


SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY GUIDE

Get ready for floods, storms, and cyclones before disaster strikes.



A long, straight asphalt road with a yellow center line and white edge lines stretches into the distance. The road is flanked by green grass and bushes. In the background, there are rolling hills and a dark, overcast sky with heavy, grey clouds, suggesting an approaching storm.

Severe weather events can happen at any time of the year in Queensland. These events can cause significant damage and even death. Queensland is already seeing the effects of a changing climate. Queensland will continue to experience more intense rainfall and more powerful storms and cyclones in coming years. It's important that Queenslanders are ready for a range of events.

Prepare your home and family now, before disaster strikes.

In a severe weather event, high wind speeds or floodwaters can delay or prevent assistance from emergency services. You and your family could be isolated for many days.

After the event has passed, roads can be closed and services such as power, gas, water, phone, and internet disrupted. In a large scale event where many people are affected, emergency services will be focused on helping the most vulnerable in the community. You may not be able to access support right away and will need to rely on the supplies and equipment you have at home.

KNOW YOUR RISK



Every year Queenslanders face a range of weather events. Tsunami have impacted Queensland and they can happen at any time with little warning. It's important to know what types of events might impact your home so you can be better prepared.

What hazards could impact you?

The weather can be very different across Queensland. Your location will help you understand the hazards you may face. Get to know your local environment to find out the potential for severe weather events.

- » Check with your local council about the types of hazards that could impact your home and community.
- » Talk to neighbours and people in your community to see if there is a history of severe weather in the area.
- » If you or a family member have a disability, contact your local support groups to understand the challenges you may face.

Check off the severe weather events below that apply to your home and community.

<input type="checkbox"/> Severe Storm 	<input type="checkbox"/> Riverine Flooding 	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Flooding or Tsunami 	<input type="checkbox"/> Cyclone 
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Now that you have identified the risks for your area, prepare your home and family before an emergency.

PACK YOUR EMERGENCY KIT



An emergency kit has the supplies for your essential needs in emergencies such as storms, floods, and cyclones. Your kit should have the supplies you need for several days in case you lose services such as power and water.

Pack enough supplies for every member of your family. Keep your kit in a waterproof container in an accessible location. Check your kit every season to make sure supplies are fresh and safe to use.

Use the following checklist to make your kit today.



Food and water items

- Water for three days (10 litres per person)
- Non-perishable food for three days
- Can opener, cutlery, plates



Self-powered items

- Torch (battery or wind-up)
- Portable phone charger and cable
- Battery powered radio
- Extra batteries
- Cooking equipment (e.g. portable stove, fuel and pans)



Medical and personal items

- First aid kit
- Medications and prescriptions
- Warm protective clothing and shoes
- Sturdy gloves
- Toiletries (e.g. toilet paper, sanitiser, face masks, toothpaste, soap, baby nappies)



Important documents

- Emergency phone numbers
- Passports and identification
- Cash
- Insurance papers and property deeds
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Photographs and keepsakes



Store your important documents in sealed plastic bags or keep a digital copy on a USB or secure online storage.

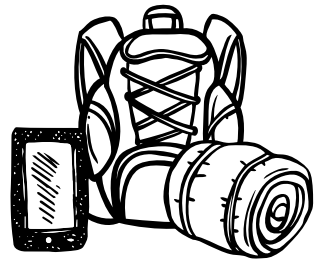


Pet supplies

- Food and water
- Toys
- Bedding
- Medication



IF YOU NEED TO EVACUATE



In an emergency, you may need to leave your home very quickly. You could find out at short notice. You need to be prepared and know where everything is that you will take with you.

Use the checklist below and note down where your items are stored. Add any extra items you may need.

Item	Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency kit	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile phone	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> House and vehicle keys	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Blankets / sleeping bags	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pillows	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Valuables	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pet collars / carrier / lead	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Toys	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Games / entertainment	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____

PREPARE YOUR HOME

All severe weather events are different, but you can prepare your home now. Use the checklist below to get ready now.



