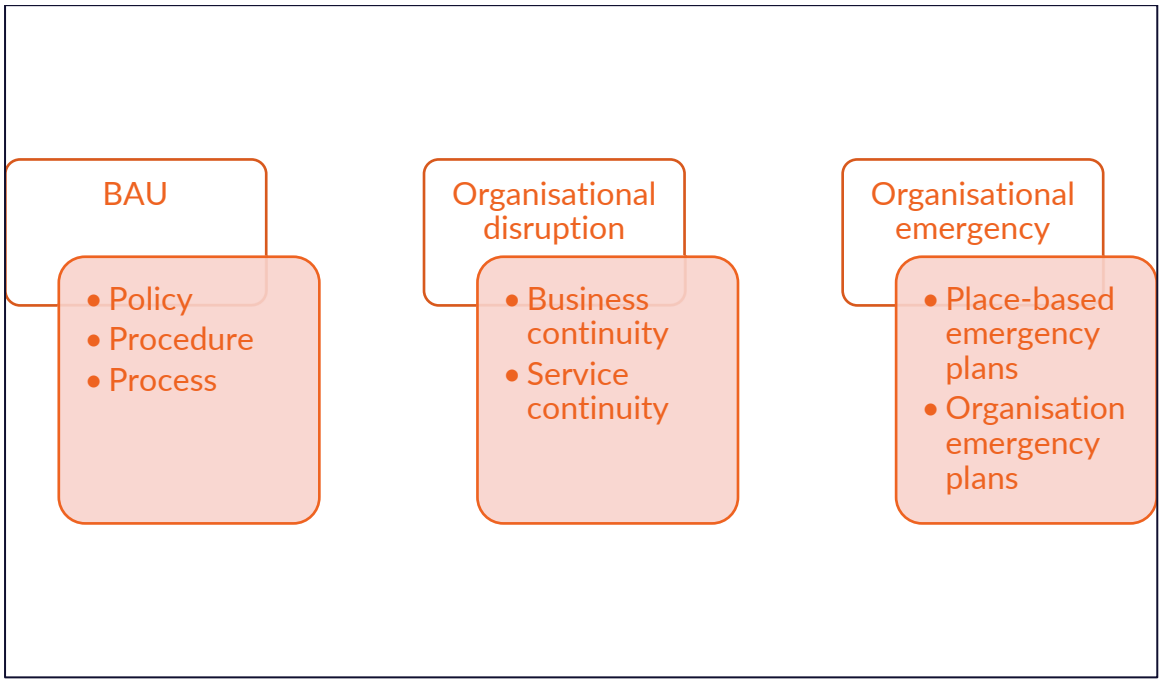


Figure 5: Sample escalation within agency or organisational plans

2.8.6.11 Business policies, procedures and processes

Agencies should review their plans not just for single agency response but to ensure they can integrate with other agencies during a widespread event. Agencies, businesses or organisations need to review their policies, procedures and processes to ensure they function effectively in an emergency.

For some organisations, existing procedures may be suitable for use in emergency, but additional resources, equipment or safety precautions may need to be activated.

2.8.6.12 Business continuity plans

Business continuity planning (BCP) enhances community resilience by ensuring disaster management stakeholders (government, NGOs and businesses) can continue their core business following any critical incident or disruption.

The process of BCP helps organisations to:

- Understand the risks of disruption (risk assessment/risk management)
- Highlight the critical functions the organisation provides (critical function assessment/critical services/prioritisation)
- Understand the impact a disruption may have on them (business impact assessment)
- Develop mitigations (pre-event) and contingencies (on-event) that allow business and service recovery (disaster recovery)
- Document business continuity plans that allow a return to operations, or a level of operations, as rapidly as possible

2.8.6.13 Business emergency plans

Businesses, agencies and organisations are required to have emergency plans under NTG legislation, such as a fire evacuation plan for buildings and businesses. Organisations may choose additional plans based on information supplied through the NTG for both natural and human-made hazards. Examples include bushfire planning, flood planning, biosecurity, cyber security and other hazards, whether listed within the TEP or not. The organisation will need to decide which, if any, of these plans requires an interface to the NTG plans.

2.8.6.14 Household emergency plans

As a shared responsibility, householders and community members are encouraged to take part in emergency planning within the NT. SecureNT publishes templates for household emergency plans to assist householders to prepare for emergency situations.

