

Home Emergency Plan

To help your household
prepare for floods, storms
and tsunami



FOR EMERGENCY HELP IN FLOOD,
STORM AND TSUNAMI CALL

132 500

In life-threatening emergencies call 000 (triple zero)



FloodSafe



StormSafe



TsunamiSafe



Welcome to your Home Emergency Plan

The NSW SES is responsible for the emergency management of floods, storms and tsunami in NSW.

This Home Emergency Plan is specifically targeted to these events but the advice can be useful for other hazards.

Being prepared now can significantly reduce:

- Loss of life
- Loss of property
- Loss of possessions

Being prepared now can also help you respond better and recover faster when these events happen.





Possible hazards where I live:

- Storms
- Flash Floods
- Floods
- Tsunami
- Coastal Erosion and Inundation
- Tropical cyclones

These hazards can have devastating impacts on people, property and possessions. Even if you are not directly impacted by floods, storms or tsunami, you may still be affected by these events as roads may be damaged or flooded, access to areas may be restricted, amenities may be lost, you may become isolated, areas you are planning to travel to may be impacted and family or friends may be affected.



I am responsible for:

- People with low or no vision
- People with low or no hearing
- People with restricted or no mobility
- People having difficulty in learning or understanding
- People taking medication
- People relying on a power supply
- Elderly people
- Children under 5
- Children aged from 5 to 12 years
- Aged from 13 to 18
- People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- People you have employed that live on your property
- Animals living with you at your property and any animals you own or care for which are kept on another property
- Friends
- Family members living away from me
- Neighbours



Prepare NOW

8 tips you can do now to prepare for floods, storms and tsunamis, as well as for other disasters:

1. Know your risk

- Know if where you live could be at risk from floods, storms or tsunamis, as well as other disasters

Know your storm risk

- Visit the NSW SES StormSafe website www.stormsafe.com.au for StormSafe information and read the StormSafe Guide
- Talk with neighbours and people who have lived in the area for a while about the local storm history

Know your flood risk

- Find out about your local flood history and visit the NSW SES FloodSafe website www.floodsafe.com.au and read the FloodSafe Guides relevant to your area
- Talk with neighbours and people who have lived in the area for a while about the local flood history
- Know the heights your area is affected by floods. Your local council may be able to provide you with specific information on how floods affect your property
- Be aware of the natural signs of flooding such as heavy rainfall and rushing or pooling water

Know your tsunami risk

- Visit the Bureau of Meteorology website www.bom.gov.au to find out what a tsunami is, how they are generated, what warning systems are in place and what warning products exist
- Know what to do when these warnings are issued

To find out your bushfire risk, visit the NSW Rural Bushfire Service www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

To find out your urban fire risk, visit Fire and Rescue NSW www.nswfb.nsw.gov.au

For information on earthquakes, heat waves and other disasters, visit the Australian Emergency Management Institute www.em.gov.au



2. Know where to go

- Have a plan of where you will go if you need to evacuate

3. Know your plan

- Use this Home Emergency Plan to document what you will do before, during and after flood, storm and tsunami
- Practice and update your plan regularly

4. Get your kit together

- Put together an [emergency kit](#) which is suitable for your household needs

5. Check your insurance

- If insurance is available, check the cover is adequate for where you live and make sure it is current

6. Prepare now to act early

- Know the triggers for what you need to do and when you need to do it
- Practice your Home Emergency Plan regularly and keep it up-to-date
- Maintain a sufficient level of supplies in case you become isolated
- Know what to do if you have no amenities

7. Listen to local radio

- Know the local radio station you need to listen to for information, updates and advice
- Know the ABC radio frequency in your area.

8. Know who to call

- Keep a list of emergency numbers near your phone, on your mobile or on your fridge.

NSW SES 132 500
Life-threatening emergencies 000 (triple zero)
NSW SES Facebook www.facebook.com/nswses
NSW SES X <https://x.com/nswses>



Get your kit together.

Put together an emergency kit today!

An emergency kit can help save precious time in an emergency situation. It provides items you might need if you lose power or need to leave your home in a hurry.

