

Disaster management

Policy statement

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Disaster management

World Physiotherapy recognises that disasters/emergencies resulting from human, natural, environmental and technological hazards (includes biological, geological, hydrometeorological and socio-natural hazards) have a major and long-lasting impact on people and the countries in which they live.

World Physiotherapy encourages member organisations to facilitate the contribution of physiotherapists, as experts in physiotherapy intervention/treatment including rehabilitation, to national and local disaster preparedness and management strategies.(1) Physiotherapists should:

- be involved in the process of developing policies and plans that help areas, countries and regions prepare for disasters/emergencies
- be involved in preventive education and measures before, during and after disasters/emergencies
- provide interventions/treatment, including rehabilitation to those affected by disasters/emergencies
- ensure that populations affected have access to physiotherapy intervention/treatment, including rehabilitation services to achieve the highest attainable level of health and function

World Physiotherapy encourages member organisations to:

- work with national governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), aid agencies and others to develop disaster/emergency prevention plans, preparedness and response strategies, and provision of coordinated responses to situations
- facilitate discussion, share resources and provide guidance to individual physiotherapists wishing to respond/volunteer in emergency relief situations
- encourage professional entry level physical therapy programmes to include disaster/emergency management in their curricula

[Glossary \(https://world.physio/resources/glossary\)](https://world.physio/resources/glossary)

Curriculum development

Disaster

Disaster preparedness

Disaster prevention

Hazard

Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)

Rehabilitation

Approval, review and related policy information	
Date adopted:	Adopted at the 16th General Meeting of WCPT June 2007. Revised and re-approved at the 17th General Meeting of WCPT June 2011. Re-affirmed at the 18th General Meeting of WCPT May 2015. Re-approved at the 19th General Meeting of WCPT May 2019
Date for review:	2023
Related World Physiotherapy policies:	World Physiotherapy policy statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce• Primary health care• Relationships with other health professionals• Torture• Description of physiotherapy World Physiotherapy endorsement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

References

1. World Health Organization. World Rehabilitation Alliance - emergency workstream 2023 [28 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/world-rehabilitation-alliance/emergencies>.

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