2.8.7. Supporting guidelines (Territory-wide guidelines and frameworks)

Guidelines play a critical role by providing detailed, practical instructions and good practices to assist agencies, organisations, and individuals within EM planning. While this Framework establishes the principles, structures, and objectives, the supporting guidelines translate these into actionable steps and are vital to effective emergency operations.

Guidelines are the practical link between the strategic intent of the Framework and its real-world application, ensuring effective execution of plans.

Guidelines also ensure EM activities follow a uniform approach across agencies and organisations, promoting interoperability during multi-agency responses. They provide specific, step-by-step processes for key tasks, such as risk assessments, resource allocation, evacuation planning, and community engagement, making it easier for stakeholders to meet their responsibilities.

Guidelines should consider the unique environmental, cultural, and logistical challenges of the NT, ensuring relevance to local hazards, demographics, and geography. They also serve as foundational materials for training programs and scenario-based exercises, enhancing readiness and competency among EM personnel.

By aligning with legislative and policy requirements, guidelines assist NT organisations in meeting their statutory obligations under the Act, and other relevant policies and guidelines.

A list of Territory-wide guidelines and frameworks is available in the TEP. Agency guidelines must be sourced through the relevant agency.

2.8.8. Australian Government emergency plans

The TEP identifies how the Australian Government Emergency Management Arrangements interface with the NTEMAs.

When writing Territory-specific plans, including hazard management plans, integration with Australian Government plans and arrangements should be considered and documented. For example, a declared Australian biosecurity event may have impacts on the NT without triggering the wider NTEMA.

The Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF) outlines the Australian Government's approach to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from crises, and short-term events. It details how the Australian Government can help support the Territory with coordinated assistance during a crisis and to protect Commonwealth interests. This extends across all hazards whether natural or human-made, and includes events related to cybersecurity.

A list of Australian Government emergency response plans is available on the Department of Home Affairs website. Of note, the Australian Government Disaster Response Plan 2020 (COMDISPLAN) outlines the request for assistance process with the Australian Government.

The Australian Government's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) works with the NT across the emergency management continuum, contributing to longer-term crisis risk reduction and resilience building.

A list of relevant Australian Government emergency plans is included within the TEP.

2.8.9. Integrating NT emergency plans across sectors and agencies

Collaboration is vital to the success of EM and EM plan integration and in providing a more effective service to the people of the NT.

The principles and actions in this Framework can help sectors and agencies create plans that integrate more effectively with each other.

The keys to effective coordination are collaboration, consultation and communication, taking place at all stages of plan development, review, and use. Minimum requirements for plan consultation are outlined within in Table1: Types of plans within NT EM Planning. However, plan authors and reviewers are encouraged to exceed the minimum requirements, improving the interoperability and suitability of their plans.

In the NT, AIIMS principles and roles for incident management should be integrated into emergency plans wherever possible to assist agency interoperability.

Any contradiction between a statutory plan and a hazard management plan should be resolved through the documented review and approval process or the IC escalated to the TC during plan activation.

2.8.9.1. Statutory plans

Statutory plans under the NT EM Act, take an all-hazards approach to managing any incident or emergency within a specific geographic area.

The IC working under a statutory plan can request the activation of any other plan within the NTEMA. These requests need to follow the appropriate channel identified within the plans themselves.

2.8.9.2. Hazard management plans

HMAs are jointly responsible with the CA for coordinating and preparing plans and capabilities to respond to a specific hazard.

The IC working under a hazard management plan can request the activation of any other plan within the NTEMA. These requests need to follow the appropriate channel identified within the plans themselves.

2.8.10. Plan activation, escalation, and triggers

Each plan should include details on how arrangements within the plan are activated, how it moves through different activation stages (including triggers for change in activation stages), and what actions and communications should occur at each stage.

In the NT, the stages of activation are listed in Table 5.

Table 5: NT activation stages

Stage	Name	Description
Stage 1	Alert	Declared when a Hazard Management Authority or Controlling Authority receives warning of an event which, in their opinion, may necessitate an emergency management response.
Stage 2	Standby	Declared when the Incident Controller considers an emergency operation is imminent. During this stage passive emergency measures are commenced.
Stage 3	Activation	Declared when active emergency measures are required.
Stage 4	Stand-down response operations and transition to Recovery	Declared when the Incident Controller assesses immediate risk has reduced. If the impacts of the emergency require ongoing early relief or recovery coordination, the Incident Controller will advise the Director, Emergency Management, Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (CM&C) in accordance with Section 5.15 of the TEP.
Stage 5	Recovery	Declared if ongoing coordination of recovery operations is required.