Your emergency kit contents:

- Portable radio with spare batteries
- Torch with spare batteries
- First aid kit (with supplies necessary for your household)
- Candles and waterproof matches
- Important papers including emergency contact numbers
- Copy of any Home Emergency Plans
- Waterproof bag for valuables

When leaving or evacuating your property, place in your emergency kit:

- A good supply of required medications
- Any special requirements and supplies for babies, the disabled, infirm and/or elderly
- Appropriate clothing and footwear
- Fresh food and drinking water

Keep your emergency kit in a waterproof storage container.

There may be other items you need to place into your emergency kit depending on what risks there are in your area. Check with the NSW Rural Fire Service and Fire & Rescue NSW for specific items you may need to place in your emergency kit if you are at risk of bushfire or urban fire.

Check your emergency kit on a regular basis and remember to check use-by dates on batteries and gloves. Re-stock any items if you need to.



What can be done NOW:

Storms:

- Maintain your property, yard and balcony
- Trim overhanging trees and branches around your property
- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters and downpipes
- Check that walls, eaves and roofs are secure and in good repair

Storms can also cause flash flooding, which can be very dangerous.

It is safer not to be in an area if flash flooding is a possibility.

Be aware of natural indicators of flash flooding:

- Very heavy rainfall
- Rushing or quickly pooling water

Floods:

- Know the triggers for what you need to do and where you need to go when it floods
- Talk with your local NSW SES members about being FloodSafe
- Be aware of the natural signs of flooding such as heavy rainfall and rushing and pooling water
- Talk with friends and relatives about organising a safe place to stay outside flood affected areas
- Know the safest route to travel if you need to evacuate

Coastal Erosion Inundation:

In case of a storm surge or very high tide when there is a storm or other coastal flooding, know your nearest safe high ground and the safest access route.

Check with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage www.environment.nsw.gov.au or Your local council about temporary coastal protection works.

Tsunami:



Find out what kind of tsunami warnings may be issued by visiting the Bureau of Meteorology, Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre web page 'About Tsunami Warnings' www.bom.gov.au/tsunami

You could be in an area where an official warning may not be available, therefore you should be aware of the natural warning signs that a tsunami may be approaching.

- You may see the ocean drop. As tsunami approach the shoreline, the sea level may, but not always recede or drop dramatically before returning as a fast moving series of waves
- You may experience an earthquake
- You may hear an unusual roaring sound from the ocean before the arrival of a tsunami.

Cyclones:

- Prior to the cyclone season, identify the strongest part of your property to move to should a cyclone happen
- Check that the walls, eaves and roof are secure and in good repair
- Check with your local council or your building control authority to see if your home has been built to cyclone standards
- Preferably fit shutters, or at least metal screens, to all glass areas
- Identify a care support person (family member, friend, service worker, neighbour), who can help plan and prepare
- This care support person may also be available to assist in putting this plan into action

People with low or no vision:

- Make audio recordings of emergency plans
- If there is a seeing-eye dog, know how to care for it in an emergency. Remember to keep a collar, harness, identification tags, food and medical records handy

People with low or no hearing:

- Note these numbers in your plan:
- If you are in a life threatening situation call 106 (a Text Emergency Call or TTY)
- The National Relay Service [133 677 (TTY) or 1300 555 727 (Speak and listen)] can connect you to other emergency services



People with restricted or no mobility:

- Consider placing mobility devices in an handy location so that access to them is easier in an emergency
- Plot an accessible evacuation route
- Think in advance about what might need to be done if the access ramp was unusable or lifts in the building were not operating

People on medication:

- Stock up on enough medication in advance, to last at least a week
- Write down the names of medications, their dosages and other instructions and place this in the emergency kit

People requiring constant power supply:

- Ensure back-up power supply in the home or where evacuating to

Elderly:

- Identify a care support person who can help prepare an emergency plan or pass on any information via a preferred means of communication
- This care support person may also be available to assist when needed to put into action this emergency plan
- Family may also be able to assist in preparing an emergency plan

Children under 5:

- Have a supply of required items for babies and toddlers for at least a week. Items may include nappies, baby food, formula and medications

Children from 5 - 18 years:

- Involve your children in planning for floods, storms and tsunami
- Ask them what are important things to do when preparing for, responding to and recovering from these events
- Give your children specific roles and practice your plan with them
- Talk to teachers at the school your children go to and encourage them to access teaching resources or request visits to the school from emergency service organisations

People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds:

- Find out what the different warning services are and what they mean for you and where you live
- Ask a translator service, relative or service provider to help you understand about flood, storm and tsunami risk where you live



- Write down in your own language what the different warnings mean and what you need to do in response to them.

