

PROCEDURE 19

Recovery, controlled reunification and reopening

Purpose: Prevent a second incident, maintain dog identity and custody, and reopen only when the site can safely provide care.



SITE CUSTOMISATION REQUIRED. This national baseline must be adapted through a site risk assessment, worker consultation and advice from the relevant state or territory regulator, emergency services, council, insurer and veterinarian. Human life takes priority.

Business and site details

Business legal name		Trading name	
Site / branch		ABN	
Physical address		Emergency entry / cross street	
Site manager		Incident Controller	
Maximum dogs		Maximum people	
Operating hours		Main phone	

Document control

Issue date		Next review date	
Approved by		Position	

Activate this procedure when

- The immediate hazard is controlled and the Incident Controller or emergency service has authorised recovery activity.

P Protect people	A Alert and activate	W Welfare and secure dogs	S Sign off accountability
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Step-by-step emergency response

- 1 Confirm authority and hazards.** Obtain clearance to enter. Complete a documented check of structure, fire/smoke, electricity, gas, water, sanitation, air quality, access, fencing, security and biological/chemical contamination.
- 2 Reconcile the manifest.** Match every dog and person against the original census, vehicles, treatment locations and alternate care. Resolve discrepancies before routine release.
- 3 Reunify securely.** Use appointments or a controlled queue, verify collector identity/authority, use a double-barrier handover and obtain signature, time and destination.
- 4 Communicate consistently.** Provide owners and staff with verified facts, dog status, care instructions, temporary arrangements and the next update time.
- 5 Meet reporting duties.** Notify the relevant WHS regulator, council, animal-welfare authority, public health, police, insurer or veterinarian as required.
- 6 Approve reopening.** The owner/operator signs the reopening checklist only when staffing, containment, utilities, sanitation, equipment, records and emergency access are functional.
- 7 Learn.** Debrief promptly, offer support, record what worked/failed, assign corrective actions and retest the revised procedure.

Do not

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|-------------|---|
| STOP | Allow uncontrolled owner entry into an affected area. |
| STOP | Reopen under commercial pressure while a critical control remains unavailable. |
| STOP | Dispose of evidence or publish conclusions before reviews and mandatory notifications are complete. |

After the immediate danger

- Retain incident, treatment, handover, inspection and corrective-action records in accordance with site requirements.
- Monitor dogs and workers for delayed health, behavioural or welfare effects and arrange follow-up support.
- Close corrective actions and retest the emergency plan before restoring normal occupancy.

Assigned emergency roles

Incident Controller	Selects the safe action, liaises with emergency services and authorises recovery.	
People / Area Warden	Protects people, sweeps assigned areas if safe and reports status.	
Dog Movement / Canine FA	Secures, identifies, separates, triages and moves dogs within training.	
Communications / Recorder	Calls services and owners, maintains the time log and preserves records.	

Procedure readiness checklist

- ☐ Define written reopening criteria for structure, utilities, access, fencing, sanitation and biosecurity.
- ☐ Require competent or emergency-service clearance where the hazard warrants it.
- ☐ Reconcile every person and dog against the original census, treatment, vehicle and alternate-care records.
- ☐ Use owner identity verification, a controlled queue and closed double barriers for every handover.
- ☐ Authorise temporary occupancy limits and assign an owner and review time to every interim control.
- ☐ Debrief staff, support affected people and retest corrected procedures before normal operation.

Site-specific arrangements

Reopening authority / criteria	
Temporary occupancy limit	
Controlled collection area	
Outstanding controls / review time	

Emergency contacts and notifications

Emergency service / competent authority		Owners and staff	
Regulator, insurer and veterinarian if required		Primary / emergency vet	

Recommended drill: Reconcile a relocated manifest, verify owner identity and complete a double-barrier handover.

Drill, review and authorisation record

Last drill date		Participants	
Corrective action owner		Action due date	
Procedure authorised by		Authorisation date	
Gaps identified / corrective actions			

Sources and further guidance

- [1] [Safe Work Australia - Emergency plans and procedures](#)
[2] [Safe Work Australia - WHS duties for emergency plans](#)
[19] [Safe Work Australia - Incident notification](#)
[21] [Agriculture Victoria - Boarding establishments code](#)

Review date: source links and national emergency numbers were checked for the master manual on 31 August 2026. Confirm local numbers, warnings, laws, codes, licences and veterinary arrangements before issue and at every review.