How South Australia Responds to Emergencies

Acronyms:

BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
CFS	Country Fire Service
DEW	Department of Environment and Water
EM	Emergency Management
PPRR	Prevention Preparedness Response Recovery
SA	South Australia
SAVEM	South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SAPOL	South Australia Police
PIRSA	Primary Industries and Regions South Australia

Purpose

After reading these notes you will have developed knowledge about:
1. The principles of emergency management
2. An overview of the State's emergency management arrangements
3. SAVEM's role in emergency response
4. SAVEM's relationship to other agencies

1. Introduction

These notes provide an overview of emergency management (EM) arrangements in South Australia (SA) and where SAVEM fits into these arrangements.

Effective emergency response needs agencies from many different services to work closely together, have agreed procedures and open lines of communication. SA has procedures and liaisons in place to ensure this. These arrangements are outlined in these notes to provide you with an understanding of how SAVEM works within the SA system.

2. Principles of Emergency Management

Emergency management is made up of four phases: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery **(PPRR)**

These four phases form a continuous loop of interrelated actions. Everyone in the community has a role in each, ranging from the individual landowner considering their own circumstances through to statewide agencies. For this reason SAVEM, like all other emergency services, has a continuing preparedness program of community awareness, training and resourcing. When SAVEM is activated we use the SAVEM Plan and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) in response and recovery.

These four principles are illustrated in the SA State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) diagram which is duplicated below:
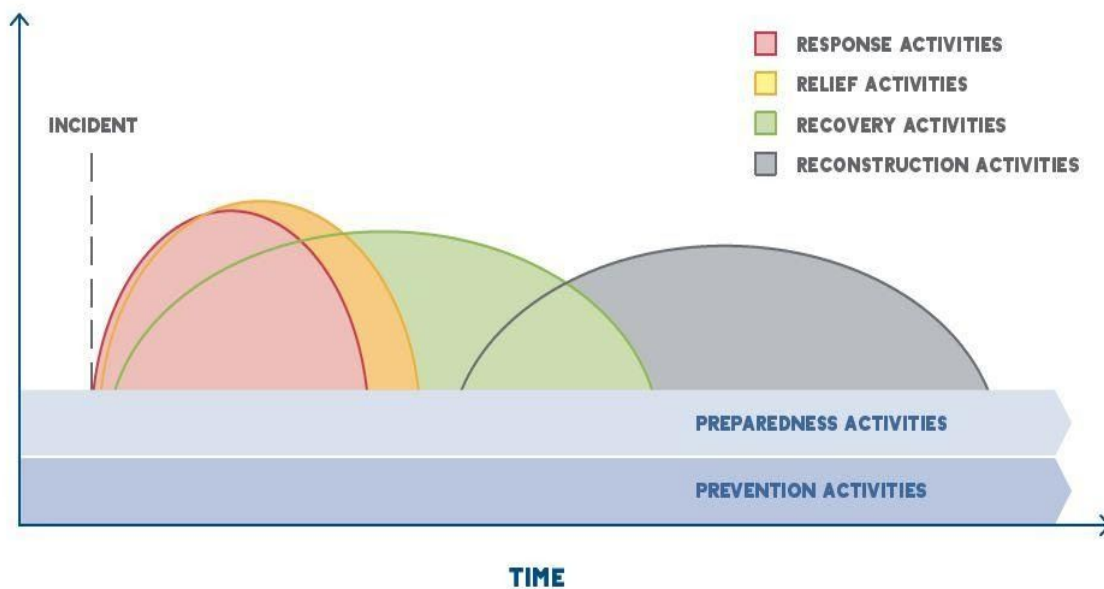
3. Overview of State Arrangements

Emergency management in SA is directed by the State level arrangements. It is important to understand that formal arrangements for emergencies differ from state to state.

In South Australia emergency management arrangements are defined by legislation in the *South Australian Emergency Management Act (2004) (The Act)*. The State Emergency Management Plan **(SEMP)** is similar to a set of regulations under the Act and provides further detail on the responsibilities and roles for various organisations.

Most **small incidents are dealt with at a local level**. For smaller incidents the **control agency** may request assistance from individual agencies locally following the structures and processes that are in place. As an incident escalates the control agency will require the assistance of other organisations which are activated through pre-agreed arrangements.

The type of emergency determines which agency is the '**Control Agency'**. For example, the Country Fire Service (CFS) is the Control Agency for bushfires, the State Emergency Service (SES) for flood, and South Australia Police (SAPOL) for road accidents. The Control Agency for emergencies in SA is determined by legislation and/or as identified in the SEMP.

4. SAVEM's Role

How does SAVEM fit into these arrangements?

SAVEM is a **Participating Agency** under Primary Industries and Regions SA **(PIRSA).** PIRSA can have a role as either a control or support agency under State arrangements.

Support agencies support the nominated Control Agency and are subject to direction by the nominated Control Agency and must follow chain of command (more on this later). This means SAVEM is a formal part of the emergency management arrangements for SA.

> SAVEM is part of the formal emergency management arrangements in SA

Other Participating Agencies under the PIRSA include the RSPCA, the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and Department of Environment and Water (DEW).