Pets:

- ID tags for all your pets are up-to-date and securely attached to collars or carriers
- Pet carriers are secure and in working order
- Each pet has a leash, collar and harness where necessary
- A current picture of your pet and a current picture of you with your pet
- Veterinary records and medications are current
- Emergency vet contact information and number
- Written feeding and medication instructions for your pet, including what not to feed them
- A pet first aid kit

Store several day's worth of food and water for each pet.

Include any agisted animals you own or care for. Remember property where you keep animals may be higher risk than your own.

Agisted animals:

- Talk to the property owner about the local risks and about their emergency plans
- Add these plans to your Home Emergency Plan
- Monitor the weather conditions near where your animals are agisted

For Livestock:

- Fit gates on internal fences to avoid moving stock along public roads
- Mark gates and water locations on a map of your property. Have this map available in case someone has to move stock for you

More information is available from the Department of Primary Industries
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

For wildlife:

RSPCA www.rspcansw.org.au

Neighbours:

- Let your neighbour know about your plan
- Use any information they give you and include this in your plan
- Make a coordinated plan so that you both can share resources



Employees:

- Make sure where you work has a business continuity plan which includes what to do in an emergency situation for flood, storm or tsunami. The Business FloodSafe Toolkit can help businesses plan for floods www.floodsafe.com.au
- Practice emergency plans at work
- Make sure work plans fit with personal plans and talk with employees/employers about this
- Make sure planning includes people leaving early for personal or safety reasons



BEFORE all emergencies:

Warnings are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology for floods, severe weather, thunderstorms, tropical cyclones and tsunami through their website www.bom.gov.au

- Activate this emergency plan
- Listen to your local radio station for information, updates and advice
- Check to see if neighbours are aware of the warning and need assistance
- Locate and check your emergency kit
- Follow all advice and instructions given to you by emergency services

It is safer to be away from areas which are going to be impacted by these events.

When flash flooding is likely the best action to take is to leave low-lying areas (evacuation) well before it may happen, but only if it is safe to do so. If you are trapped by rising floodwater, seek refuge in the highest part of a sturdy building. Stay there and call 000 (triple zero).

- Contact care support persons if you have previously organised to do this and prepare to respond as you have planned

Children:

Children may become frightened when floods, storms or tsunami are about to happen.

- Stay calm and reassure children that they can take steps to be safe
- Let your children know exactly what is happening, what they can do to help and what they need to do
- Move children away from the impact area immediately



BEFORE Storms:

When a Severe Weather Warning or a Severe Thunderstorm Warning is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology:

- Secure or put away any loose items from around your home, property or balcony that could become dangerous in storms
- Stay indoors away from windows
- Park vehicles under solid shelter away from trees and power lines
- If driving, pull over to the side of the road away from gutters, drains, trees and power lines
- Reconsider non-essential travel
- Bring children inside keeping them clear of windows
- Bring pets inside keeping them clear of windows

BEFORE Cyclones:

- Fill fuel tank
- Stock clean drinking water
- If advised, collect children from school or childcare centre and go home
- Close shutters or board-up or heavily tape all windows
- Draw curtains and lock doors

BEFORE Floods:

A Flood Watch may be issued by the Bureau of Meteorology when floods have the possibility of happening. A Flood Warning is issued by the Bureau when flooding is likely. Flood Warnings are issued on rivers that have flood gauges.