In general, these activation levels are used in response and recovery. Longer-term prevention and preparedness activities outlined within EM plans do not require the triggering of activation stages.

Activation of response arrangements happens when there is a need to:

- monitor potential hazards or emergency response operations
- support or coordinate emergency operations conducted by a hazard management authority or controlling authority
- coordinate resources in support of emergency operations
- coordinate Territory-wide emergency or disaster response and recovery activities.

Different hazards do not require different sets of activation stages but may require different actions and communications within each stage. For an activation stages template to assist with developing actions and communications refer to the *Planning Guide for NT Emergency Management Planners.*

It should be noted the progression through these stages may not be linear e.g. for rapid onset events, Stage 3- Activation may be the start point for an incident response.

In general, plans are initially activated by a CA in relation to a threat or a hazard. LCs, RCs and the TC can activate statutory plans, and the TEMC can direct a plan to be activated. Any participant in the plan must be notified of plan activation.

Incidents are generally classified by the CA and an IC appointed based on the level of incident.

The IC or Recovery Coordinator determines the activation stage of the plan, within a response or recovery phase. Multiple plans in the NTEMA may be at different activation stages depending on the nature of the hazard or emergency.

2.8.10.1. Escalation

Escalation may occur primarily for two reasons:

- Additional powers are required under one or more legislative frameworks (e.g. ability to evacuate under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*); or
- Resources available for incident management are being overwhelmed, and additional assistance from the region, Territory, another NTG agency, functional group, or Australian Government is required.

The initial decision to escalate should be made by the IC, and a request made to the relevant level of the NTEMA.

Escalation for emergency powers is governed by NTG legislation, including Emergency and Disaster Declarations, with requests made to the TEMC who will provide advice to the decision-maker.

Arrangements for escalation outside of the NT to the Australian Government are detailed in the TEP.

Where emergency powers are not required, but available resources for managing an emergency may be overwhelmed, plans should detail an activation and escalation process for accessing additional resources beyond normal capacity.

2.8.10.2. Recovery activations

The DCM&C holds the authority for activating Recovery arrangements in the NT, and is guided by, or convenes, the relevant councils and committees as outlined in Figure 6.

NT recovery arrangements are outlined within the TEP.

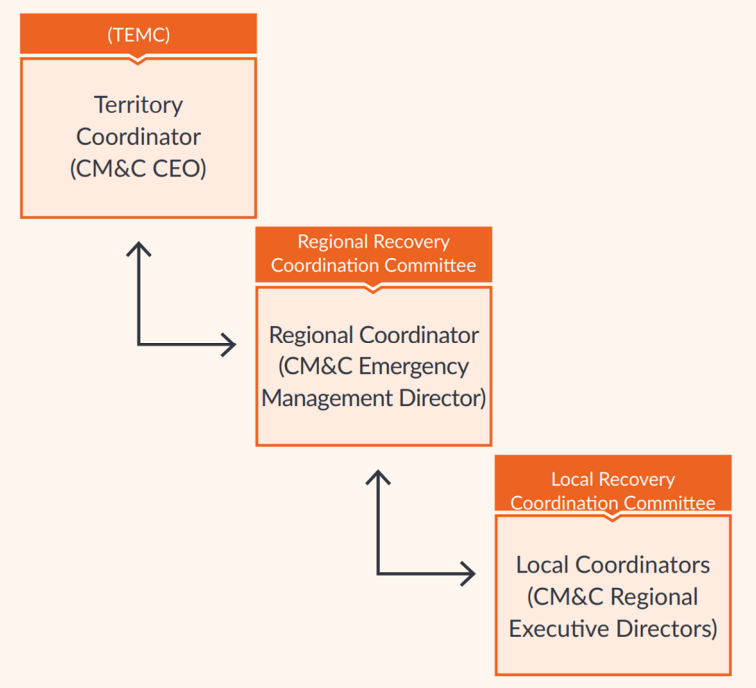


Figure 6: Recovery governance coordination

Recovery activation and planning commences as soon as a response activation is communicated. A formal transition process should be undertaken to hand over recovery responsibility to the appropriate authority.

2.8.11. Financial arrangements

Emergency plans should contain relevant financial arrangement information to give clarity to plan owners and users on the financial impacts of their decisions.

Plans should reference the latest guideline, including the *NTG Emergency Operation Centre Finance and Procurement Guideline*.

Where Australian Government financial support may be obtained, this should be included in the relevant plan.

