

Operational definition

Emergency and disaster reduction in health includes prevention, mitigation, preparedness, early response and rehabilitation.

- Planning for prevention and preparedness;
- Management of mitigation, early response and rehabilitation in the event of public health emergencies and disasters that impact public health; and
- Implementation of International Health Regulations (IHR).

This includes involvement of the entire health system and the broadest possible intersectoral and inter-institutional collaboration by developing policies and plans, and executing activities that reduce the public health impact of emergencies and disasters.

Scope of the function

Planning for prevention and preparedness

- Periodic risk and vulnerability assessments

Natural hazards: meteorological (e.g., drought, heat wave, flood), geological (earthquake, landslide) and biological (pandemic/epidemic)

Human-caused hazards: accidents (workplace, transportation or structural) and intentional acts (civil disturbance, strike, hostage incident, terrorism, arson, etc.)

Technological hazards: utility outage, application failure, loss of connectivity, fire, explosion, hazardous material spill or release, transportation interruption

- Emergency planning

Health sector/cluster operational plan for all potential emergency situations

Pre-crisis mapping of “who does what where when” (4W matrix)

Sector-specific protocols in the event of an emergency

- Coordination structure

Surge mechanism

Roster of available technical specialists to advise in specific situations

Alert system for specific disease outbreaks and emergencies

Information management (coordination between health and other civil services)

Management

- Capacity to implement early response plan and mobilize resources
- Relief operations
- Surge deployment
- Recovery and reconstruction
- Rehabilitation.

International Health Regulations

- Fostering global partnerships
- Public health capacities for surveillance and response
- Public health security
- Management of specific risks
- Sustaining rights, procedures and obligations
- Performance of studies to track progress.

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