- Locate pets and include them in your flood preparation
- Coordinate relocation of agisted animals
- Move animals to high ground with adequate natural feed. Additional feed may be required for animals stranded for extended periods
- In extreme circumstances, the best option may be to cut fences so that animals can escape danger (and be collected later)



BEFORE a Tsunami:

When a Tsunami Watch is issued:

- Locate your emergency kit and add any medications, important papers, special items for babies, elderly, clothing, food and water
- Locate and follow your emergency plan
- Keep listening to your radio station for information, updates and advice

When a Tsunami Warning is issued:

- Follow all advice and instructions given to you by emergency services

Sometimes there can be little or no warning of storm activity.



EVACUATING:

Emergency Warnings are issued by the NSW SES for floods, storms and tsunami through the NSW SES website www.ses.nsw.gov.au and local media.

Emergency Warning - the highest level of warning. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Action statements may include:

- Evacuate now / Evacuate before [time]
- Shelter now
- Move to higher ground

When an Emergency Warning is issued:

- Locate important papers, valuables and mementos. Put them in your [Emergency Kit](#)
- Keep listening to your local radio station for information, updates and advice
- Follow instructions given to you by emergency services

When an *Emergency Warning* / *Evacuate now* is issued, staying inside a property, even one which you think is safe, may be very dangerous. If you are warned to evacuate it is always safest to move to a location away from the affected area early:

- Turn off the electricity and gas at the mains before you leave and turn off and secure any gas bottles
- Take your emergency kit
- Take your pets with you
- Never enter or travel through floodwater
- Keep listening to your local radio station for information, updates and advice
- Follow your Home Emergency Plan or Business Plan
- Follow all instructions given to you by emergency services
- Wear appropriate clothing

You should leave well before roads and evacuation routes are cut off or closed.

Stay with family or friends away from the affected area. Evacuation centres may also be established by welfare services in your area. Help may include:

- Temporary accommodation
- Financial help
- Personal support
- Refreshments and meals
- Clothing and personal needs
- Help in contacting family and friends
- Take enough medication with you to last at least a week
- Identify a place to go which has a back-up uninterruptible power supply



- Take relevant and adequate toddler and baby items with you to last at least a week
- Take your pets with you making sure they are either leashed, muzzled and/or transported appropriately
- Make sure your pets are catered for wherever you evacuate to
- Have clean up supplies including litter bags, paper towels, wipes, sanitisers and garbage bags
- Take pet toys, beds, blankets, towels and treats

To learn more about our warnings levels and actions statements, visit <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-warnings/>



DURING all emergencies

- For emergency help in floods, storms and tsunamis, call the NSW SES on 132 500
- In life-threatening emergencies, call 000 (triple zero)
- Check that your neighbours have received all warnings and advice
- Keep listening to your local radio station for information, updates and advice
- Follow all advice and instructions given to you by emergency services
- Make sure children follow the emergency plan

DURING storms:

- Stay clear of creeks, drains, causeways, gutters, streams, fallen trees, power lines and damaged buildings
- If driving, put on your hazard lights and pull over to the side of the road, keeping clear of drains, causeways, streams, creeks, trees and power lines
- If outdoors, seek secure shelter away from drains, causeways, streams, creeks, trees and power lines

During cyclones:

- Remain indoors
- Disconnect all electrical appliances
- Listen to your battery powered radio for information, updates and advice
- Stay inside and shelter clear of windows and in the strongest part of the building
- If the building starts to break up, protect yourself with mattresses, rugs or blankets under a strong table or bench or hold onto a solid fixture
- Beware that the centre of a cyclone can be calm. If the wind drops, don't assume the cyclone is over; violent winds will soon resume from another direction. Wait for the official 'Reduced threat: return with caution'
- If driving, stop (handbrake on and in gear) but well away from the sea and clear of trees, power lines and streams. Stay in the vehicle

DURING floods:

A Flood Warning is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology when flooding is about to happen and may be updated during floods.

A Flood Warning provides a predicted flood level on a river gauge and a time at which the river will reach that level.

- Never drive, ride or walk through floodwater
- Never play in floodwater
- Keep in contact with your neighbours
- Be prepared to evacuate if advised



Floodwater can be deeper and faster flowing than it appears. It can erode roadways and create deep pot holes.

Floodwater can also contain sewerage, debris, dead animals and contaminants such as oil and petrol.