2.8.12. Security classification of plans

When developing a project plan for a new EM plan under this Framework, the need for a security classification should be assessed under the Northern Territory's Information Management Standards.

When reviewing a plan that has had a previous security classification, the review should follow the existing security classification. During the review, the planning review team should assess if the existing security classification is appropriate or needs to change.

When accessing security-classified plans for any reason, the following policies and legislation must be adhered to:

- Northern Territory Public Sector Organisations Records and Information Management Standard (NT Department of Corporate and Digital Development)
- Any relevant NT or Australian Government legislation

When working on emergency plans involving the Australian Government, it may be necessary to reference the Australian Government's Protective Security Policy Framework on classification of information. This can form part of the planning process and EM plan, provided the NT Information Management Standards are adhered to as a minimum.

2.8.13. Emergency management planning training

Individual NT EM plans should outline any specific training requirements for those using the plan.

WebEOC can aid interoperability between agencies through a single platform. Emergency plans, and associated sensitive or personal information, can be stored in a restricted environment for access during emergency events and disasters.

The owner of this Framework (NTES) is responsible for developing and delivering EM training to NTG agencies that have a role within the NTEMA. NTES supports EM planning within the NT through their regular AIIMS Incident Management Training.

SecureNT, managed by the CMC provide public information on EM planning, including templates and planning resources via their webpage.

2.8.14. Planning methodology

This section of the Framework provides guidance for those involved in EM plan review and approval on how to align planning in the NT with this Framework. The NT uses the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (AIDR) emergency management methodology, adapted for the Territory's unique challenges for both natural and non-natural hazards.

The document *Planning Guide for NT Emergency Management Planners* provides more detail on how to conduct EM planning in the NT. For support, please contact the NTES Planning and Preparedness Command.

2.8.15. Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is designed to enhance NT EM planning by embedding a culture of ongoing review and refinement of plans. Given its resource-intensive nature, implementation may occur in stages to allow adjustment by existing plan owners.

2.8.15.1. Continuous improvement goal statement

The NTG is committed to ensuring that EM planning remains adaptable, evidence-based, and responsive to changing risks, enhancing both community resilience and operational capacity. All stakeholders aim to foster innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness in NT EM planning.

2.8.15.2. Principles of lessons management

The three key principles of lessons management in this Framework are derived from the AIDR Lessons Management Handbook:

- **Learning focused** – Using lessons from past incidents, exercises, and feedback to drive positive change and continuous improvement
- **Inclusive** – Encouraging collaboration among stakeholders to strengthen lessons management activities across all phases of the lessons cycle
- **Consistent** – Ensuring scalable, sustainable, and standardized lessons management processes to support stakeholder contributions and enable trend analysis.

The goal is to ensure lessons are systematically identified, analysed, and embedded into EM planning to enhance resilience and response effectiveness.

2.8.15.3. Objective: Shaping the future of emergency management planning

This approach focuses on the following objectives:

- **Adaptability:** Plans remain flexible and scalable, integrating new risks like climate change, emerging technologies, and evolving community dynamics
- **Evidence-based decision-making:** The latest data, information and academic collaboration improve hazard assessment and preparedness strategies
- **Lessons management & continuous learning:** A systematic approach to capturing and applying insights from incidents, exercises, and community feedback ensure EM plans evolve effectively
- **Innovation & inclusion:** New methodologies and technologies are trialled, while community participation, First Nations perspectives, and diverse needs shape response strategies
- **Organisational culture shift:** All EM practitioners foster a proactive, forward-thinking mindset where continuous improvement is embedded into training, planning, and emergency responses.

2.8.15.4. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation help ensure EM plans meet the principles and objectives outlined above. It also provides other key benefits:

- **Early gap identification** – Detects weaknesses in plans and processes
- **Facilitates corrective actions** – Enables timely adjustments to address new threats.

Additionally, monitoring and evaluation helps reinforce clear roles and responsibilities, builds trust and collaboration with stakeholders, and strengthens resilience by embedding lessons learned.

2.8.15.5. Continuous improvement cycle

The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model underpins the continuous improvement process, ensuring that EM planning evolves systematically based on lessons learned and performance evaluations.

It consists of four stages:

- **Plan** – Identify areas for improvement, set objectives, develop a strategy, and allocate resources.
- **Do** – Implement the plan, often through exercising, documenting challenges and unexpected outcomes.
- **Check** – Evaluate implementation results, compare them with objectives, and analyse data for effectiveness.
- **Act** – Standardise successful changes, incorporate them into regular operations, and adjust if necessary.

