

PROCEDURE 12

Infectious disease or suspected outbreak

Purpose: Isolate early, obtain veterinary direction, stop avoidable spread and maintain welfare and traceability.



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

- Unusual coughing, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, skin lesions, neurological signs, multiple sick dogs, known exposure, positive test or veterinarian/public-health notification.

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	Isolate. Move the affected dog by the lowest-contact route to the designated isolation area with dedicated equipment and PPE. Keep a separation barrier and clear sign.
2	Stop movement. Pause admissions, group mixing, shared water, grooming and non-essential transport until veterinary risk advice is received.
3	Contact the veterinarian. Provide signs, onset, vaccination and travel history, dog list, affected areas and numbers. Follow testing, treatment, exclusion and cleaning directions.
4	Create an exposure list. Identify dogs, people, vehicles, equipment and locations linked to the infectious period; preserve attendance, kennel, staff and cleaning records.
5	Apply infection controls. Use clean-to-dirty workflow, dedicated PPE/tools, controlled waste and laundry, hand hygiene, and a veterinarian-approved disinfectant at the correct dilution and contact time.
6	Communicate. Notify exposed owners with veterinarian-approved facts, signs to monitor and instructions. Protect identity and do not speculate.
7	Escalate. Notify animal-health, public-health or WHS authorities if the veterinarian or law requires it, especially for zoonotic or notifiable disease.

Do not

STOP	Move a suspected infectious dog through common areas without a controlled route.
STOP	Use high-pressure cleaning that aerosolises contamination unless the veterinarian-approved plan allows it.
STOP	Reopen or readmit based only on symptom improvement; use written veterinary clearance criteria.

After the immediate danger

- Complete terminal cleaning and verify required contact times.
- Review vaccination/intake rules, ventilation, density, isolation capacity and staff sickness reporting.
- Maintain a veterinarian-approved health management plan; some jurisdictions and establishment types expressly require one.

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

- ☐ Maintain a veterinarian-approved health management plan and clear exclusion criteria.
- ☐ Provide a dedicated isolation room, separate air flow where practicable and controlled access.
- ☐ Store dedicated PPE, bowls, leads, cleaning tools and waste supplies outside the isolation area.
- ☐ Use a clean-to-dirty workflow and approved disinfectants at the correct dilution and contact time.
- ☐ Maintain vaccination, travel, symptom, attendance, exposure and cleaning records.
- ☐ Train staff to protect privacy and avoid unsupported diagnosis or public speculation.

Site-specific arrangements

Isolation room / entry route	
Dedicated PPE / equipment	
Disinfectant / contact time	
Exposure list / records location	

Emergency contacts and notifications

Primary / emergency veterinarian		Exposed owners and staff	
Animal-health / public-health authority if required		Primary / emergency vet	

Recommended drill: Isolate a simulated symptomatic dog, create an exposure list and demonstrate clean-to-dirty controls.

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

[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.