



Service provider advice in case of natural disaster

From time to time, service providers of the Australian Government Hearing Services Program (the program) may need to temporarily close certain sites due to natural disaster (e.g. bushfires, cyclones, flooding). This factsheet provides information about what service providers need to do if their site has been affected by a natural disaster, and also outlines the help available to clients of the program if their usual service provider has temporarily closed.

Closing sites

If you are a service provider and your site will be temporarily closed, you should register the temporary site closure due to 'natural disaster' on the portal. Should you be unable to access your systems, please call 1800 500 726, or email hearing@health.gov.au, and your site status will be updated.

When your site re-opens, you will need to update the site's status on the portal.

Services available to clients

You are able to provide urgent services to clients of the program if their usual service provider is closed.

Relocating clients in the portal

If a client approaches your clinic for urgent assistance with their devices, you will need to follow the usual processes by transferring them to you in the portal, and recording their consent to provide hearing services.

The transfer will initiate an email to the client's usual service provider to advise that the client has relocated. If you are the client's usual service provider, when you re-open you will need to contact the client to determine

- if they genuinely want to relocate to another service provider
- if they approached another service provider to seek urgent assistance during your closure, but wish to continue receiving services from you

If the client has genuinely chosen to relocate, you should forward their file to the current service provider promptly.

If the client wishes to continue receiving services from you, you will need to transfer them back to you in the portal and obtain a record of their consent, as usual.

Damaged devices

If a client has a damaged hearing device that needs to be serviced in the clinic or sent to the manufacturer for repair (and their usual service provider is closed) they can attend any service provider of the program for assistance.

If a client in this instance attends your clinic for help, you can service the hearing device or dispatch it to the manufacturer for repair. If you send the hearing device to the manufacturer, you should include a covering note to ask that it is returned to the client's usual service provider.

In this situation, you should contact the client's regular service provider (if possible), before undertaking this process as there will be occasions where the regular service provider will be closed for significant periods of time.

Lost or damaged beyond repair devices

A client's hearing device may be deemed damaged beyond repair by the manufacturer, or lost. If the client has an urgent need for it to be replaced, you will need to follow the usual procedures, including completion of a statutory declaration if required (for lost hearing devices). You may wish to waive the \$30 replacement fee.

Note that Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) gold and white card holders who are clients of the program do not need to pay the replacement fee, as DVA will cover this cost.

Depending on availability, you may consider offering a hearing aid on loan while the client's device is sent for repair or awaiting replacement.

Further information

If you require further information, please visit the program's website, www.hearingservices.gov.au. You can also contact the program's call centre on 1800 500 726, or email hearing@health.gov.au.