The PDCA cycle fosters learning, efficiency, and adaptability, ensuring continuous refinement of EM processes and services. Key benefits include reducing errors, improving stakeholder satisfaction, and enhancing service quality.

2.8.15.6. Lessons management

Lessons management is essential to continuous improvement. It involves systematically identifying, analysing, and implementing lessons learned from emergency responses and evaluations.

- Lessons are collected through post-incident analyses, operational debriefs, community feedback, and research
- A centralised system and uniform process across agencies to capture and organise insights to ensure no critical information is overlooked.

Implementation and accountability:

- Recommendations should be prioritised based on urgency and impact
- Changes should be monitored through performance indicators and regular evaluations
- Stakeholder feedback loops ensure EM plans remain relevant and responsive
- A continuous improvement committee oversees governance and ensures accountability.

Key outcomes

- EM plans become adaptive, data-driven, and community-aligned
- A culture of learning and innovation strengthens the NTG's ability to protect communities

- Sustained accountability ensures continuous progress and governance oversight.

This comprehensive continuous improvement approach ensures the NT remains proactive, efficient, and resilient in its EM planning and response efforts.

2.8.15.7. Recommendations management

Plan owners are responsible for implementing continuous improvement recommendations to enhance EM plans and therefore safety, efficiency, and public trust.

This accountability ensures compliance with legislative and regulatory standards, aligns with risk management best practices, and strengthens emergency preparedness.

Key aspects of this accountability include:

- **Regulatory compliance:** Adhering to legal and national EM standards
- **Community and stakeholder trust:** Demonstrating responsiveness to feedback and lessons learned
- **Risk management:** Closing gaps to mitigate future threats to public safety, infrastructure, and the environment
- **Governance mechanisms:**
    - Policy frameworks – Integrating recommendations into policies and procedures
    - Performance monitoring – Tracking progress using key performance indicators (KPIs)
    - Reporting processes – Providing updates to internal and external stakeholders
- **Organisational learning:** Using recommendations to inform training, resource allocation, and operational strategies
- **Transparency:** Publicly reporting on major improvements via annual reports, post-incident reviews, and audits
- **Ethical responsibility:** Acting in the best interest of the community by continuously enhancing safety measures and emergency responses
- **Resilience and adaptation:** Ensuring NTG evolves to address emerging risks and remains efficient in serving the Northern Territory

By prioritising continuous improvement and accountability, NTG reinforces its commitment to protecting lives, property, and the environment while maintaining operational excellence and community confidence.

2.8.15.8. Plan reviews and review frequency

A structured, transparent, and adaptive review process enhances public trust and ensures preparedness, responsiveness, and alignment with the TEP and the NTNHRMF.

There is a statutory requirement for an annual review of the hierarchy of territory emergency plans which is overseen by the NTES and conducted by plan owners within the NTPF and NTFES.

Other suggested types, triggers and timeline for EM plan reviews:

1. **Administrative reviews** (annual) – Ensures non-operational elements (e.g., contacts, resources, procedures) remain accurate and current
2. **Targeted reviews** (as needed) – Focuses on specific sections in response to new risks, legislative changes, or stakeholder feedback

3. **Out-of-session reviews** (triggered by events) – Adapts the EM plan in real time following major incidents, legislative amendments, or plan activations
4. **Post-exercise reviews** (completed within 30 days; amendments within 3 months) – Incorporates lessons learned from multi-agency drills and exercises
5. **Full reviews** (every three years) – Comprehensive evaluation of the EM plan's strategic alignment, operational effectiveness, and compliance with NTEMAs

Key review process features:

- **Review schedule** – A formal, annually published schedule ensures timeliness and accountability
- **Stakeholder engagement** – Includes government agencies, NGOs, First Nations representatives, and community groups through workshops, surveys, and consultations
- **Transparency in amendments** – All changes are documented and shared via a change log, email updates, and briefings
- **Continuous improvement** – Uses performance metrics, post-implementation evaluations, and feedback to assess and refine changes
- **Risk integration** – Ensures alignment with the NTNHRMF (where relevant), updating plans based on evolving risks
- **Training and capacity building** – Personnel receive training on EM planning, stakeholder engagement, and post-incident evaluations
- **Reporting and accountability** – Plan review outcomes are formally reported to the TEMC ensuring clear recommendations and implementation timelines are outlined.

