



Managing emergencies and pandemics in general practice

To support practices in emergency planning and management, the RACGP has developed a useful resource *Managing Emergencies and Pandemics in General Practice: A Guide for Preparation, Response and Recovery* with the support from the Department of Health (DOH).

The aim of the guide is to assist general practices better prepare for, respond to and recover from the impact of emergencies and pandemics. Practices can access a free copy of this guide from:

www.racgp.org.au/managingemergencies

Emergency response planning tool

To complement the guide, the RACGP (with the support from DoH) has developed an Australian first, online Emergency Response Planning Tool (ERPT). The ERPT is a practical tool that guides users through a series of planning templates, where critical information about the practice can be entered and saved.

The ERPT securely stores key practice information, such as staff contact details and unique contract and insurance numbers. The ERPT also provides advice about how practice staff should communicate during an emergency and designs a staff communication tree. The information stored in the ERPT is used to create a unique emergency response plan which is individually tailored to the practice.

The ERPT also provides suggested contingency measures for staff so that, in the event of an emergency, they will know how to respond to:

- ❖ loss of power supply to the practice
- ❖ disruption to water and gas supplies
- ❖ disruption to telecommunications systems
- ❖ loss of IT systems or data
- ❖ loss of business records
- ❖ complete or partial loss of practice premises
- ❖ loss of medical supplies, equipment and furniture
- ❖ loss or non –availability of key staff.

The customised emergency response plan can be saved online and printed as a hard copy for ease of access. It is recommended that practices always print a hard copy and store their emergency response plan in various locations to ensure staff can readily access the plan at critical times, regardless of disruptions to power and/or telecommunication services.

Subscription fees

General practices who register now will have free access to ERPT until June 2015 (with a maximum of 2,100 practices).

Recognising the value that the ERPT brings to general practice, the RACGP is currently exploring options to provide continued free or subsidised access to the tool following this period.

Creating an account

Creating an account is very simple. Follow the below steps to create an account for the ERPT:

- go to <http://erpt.racgp.org.au>
- click on Create an account
- fill in all of the fields, choose a state/territory and check the tick box confirming that you are a working in a general practice
- your username is the name of your practice as one word, without spaces - E.g. name of practice: Health Connect username: healthconnect
- your password will be set by you when you register
- read and accept the terms and conditions.

Authentication

Once you have created an account the RACGP and Healthpoint will authenticate and authorise access to the ERPT. This process takes approximately one working day.

Once authorized, you will receive an email which informs you that your account has been activated.

Using the ERPT

Once your account has been activated, you can log in at any time to create, view, edit or publish your emergency response plan.

When using the ERPT, it is important to note that:

- the amount of time it will take to complete your emergency response plan will depend on the size of the practice. For example, small practices may determine that some sections are not relevant to their practice.
- Once registered, log in and, on the first page you enter you will find a document called, *ERPT Content Guidelines for Smaller Practices*, which you can download, for advice on the key sections to complete for smaller practices
- you do not have to complete your emergency response plan in one sitting. You can complete a section at a time by clicking on the save changes button (green button –bottom right hand corner)
- when a section is complete, ensure that you tick the complete box (bottom right hand corner). All completed sections will have a little green tick next to the relevant section on the left hand side of the menu
- there is a dedicated support team to help you in developing/revising your emergency response plan.

Good luck with completing your first emergency response plan on the ERPT.

User feedback

Comments made by a practice Manager from Maffra in Victoria having completed her practice's plan using the ERPT,

"Would like to congratulate you on the Emergency Planning Tool. I have done this for our practice, took no time at all, and made several of my other documents obsolete. Very happy that I could attach other documents/manuals to the plan, and to have access for everything I need from one point, instead of using my previous Drop Box account."

"I particularly liked the options to 'grey' out areas that were not applicable to the practice - I really cannot think of any way to improve the tool, I really did find it user friendly and the fact I completed it in a day goes to show how very easy it is."

ERPT enquires

For more information regarding the ERPT email: erpt@racgp.org.au or call 1800 008 384 or 1800 284 789

To register for free access to the ERPT, visit <http://erpt.racgp.org.au>