Home maintenance

- Keep your roof in good condition, check it regularly.
- Keep gutters and downpipes clear so water can drain away quickly.
- Trim trees and overhanging branches (be careful of any overhead powerlines).
- Check and fix any corrosion, rotten timber, termite infestations and loose fittings.



Home preparations

- Check your home, contents and vehicle insurance is up to date and provides suitable coverage.
- Identify the strongest room in your home to shelter in during storms and cyclones.
- Know where and how to turn off the main supply for water, power, and gas.
- Consider any arrangements you will need to make for pets or livestock.
- Check in with your neighbours in case they need help.
- Know where to go for information and warnings.

MAKE YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN

Prepare for disasters by making an emergency plan. Get together as a household and make your plan on the template provided. Tear it out and display it where everyone can see it. Take a photo to store as a digital copy on your phone or computer.



Research hazards and disaster management arrangements for your community.

- » Check with your local council if severe storms, cyclones, floods, storm surge or tsunamis are likely in your area.
- » Research local emergency plans, evacuation zones, and suggested evacuation routes for where you live and work.
- » Find out what help is available through local council and support agencies.
- » Know how to find out about evacuation centres in your community during a severe weather event. Where are they located? What facilities are available? Will you be able to take your pets?



Discuss possible scenarios and what you could do.

- » What could happen in a cyclone, storm, flood or tsunami?
- » What would you do in these situations?
- » Where might you be when an emergency occurs?
- » How will you stay in contact with friends and family?
- » Do any members of your household have medical conditions or special needs that must be considered?
- » How will you care for your pets and livestock? You may not be able to take them with you if you evacuate.

OUR HOME EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PLAN

OUR DETAILS:

Name: _____ Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Contact number: _____

Medications: _____

Medications: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Contact number: _____

Medications: _____

Medications: _____

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO REQUIRE SPECIAL ASSISTANCE:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Assistance: _____

Assistance: _____

Aid required: _____

Aid required: _____

PET DETAILS:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Type / Breed: _____

Type / Breed: _____

Pet ID: _____

Pet ID: _____

Vet name: _____

Vet name: _____

Vet contact: _____

Vet contact: _____

Medications: _____

Medications: _____

VEHICLES:

Vehicle make: _____

Vehicle make: _____

Registration: _____

Registration: _____

Vehicle make: _____

Vehicle make: _____

Registration: _____

Registration: _____

HOME SERVICES CONTACTS AND DETAILS:

Electricity Provider: _____

Gas Provider: _____

Shut off location: _____

Shut off location: _____

Water Supplier: _____

Phone company: _____

Shut off location: _____

Internet provider: _____

Meeting place 1: _____

Contact name: _____

Phone number: _____

Meeting place 2: _____

Contact name: _____

Phone number: _____

Out of town contacts

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Triple Zero (000)	Police Fire Ambulance Emergencies
132 500	State Emergency Service
	Local Council
	Doctor
	Chemist
	Insurance provider

EMERGENCY ACTIVATION CHECKLIST

Contact household Make final preparations

Check on neighbours Tune into warnings

Locate emergency kit Shelter in the strongest room (unless evacuating)

EVACUATION CHECKLIST (use the extra boxes to add your own)

Before leaving:

Fill vehicles with fuel

Check evacuation or meeting place location

Check evacuation routes

When leaving:

Pack emergency kit and evacuation kit items Secure and lock home

Turn off mains power, gas and water supplies Locate and secure pets as planned

Contact out of town contacts when leaving

Contact out of town contacts once at destination

If flooding or storm surge is imminent:

Sandbag internal drains and toilets

Store electrical items off the ground



Think about your shelter or evacuation options.