Animal rescue organisations who are not a formal part of these arrangements are not recognised emergency response agencies and are not trained and equipped to operate in emergency areas. They may however be utilised outside the incident area.

The diagram below demonstrates this and where SAVEM sits in the 'Chain of Command'. This is important to understand in relation to activation and authority to undertake certain activities.

A **chain of command** is established so that everyone knows who they report to, what their responsibilities are and who has the authority to request/direct their activities. A chain of command enforces responsibility and accountability. Chain of command helps by improving communication with team members. As a result, this helps responders improve and adjust their work methods. Chain of command informs the structure of the response so that all responders have clarity in their role and who they report to.

> Following the chain-of-command, discipline and good communications are critical to success during emergency responses.
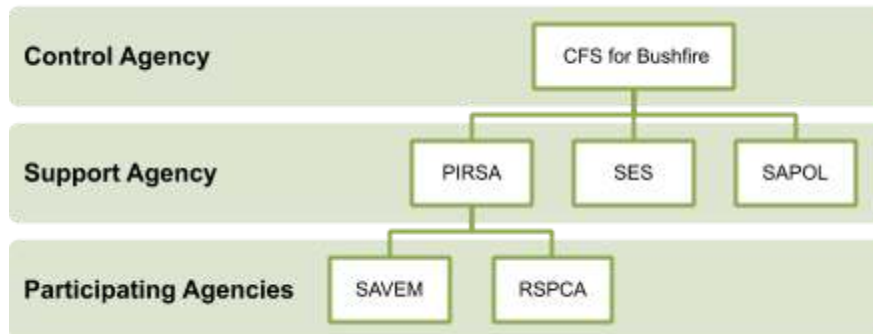
The circle of actions (phases) for emergency management

As noted above, a model of emergency management in common use has four continuous and overlapping phases:

Prevention – are actions undertaken to reduce the effect of an incident. Sometimes this is referred to as mitigation. Examples include:
 a. Burn-offs to reduce bushfire impacts
 b. Constructing river bank levees to reduce flooding
 c. Vaccination to reduce seasonal influenza impacts

Prevention activities are constant and ongoing.

Preparedness – is making arrangements, creating and testing plans, training, educating and sharing information to prepare communities for an emergency incident. These actions are happening continually and are ongoing.

SAVEM has a continuous rolling community awareness program including information brochures, collaboration with other participating agencies (e.g. RSPCA), public speaking and presentation calendar.

Examples of preparedness activities SAVEM performs include managing & maintaining resources such as servicing and maintaining vehicles, registrations and insurance, charging and updating phones. These activities create a significant time commitment.

SAVEM preparedness activities include training. SAVEM has a training program that includes internal and external courses. Courses include Level 1, Team Leader, specialist topics and Exercises. Volunteers also participate in relevant courses run by other agencies including CFS and PIRSA.

Response – the activities during or immediately after an emergency. These activities minimise the consequences of the incident on communities and the environment. The priorities during response are always (human) life, property and then environment. The first priority is always to protect human life.

Response duration can be hours, days or weeks. Response is the most publicly visible element in emergencies: the road crash, the oil spill, the bushfire. Each brings visible activities and media interest.

During a response the control agency (the agency responsible for leading the activities to an incident) is usually supported by other organisations even for small events e.g. BOM to provide weather information to CFS, SAPOL to control access to dangerous areas and search premises, and agencies providing evacuation centres. SAVEM is one of the many agencies that will be activated to support a control agency. SAVEM is

activated through PIRSA, via established protocols (which are described in later training modules).

One of the hardest parts when activated is to understand the need to initially "hurry up and wait", an expression used in emergency management work. (Refer SAVEM Newsletter February 2014 for more on this). This refers to the fact that although you know that something needs to be done, SAVEM must wait until the control agency deems it safe for us to enter the incident area. Therefore, there will inevitably be a "hurry up and wait" period.

The Response phase of an emergency can be further broken down to three stages:

1. **Alert /Standby** stage. On receiving information that an incident may require SAVEM activation, personnel will be alerted to ensure they are ready to act if needed. Some of the activities that may occur include:
   - Notifying key personnel to be on standby i.e. ready to deploy.
   - Testing of communications arrangements.
   - Checking and preparing equipment
   - Establishing flow of information with other agencies
   - Planning the deployment i.e. how many, what "stuff" and where do we need to be

2. **Operational stage**. This is when we deploy and commence activities. We may go straight to this phase without an Alert/Standby stage. Actions may include:
   - Activation and briefing of personnel
   - Mobilisation of equipment and supplies
   - Establishment of local control centre
   - Allocation of resources
   - Collaboration with other agencies
   - Production of plans (IAP) and records

3. **Stand-down /Demobilisation** stage commences when the incident is controlled and in preparation for transition to recovery. Activities of this stage include:
   - Debrief of all personnel before release
   - Release of personnel and equipment
   - Repair, decontamination, and maintenance of all equipment
   - Collection and collation of all records
   - Cancelling contracts
   - Cleaning of facilities
   - Reports to be finalised
   - Prepare transition to recovery plan

Relief refers to the provision of essential, appropriate and timely assistance to those affected by an emergency. It is based on an initial rapid assessment of needs and is designed to contribute to their early recovery. So, for animals this usually involves managing pain and providing food and water in the immediate period after an incident.

