

SEMC COMMUNIQUE

October 2024



The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on 2 October 2024.

Presentations

Lithium-Ion Battery Fires

Lithium-ion batteries are the preferred choice for many modern technologies and come in various forms through residential battery energy storage systems and electric vehicles (EV). Fires from lithium-ion batteries are on the rise largely due to the purchase of cheap products online, reconditioned batteries on new frames, exposure to heat, overcharging, damage or system faults.

To understand how to best respond to lithium-ion battery fires, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) led Exercise Bright Spark; a multi-phase, multi-agency exercise to trial new technology and capabilities to combat an EV fire. This exercise provided world-first data on atmospheric contamination and runoff. This information is currently being analysed by ChemCentre.

DFES is currently preparing the Post Exercise Report which will inform further work in this area.

Discussion Items and Outcomes

2024 Emergency Preparedness Report

The Emergency Preparedness Report advises the Minister for Emergency Services on emergency management and the preparedness of the State to combat emergencies.

The 2023 report examined key changes to the emergency management sector over the last decade with a focus on WA's consideration of a systemic approach to disaster risk reductions.

The 2024 report will build on the systemic risk themes outlined in the 2023 report. Insights will be drawn from (1) incidents and emergencies; (2) state exercising; and (3) sector-based annual reporting processes. The report is expected to be finalised by the end of the year.

Exercise Cross Handle (Shell)

The Director General of Department of Transport (DoT) is the Hazard Management Agency for Maritime Environmental Emergencies (MEE). Earlier this year, DoT participated in Exercise Cross Handle with Shell Australia to practice DoT's Incident Management Team processes and cross-jurisdictional arrangements.

Exercising is an important component of preparedness, to test the functionality of the systems, plans and arrangements, as well as the skills and capability of relevant personnel. The completion of this exercise marked a significant milestone for DoT and Shell Australia in assessing and enhancing MEE hazard management.

SEMC Strategic Plan Update

Work to develop a new SEMC Strategic Plan is continuing. Draft strategic objectives have been developed in consultation with all Subcommittees and District Emergency Management Committee Chairs.

It is expected that the draft will be presented to SEMC for consideration in December 2024.

Bushfire Framework Review Finalisation

State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas (SPP 3.7) directs how land use should address bushfire risk management in Western Australia. It applies to all land designated as bushfire prone by the Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Commissioner as highlighted on the [Map of Bushfire Prone Areas \(link is external\)](#).

In July 2019, the Government announced a three-stage action plan to review the Bushfire Policy Framework, including SPP 3.7 and the Map of Bushfire Prone Areas. The Review is now complete.

The new SPP 3.7 was published on 24 September 2024 and will be operational from 18 November 2024, along with the *Planning for Bushfire Guidelines*. The Map of Bushfire Prone Areas came into operation on 24 September 2024.

Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Program

Building on the previous work of the LEMA Review, the LEMA Improvement Program is continuing to work toward a more capable and resilient community, through a local approach to emergency management.

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) has partnered with DFES on behalf of SEMC to deliver the improvement program.

The first LEMA Improvement Program Board meeting took place on 26 September 2024, with representation from DFES, WALGA, and the Departments of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, and Communities.

Until the reform of LEMA, local governments are advised to proceed as planned with LEMA reviews, so they maintain their obligations under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*.

General Updates

2024 Subcommittee Chair and Executive Officer Forum

The 2024 Subcommittee Chair and Executive Officer Forum was held on 10 October 2024. It was an opportunity for each Subcommittee to share any updates, issues experienced and network. Key discussion points included:

- improving engagement with agencies outside of the emergency management sector
- continuing improvements in the communications from the SEMC and between the subcommittees
- refining draft objectives for the new SEMC Strategic Plan
- governance updates including the new SEMC Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy and Declaration Form.

Comprehensive Review Schedule

The following State EM documents are out for broad consultation:

- State Hazard Plan – Human Biosecurity closes 8 November 2024.
- State Hazard Plan – Fire closes 9 December 2024.

The following State EM documents are planned for comprehensive review and broad consultation in 2024/2025.

- State Support Plan – Emergency Public Information
- State Hazard Plan – HAZMAT Annex B Space Re-entry Debris (SPRED)
- State Hazard Plan – Cyber Security
- State Support Plan – Freight and Supply Chain
- Impact Statement Guideline and Template
- Local Recovery Guideline

Next Meeting of the SEMC

The next meeting of SEMC will be held on 4 December 2024.

Contact Us

If you have feedback or questions, get in touch at info@semc.wa.gov.au.