- » If you live in a well-constructed home outside a storm tide or flood prone area, plan to shelter in your home.
- » Identify the strongest, most protected part of your home to shelter in (preferably away from windows).
- » If you do shelter in your home, how long might you be isolated for? How many days of supplies will you need?
- » If flooding is a risk, organise your evacuation now so you can shelter in a safer place with friends or family. Think about paid accommodation or evacuation centres as a last resort.
- » Each local council will have a different plan for evacuations. Find out yours now so you are prepared.



Think about why you may need to leave.

- » What are your triggers for leaving?
- » Who will you tell? You should let your family, friends, and neighbours know where you have gone in case you need to be contacted.
- » If there is a threat to your life, authorities may issue a mandatory direction to evacuate. You must follow this direction and leave.



Make sure everyone is prepared.

- » Prepare your emergency kit and get your home ready before storm and cyclone season.
- » Make sure everyone knows how to find information about weather events and warnings.
- » Update your emergency contact details at your work, school, and childcare centre.
- » Make sure everyone (including children) knows to call Triple Zero (000) in an emergency.
- » Share your emergency plan with family and friends.
- » Practise your plan.

BE AWARE

During a severe weather event, safety should always be your first priority. It's up to you to take notice, seek information, make decisions, and act. The most important thing to remember is to follow the instructions of local authorities and emergency services.

Weather warnings are published across many information channels. Tune in to local media including radio, official social media feeds and websites to stay informed.



TUNE IN

- » Find your local ABC Radio Station www.abc.net.au/newsradio
- » Find your local commercial radio www.commercialradio.com.au



GO ONLINE

- » Bureau of Meteorology website www.bom.gov.au
- » Your council website or disaster dashboard
- » QFES Facebook @QldFireandEmergencyServices
- » QFES Twitter @QldFES



LISTEN

- » Standard Emergency Warning Signal
This siren is used at the start of serious warnings on television and radio. Act immediately on the advice given.
- » Emergency Alert
Warning messages sent to all network mobile and landline phones. Messages will come from 0444 444 444.
- » Door Knocks
Emergency services or local council personnel may visit your area to pass on warnings.



Find out more from the Bureau of Meteorology. Phone 1300 659 210 for:

- » Queensland Weather Warnings
- » Tropical Cyclone Warnings
- » Land Weather and Flood Warnings
- » Queensland Coastal Marine Warnings
- » Australian Tsunami Warning Information



ACT

- » Make sure everyone in your home is aware of the warning and advice.
- » Activate your Emergency Plan and locate your Emergency Kit.
- » Follow your evacuation plans, if you need to leave.
- » Check on neighbours and friends who may need assistance.

SEVERE STORM

Severe storms impact all areas of Queensland, striking at any time of year. They are often unpredictable, can last many hours and travel long distances, causing serious injury and major damage to property. They are the most common severe weather event in Queensland and are predicted to occur more regularly in Australia.

Damaging winds from storms can bring down trees, branches and powerlines, remove roofs, and blow around outdoor items. Hail and lightning can injure people and damage property, and flash flooding can occur.

Extra preparations before storm season:

- Secure, weigh down or put away any loose items around the house, yard or balcony. Items such as potted plants, outdoor furniture, garbage bins, and trampolines can become dangerous missiles.
- Fit windows with shutters or metal screens for added protection during high winds.
- Contact your local council or energy company if you think trees in your street may pose a threat to your property or power lines.
- If anyone in your house relies on electrical equipment for medical reasons, make a plan if your power is cut – it may take time to be restored.

When storms strike:

- Tune in to warnings.
- Contact family and neighbours to make sure everyone is aware of the warning.
- Move indoors, bringing children and pets with you.
- Locate your emergency kit.
- Park vehicles under cover. If you cannot access cover, park away from trees, power lines, and creeks and cover with firmly tied down blankets to minimise hail damage.
- Move outdoor equipment, rubbish, chemicals and poisons to a higher location.
- Unplug electrical items, aerials and computer equipment to avoid damage from a power surge.
- Prepare torches in case you lose power. If you do, note the time and check your home electrical safety switch to see if it is a wider power outage.
- Close windows, shutters and curtains.
- Stay inside, away from windows, external doors and skylights until the storm has passed.
- If the building starts to break apart, shelter in the strongest room under a mattress or strong table.
- If driving, stop clear of trees, powerlines and creeks. If you're in an urban area, consider parking in a sheltered carpark. Never drive on flooded roads; even a small amount of water can sweep away your vehicle.