Recovery is the longest phase. It is the process of supporting emergency-affected communities in reconstruction of infrastructure and restoration of social, environmental and economic well being. Usually measured in months and/or years, it begins at the same time as response and continues long after the emergency is contained. It draws in not only the emergency response agencies, but also the community to support one another through both formal and informal methods. For example, PIRSA deploys its veterinarians and animal health officers to work with affected livestock owners to facilitate feed supplies and other welfare needs as part of the recovery process.

SAVEM remains a contact point during recovery for as long as necessary: It can be days or weeks before injured animals come out of impacted but inaccessible areas. This timescale is different for every incident. During this phase SAVEM works with many animal rescue groups for long term rehabilitation of animals. We will provide examples of this during the face to face workshop.

> SAVEM is a response, relief and recovery agency whereby we provide relief and recovery for animal welfare needs.

The cycle

The cyclical nature of this model is important as it highlights that managing emergencies happens all the time, not just during 'the season' (for bushfires and cyclones, for example). It also shows the way the phases blend into each other and overlap rather than being discrete categories.

It is useful to be familiar with the four phases as they are part of the everyday language of the emergency management sector. These four phases form the basis of planning and allocating responsibilities in emergency management.

To demonstrate this cycle let's use the example of a dog in a standard Australian home. To prevent an emergency of a broken leg which usually occurs through road accidents we keep them on a leash or in a fenced yard and we don't transport him loose in the back of the ute. Preparedness activities include building a fence to keep him in, having a leash to walk him on and have a tie down point in the ute so he can't fall off. Another preparedness activity would be taking out pet health insurance in case he does break his leg. The response would be taking him to a veterinarian for surgery and recovery would be the phase at home where his exercise is restricted, he has medications and follow up x-rays to make sure the bone is healing.

5. SAVEM's Relationships

Facing emergencies is a constant reality in Australia. It therefore becomes everyone's responsibility to be part of the arrangements. It takes strong relationships between agencies to achieve effective outcomes.

Structured arrangements mean that responsibilities and communications are established before the incident occurs, improving outcomes. This minimises duplication of effort and wasted resources so that responses are efficient and effective. This way each agency is able to focus on its role and doesn't waste resources trying to undertake tasks they do not have the expertise for.

It is not helpful for individuals to instigate independent actions that are "free-lancing" or self-responding. For example, entering a fireground without authorisation may result in that person being injured in an unsafe location (e.g. being hit by a falling tree). This could result in crew from another agency being redirected from their primary task to affect a rescue and putting themselves at risk.

> SAVEM will not tolerate "freelancing".
> Freelancing will compromise the entire operation; duplicate tasks, waste resources and time and put other responders at risk.

SAVEM will not tolerate "freelancing". SAVEM is very protective of its reputation. We have a very strong positive culture of safety and discipline. This in no way should be seen to diminish the positive valuable work individuals can do, particularly in actions which complement the support given through formal arrangements.

SAVEM continually works on developing and maintaining relationships with all the various agencies that we may have to work with during an emergency. Through these efforts SAVEM is respected and trusted by the emergency services.

6. Terminology and the Three CCC's

Three other terms you may hear that you should be familiar with are Coordination, Control and Command. These terms will be used in other training notes and activities. They are defined below:

Term	Definition
Coordination	The **bringing together** of various organisations /**resources** to support a response.
Control	The **overall direction** of activities at an incident. **Authority** for control is established in legislation **Responsibility** for tasking others Control **operates horizontally** across organisations
Command	The **internal direction** of the agency. Command operates **vertically** within an agency.

7. Summary of SAVEM's Role

Concept	SAVEM role
Participating agency	As part of Agriculture and Animal Services (AAS) Functional Support Group under PIRSA's leadership
Control Agency	**NONE –** Defined in SEMP
Prevention	**NONE –** Hazard leader role (SEMP)
Preparedness	Training and development of organisation and resources
Relief & Recovery	Yes, largely SAVEM's role
Response	Yes, supporting control agency as a participating agency to AAS

8. Training Note 2 Quiz

1. Emergency management is made up of four phases known as PPRR. PPRR stands for:
    a. Prevention, Practice, Readiness and Recovery
    b. Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery
    c. Prevention, Preparedness, Readiness and Resilience
    d. Prevention, Practice, Readiness and Recovery

2. SAVEM is not part of the State arrangements and can freelance at any incident.
    a. True or False

3. SAVEM is activated by:
    a. SAPOL
    b. The Country Fire Service
    c. RSPCA
    d. PIRSA
    e. None of the above

4. Complete the table below by matching the descriptions to the terms.
    a. Managing all activities to resolve the incident
    b. Bringing together resources to support the incident
    c. Providing direct tasking to those reporting to you

Term	Description
Coordination	
Control	
Command	

5. PIRSA can have a role as either a control agency or support agency under the State arrangements.
    a. True or False