How to protect human rights in disasters

Australian Human Rights Commission

Apply the 5 human rights principles to guide decision making and support better outcomes in emergencies and disasters.

PEOPLE-CENTRED
Put people's rights, needs, strengths and lived experience at the centre of decision-making.

FAIR
Identify and address discrimination, unequal risks and barriers to support.

PARTICIPATORY
Include people in decisions that affect them.

PROPORTIONATE
Use evidence based measures that are necessary and balance risk with compassion.

ACCOUNTABLE
Explain decisions and provide effective pathways for feedback, review and remedy.

COMMUNITY: Share local knowledge, support each other and help shape decisions.

INDIVDUALS: Prepare, make informed choices and support others.

PREVENT
Identify, prevent and reduce risks to people and their rights

Ask the right questions
- Who is most at risk?
- What barriers are they facing?
- How can risk be reduced fairly?

How it looks
- Reduced hazard exposure
- Reduced vulnerability to disaster impacts
  - Reduced inequality in disaster risk

PREPARE
Build inclusive plans, capability, information and trust

Ask the right questions
- Does everyone know what to do?
- Can everyone access information?
- Does everyone have what they need to prepare?

How it looks
- Trusted relationships between community and government
- Increased community capability
- Accessible plans, information and systems



PEOPLE, RIGHTS AND DIGNITY
Recognise and respond to diverse experiences, strengths and needs.

RECOVER
Restore rights, reduce inequality and build back better

Ask the right questions
- Is recovery helping everyone who needs it?
- Are affected communities shaping what comes next?
- Who may be falling behind?

How it looks
- Restored rights and barriers removed
- Effective review and remedy
- Stronger community resilience

RESPOND
Save lives, meet immediate needs and protect dignity

Ask the right questions
- Is support reaching those who need it?
- Is anyone being left out?
- Are emergency measures fair and necessary?

How it looks
- Lives and safety protected
- Essential needs met
- Emergency powers are necessary, temporary and minimally restrictive

BUSINESS: Maintain services, supplies and capabilities that communities rely on.

GOVERNMENT: Lead, coordinate, fund and support effective action.

Applying human rights shapes both decisions and outcomes

1. **CORE PRINCIPLES** — Set the standard
2. **PHASE-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS** — Reveal impacts and barriers
3. **DECISIONS** — Assess options and rights impacts
4. **ACTIONS** — Direct resources and support
5. **EVIDENCE** — Monitor access, experience and impact
6. **RIGHTS OUTCOMES** — Show whether rights are realised

HOW IT LOOKS
Lives and safety protected · Dignity upheld · Fair access to support · People informed and heard · Essential needs and rights met · Resilience strengthened

Evidence, feedback and learning improve the next cycle