After the storm

Storms can cause damage to buildings and vehicles and cut access to power and water supplies. Once the storm has passed, you will be able to assess any damage and clean up.



Check your home and property for damage. Take photographs of any damage as proof and contact your insurance provider.



Clean up debris around your home. Check with your local government for advice on disposing of green waste and other materials such as asbestos fencing.



Continue to listen to local radio and check official websites for updated information or instructions.



Stay clear of creeks, drains, causeways, streams, fallen trees, and any damaged buildings.



Check in with your family and neighbours.



Avoid any powerlines brought down during the storm. Be careful of metal fences that may be in contact with the downed lines. Contact your energy provider or call Triple Zero (000) to report the danger and warn others to keep clear.



Never drive, ride, swim or walk in floodwater.



Watch out for scared or agitated pets and animals that may be hiding in unusual locations.



Do not go sightseeing. This can delay emergency services and increase the possibility of accidents. Only travel through affected areas if necessary.



Contact the State Emergency Service (SES) on 132 500 if you need emergency assistance with storm damage.

RIVERINE FLOODING

The most common reason for flooding is when rivers and creeks cannot contain the excess water from heavy rain. Water can travel overland and affect rivers downstream, causing widespread damage. Even if your home is not flooded, you could still be isolated.

Extra preparations if you live in a flood-prone area:

- Store all fuels, poisons and chemicals well above ground level.
- Consider installing flooring other than carpet. Rugs that can be rolled and stored may be more suitable.

When flooding is likely:

- Tune in to warnings.
- Locate your emergency kit.
- Put fuel in your vehicle and pack it with your emergency supplies in case you need to evacuate.
- Secure loose material around your home and yard to prevent them being carried away by floodwater.
- Stack belongings onto benches and tables above the expected flood level. Place electrical equipment on top.
- Place sandbags in appropriate places around your home to help reduce the impact of flood damage.
- Move pets and livestock to safety.
- Turn off household utilities (power, gas, water).



Travelling in flood conditions

Never drive, ride, walk, or swim in floodwater. Water can be deeper and faster flowing than it appears. A small amount can easily sweep away vehicles. It can wash away road surfaces leaving deep holes and uneven surfaces, and hide debris, rubbish, dangerous animals, sewage and other contaminants.

If your path is blocked by floodwater, back up and find another travel route. Don't feel pressured by other vehicles to cross a flooded road.

Avoid travelling at night when visibility is limited. Watch out for hazards such as fallen power lines, trees and debris, broken water and sewage lines, and displaced wildlife.

Do not return home until police or emergency services personnel advise it is safe and travel on the recommended routes.



Returning home

Only return home when authorities have declared the area safe.



Do not enter floodwater.



Wear protective clothing to avoid contact with contaminated surfaces and floodwater.



Use a torch to inspect buildings.



Check for animals and wildlife. Snakes, spiders, rodents, pets and other animals may have taken refuge in your home during the flood.



Check for damage to windows, walls and the roof.



Check with electricity and gas authorities if supplies have been interrupted to decide if it is safe to turn on connections.



If floodwater has entered your home, keep electricity, gas and appliances turned off until they have been checked by a licenced electrician.



Take photographs for insurance purposes.



Throw away any food and medications that have come into contact with floodwater.



Only drink bottled or boiled water until the normal water supply has been declared safe by health authorities.



Wash surfaces that have been affected by floodwaters with an antibacterial cleaner.

COASTAL FLOODING

80% of Queenslanders live in coastal areas, at risk of coastal flooding (often called inundation) due to tidal changes, storms, cyclones, and tsunamis. Climate predictions forecast that a rise in sea levels over the next few decades and an increase in storm activity will see more frequent flood events along the Queensland coast.