DURING Tsunami:

When a Marine and Immediate Foreshore Threat Tsunami Warning has been issued:

- Get out of the water and move away from the immediate water's edge of harbours, coastal estuaries, rock platforms, and beaches
- Boats in harbours, estuaries and in shallow coastal water should return to shore. Secure your boat and move away from the waterfront
- Vessels already at sea should stay offshore in deep water until further advised
- Do not go to the coast to watch the tsunami, as there is the possibility of dangerous, localised land inundation of the immediate foreshore
- Check that your neighbours have received this advice

When a Land Inundation Threat Tsunami Warning has been issued:

- Evacuate low-lying parts of coastal towns and villages in the tsunami impact area
- Vessels already at sea should stay offshore in deep water until further advised
- Go to higher ground, at least ten metres above sea level, or if possible move at least one kilometre away from all beaches and the water's edge of harbours and coastal estuaries
- Take only essential items that you can carry including important papers, family photographs and medical needs
- It may be in your own interests to walk to safety if possible to avoid traffic jams
- If you cannot leave the area take shelter in the upper storey of a sturdy brick or concrete multi-storey building



AFTER all emergencies:

If outside the impacted areas:

- Do not enter these areas until an official 'Reduced threat: return with caution' has been issued

If inside impacted areas:

- Be aware of health and safety issues
- Keep listening to your local radio station for information, updates and advice
- Check to see if your neighbours need help
- Do not go sightseeing as this may hinder recovery efforts or put yourself and others at risk

Animals may be distraught, frightened or disoriented after a disaster event.

If any animals are missing, check with local pounds, animal shelters, animal control authorities, RSPCA or boarding kennels. Take a recent photo of your pet with you.

AFTER storms:

- Check your house or property for damage
- Stay clear of creeks, drains, causeways, gutters, streams, fallen trees, power lines and any damaged buildings

The NSW SES can assist with temporary measures to make your property safer. Any damage needs to be assessed and repaired by qualified tradespeople.

AFTER Floods:

- Ensure the structural stability of your property before entering. Check for damage to windows, walls and the roof and be especially cautious of potential contaminants including asbestos
- Make sure the electricity and gas is turned off before going inside. Use a torch to carry out inspections inside buildings
- If power points, electrical equipment, appliances or electrical hot water systems have been exposed to floodwater or are water damaged in any way, they must be inspected by a qualified electrician before use
- Gas appliances and gas bottles that have been exposed to floodwater should be inspected for safety before use
- Wear suitable protective clothing, including boots and gloves, when cleaning up
- Be aware of any slip, trip or fall hazards
- Never eat food which has been in contact with floodwater
- Only use clean utensils and personal items



- Have a supply of fresh drinking water

The NSW SES will issue an 'Reduced threat: return with caution' when it is safe to return to an area that has been evacuated.

AFTER a Tsunami:

A Tsunami Cancellation will be issued when the tsunami threat has passed.

If you are in an area impacted by a tsunami, follow all advice and instructions given to you by emergency services.



RECOVERY

The aftermath of a natural hazard can affect people in different ways. Sometimes we may be exposed to things that are distressing.

The NSW SES has developed a [Recovery Guide](#) to assist people recover from floods, storms and tsunamis.

Here are a few tips from the guide:

- If you can, contact family or friends to let them know that you are OK or if you need help
- Follow all instructions given to you by emergency services
- Update your plan with what you have learned from this disaster

NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire and Rescue can also provide information on recovering from bushfire and urban fire - www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and www.fire.nsw.gov.au

Natural disasters can damage property and people, but they can also often help build a sense of community.

Talk to people in your community and help each other where possible. Seek out information and share it with those around you.

As part of the recovery from natural disasters, communities and Government are also supported by the non-Government sector. Community partners such as the Salvation Army, ADRA, Anglicare, St Vincent De Paul and the Red Cross provide a range of assistance to support people and communities in time of need.

Disaster Recovery Centres may be established following some disasters. Recovery centres may provide a range of welfare services including financial assistance, personal support, organising temporary accommodation and providing information and referrals. If you have been affected by floods and require assistance, contact Disaster Welfare Services on 1800 018 444