By implementing a structured, transparent, and collaborative review process, the NTG ensures EM plans remain dynamic, effective, and reflective of the Territory's evolving emergency landscape.

2.8.15.9. Exercises

Exercises are essential for testing emergency plans, ensuring they are robust, well-understood, and supported by adequate capabilities and resources. Lessons and insights gained from exercises should be treated the same as lessons learned from activations.

Exercises should be conducted at all levels and involve all relevant agencies.

Exercises may be initiated by the plan owner or triggered by:

- Legislative changes
- Significant personnel, position, or function changes
- New or emerging hazards and risks

Exercise oversight and scheduling:

- Is conducted under guidance from Territory, regional, or local controllers, the TRC, TEMC, HMA or functional groups
- May be included as an appendix to emergency plans.

These exercises ensure emergency arrangements remain effective, up to date, and adaptable to evolving risks.

The NTES provide support to local and regional emergency committees in the design, delivery and evaluation of exercises for all hazards.

2.9. Framework governance

The governance arrangements for this Framework ensure inclusive, transparent oversight for NT EM planning, aligning it with community needs. They enhance accountability, collaboration, and capability across all levels to improve emergency PPRR.

The governance arrangements:

- Ensure a coordinated, transparent, and accountable approach to EM planning across the Territory
- Define roles, support shared decision-making, and align with legislation and national guidelines
- Encourage community input, expert insights, and local knowledge to shape adaptable and culturally appropriate plans
- Allow for regular evaluations and transparent communication to foster public trust and continuous improvement
- Improves collaboration across government, emergency services, private sector, NGOs, and the community to strengthen risk awareness and enhance emergency preparedness and resilience.

2.9.1. Framework ownership

The NTES oversees the NTEMPF, ensuring it remains dynamic and effective.

Key responsibilities include:

- **Strategic leadership and oversight**: Setting objectives, establishing governance, and aligning with policies and legislation
- **Framework development and maintenance**: Designing a scalable framework, standardising processes, and updating it based on risks and best practices
- **Risk assessment and integration**: Conducting risk assessments, prioritising mitigation, and maintaining the Territory Risk Register
- **Stakeholder engagement**: Fostering partnerships with agencies, industry, NGOs, and communities, ensuring inclusive planning
- **Implementation and coordination**: Assisting in plan development, ensuring resource allocation, and promoting interoperability
- **Monitoring and continuous improvement**: Evaluating effectiveness, learning from incidents, and refining plans
- **Compliance and accountability**: Ensuring legal adherence, defining responsibilities, and reporting progress
- **Communication and public awareness**: Promoting transparency, facilitating information sharing, and enhancing community preparedness.

These efforts strengthen preparedness, reduce risks, and improve emergency management across the NT.

2.9.2. Framework review frequency and process

The Framework should undergo a structured review process to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and aligned with evolving risks, legislation, and best practices. Administrative and out of session reviews will occur as legislation and the NTEMA are amended, followed by three-yearly reviews. Key steps in the review process are:

1. **Initiation and scope definition** – Establishes review objectives, focus areas, team composition, and timelines
2. **Stakeholder consultation** – Engages government, NGOs, First Nations representatives, and community groups to gather diverse input
3. **Assessment and gap analysis** – Evaluates compliance with relevant legislation, risk alignment, and performance during incidents to identify weaknesses
4. **Framework revision** – Updates policies, streamlines processes, and incorporates technological advancements
5. **Validation and approval** – Tests revisions through scenarios, seeks stakeholder feedback, and secures endorsement from TEMC and the NTFES Commissioner
6. **Implementation and communication** – Distribute revised framework, conducts training, and ensures clear communication with stakeholders
7. **Documentation and reporting** – Maintain transparency through formal reporting, change logs, and accountability measures
8. **Continuous improvement** – Monitors effectiveness through performance metrics, evaluations, and ongoing stakeholder feedback.

The review should assess the Framework's compliance with current laws, such as the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, and alignment with national policies and standards that may have changed within the review window.'

2.9.3. Evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework

This Framework will be periodically evaluated by the NTES, using a comprehensive set of performance metrics and indicators to measure effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. These metrics should assess both outcomes (e.g. reduced incident impact, improved resilience) and processes (e.g. plan development, stakeholder engagement, resource readiness), and should be summarised in a report as part of the evaluation process.

By systematically measuring these metrics, NTES can ensure the Framework stays effective, aligned with its goals, and continuously improves to meet the Territory's dynamic challenges.