Check with your local council if coastal flooding could be a danger to your home and family. Keep up to date with local weather warnings and follow the flooding preparation advice on page 17.

Storm surge

A storm surge is when the normal seawater level rises, caused by intense low pressure systems, including cyclones. Strong winds will push large waves towards the coastline, causing water to swamp the landscape, sometimes for kilometres inland.

The wind and pounding waves are a severe threat to lives and can cause significant damage to buildings and infrastructure. The danger is significantly higher when the storm surge arrives during high tide.

Follow the flooding preparation advice on page 17 and follow the advice of local authorities. You need to be ready to leave your home quickly. Evacuation may be necessary based on predicted wind speeds and water levels. The safest option is to decide early if you are going to leave.

Tsunami

A tsunami is a series of powerful waves produced during a large ocean disturbance, such as an earthquake, underwater landslide or volcanic eruption. They can occur with very little warning and can be very destructive.

If you feel the ground move, see the ocean draw back, hear a loud roaring sound, or see a wave coming, a tsunami may be on its way. The water may not recede before the tsunami strikes so don't rely on the drawback as the only sign. You should listen for alerts and sirens but don't wait for them. Act quickly.

Official warnings are issued by the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre and advertised through media and emergency services. There are three warning levels.



No threat.

An undersea earthquake has been detected, but a tsunami has not formed, or the tsunami poses no threat.



Marine and immediate foreshore threat

Potentially dangerous rips, waves and strong ocean currents in the marine environment. Some localised overflow onto the immediate foreshore is possible.



Land inundation threat

Warning for low-lying coastal areas of major flooding, dangerous rips, waves and strong ocean currents.

If you are near the beach when a warning is issued, immediately move inland or to higher ground. If you can't move inland, seek shelter in the upper levels of a sturdy multistorey building. Follow the instructions of emergency services and do not return to the area until you are advised it is safe.

CYCLONE

Tropical cyclones are intense low-pressure systems that form over warm tropical waters. Every year tropical cyclones impact Queensland communities; producing dangerous and destructive high winds, heavy rainfall, flash flooding, and storm surges.

Tropical cyclones can last for many days before finally ending over land or cold oceans. The wind and rain that comes with them can affect far further than where the cyclone lands.

There are five tropical cyclone categories that describe the severity.



Minimal house damage. Damage to some crops, trees and caravans. Boats may drag moorings.



Minor house damage. Significant damage to trees and caravans. Damage to some crops. Risk of power failure.



Some roof and structural damage to buildings. Some caravans destroyed. Power failure likely.



Significant roof and structural damage. Caravans destroyed. Dangerous airborne debris. Power failure.



Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction.

Extra preparations if you live in a cyclone-prone area:

- Arrange for a professional builder to check your home and suggest ways you could increase its ability to withstand high winds.
- Fit shutters or metal screens to glass windows and doors for added protection during high winds.
- Make sure sealant around windows and doors is maintained to prevent wind-driven rain.

When a cyclone is imminent:

- Tune in to warnings.
- Locate your emergency kit and evacuation items.
- Put fuel in your vehicle and park it in a sheltered area so you are ready to evacuate if necessary.
- Secure large items such as boats, caravans, trailers, rainwater tanks, outdoor furniture, shade sails and any loose material around your home.
- Fasten all cyclone screens and board up any exposed windows, doors and seep holes.
- Close windows. Securely tape plastic sheeting to the inside of windows to keep wind-driven rain out of your home.
- Fill containers with drinking water.
- Bring children and pets indoors. Remain inside away from windows and await further advice.
- Check in with family, friends and neighbours to make sure they are preparing too.

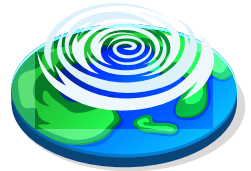
If you choose to leave your home before the cyclone hits your region, remember to take your pets and emergency kit with you and lock your home.

Storm surge is a very dangerous hazard during a tropical cyclone.



When a cyclone strikes

A cyclone will sound like a roaring train or jet engine. You could be inside for many hours. There may be strong winds and horizontal rain. The skies will darken and day will turn to night. Wind turns loose objects into missiles that can damage your home. Be prepared for noise and darkness.



- » Wear strong shoes and tough clothing for protection.
- » Turn off all electricity, gas and water supplies.
- » Go to the place where you planned to shelter in your home.
- » Stay tuned to your information and warnings channels.
- » If the building begins to break up, shelter under a strong table, bench or heavy mattress.
- » Beware the calm eye of the cyclone. Stay inside until you have received official advice that it is safe to go outside.

If you are driving when the cyclone hits, stop the vehicle and engage the handbrake. Stop well away from the sea and clear of trees, power lines and streams. Stay in the vehicle.

If you are evacuating to a public shelter or higher location, follow the directions of Queensland Police Service and emergency services personnel. Homes in low-lying coastal areas may be advised to evacuate early.

After a cyclone or coastal flooding

Do not go outside until authorities have advised it is safe.



Continue to monitor information channels and follow the advice of authorities.



Check on the welfare of pets and livestock. Be cautious of any animals and wildlife which may have taken refuge in your home.



If you need to go outside, be aware of your surroundings and take care when inspecting your property and travelling. There may be fallen trees and power lines, broken water and sewage lines, loose roof sheeting, and other material.



Check in with your family, friends and neighbours.



If you are returning home, follow the travel paths recommended by local authorities. Do not drive into floodwater.



Use a torch when inspecting buildings.



If you have solar panels that are damaged, do not turn on your power supply until they have been checked by a licenced electrician.



Do not use electrical appliances if they are wet until they have been checked by a licenced electrician.



Take photographs for insurance purposes.



If you need emergency assistance with damage to your home, contact the SES on 132 500. For life threatening emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).

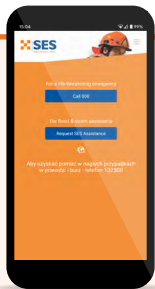
SES assistance

Do you need emergency help during or after a severe weather event?

SES volunteers can help by carrying out temporary repairs to protect your family and prevent further damage to your home in non-life threatening emergency situations, such as:

- » If the roof of your home is leaking or badly damaged.
- » If your home is flooded or in danger of flooding.
- » If a tree has fallen onto your home causing damage or blocking access.
- » If your home is badly damaged and in need of temporary repairs that you cannot do yourself.

Make sure you inform the SES of any hazards they may face, such as asbestos and solar panels. Permanent repairs will need to be organised by contacting your insurance provider or a private contractor. For all life threatening emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).



To request help from the SES, you can:

- » Lodge a request on the SES Assistance QLD App
- » Call 132 500, or
- » Lodge a request at 132500.qld.gov.au

Your local SES Group will respond as soon as possible.



Can you help yourself?

SES volunteers attend 132 500 requests for help in priority order, based on the information provided. In large scale emergencies, the SES will be overwhelmed with requests for assistance and may not be able to get to you for hours or even days.



Before you call the SES for help, can you help yourself? Place a bucket under the leak. Move furniture and belongings to avoid damage. Clear debris from your gutter or downpipe so excess water can flow away.



Contact numbers for additional assistance:

Crime Stoppers	1800 333 000
Community Recovery Hotline	1800 173 349
Electrical Emergencies	13 19 62 (Energex)
.....	13 16 70 (Ergon Energy)
Health and Hospital Information	13 43 25 84
National Relay Services	133 677 (TTY/Voice Calls)
.....	1300 555 727 (speak and listen)
.....	0423 677 767 (SMS relay)
Road traffic and travel information	13 19 40
RSPCA.....	1300 264 625
National translation and interpreter service	13 14 50
Volunteer Marine Rescue.....	1800 797 289





@QldFES

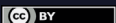


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