



DISASTER MANAGEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Understanding Tropical Weather – What Visitors Need to Know

Safeguarding Townsville's Environmental Health

In the Tropics, disasters like cyclones, storm surges, floods and fire can strike quickly and with little warning – but awareness and a little preparation will help keep you safe.

The North Queensland climate means cyclones, tropical storms, and flooding can occur especially during the “wet season”, between November and March.

As a visitor, it is important to be aware of your surroundings and familiarise yourself with disaster warnings and procedures. Being aware will ensure that you are prepared should a disaster strike.

WHEN A NATURAL DISASTER STRIKES >>

Stay calm! Follow any instructions given to you by emergency workers, accommodation management or local government representatives.

A series of graduated warnings – from Alert to Warning – will keep you informed if an event is expected.

If a serious event is expected, you will hear the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) - a wailing siren used throughout Australia for serious events including cyclones. When you hear the signal on radio or television (it will interrupt all programs). Pay careful attention to the message that follows, and act immediately on the advice given.

It is usual for local people to have an emergency kit organised for times of disaster.



If you are staying in a hotel, hostel or other accommodation, ask management what you should gather – they may already have appropriate stocks in place for you.

If you are staying in a mobile home, caravan or camping site, consider moving to a more secure structure or temporarily leave the area– cyclones may damage or destroy unprotected vehicles.

Keep your emergency items with you and make sure important documents (passport, cash, and identification) are placed in waterproof plastic bags and kept close to you.

Tune to any local radio station for warnings and advice. Remember that if electricity is disrupted, you may not be able to use your mobile phone.

You are safest staying where you are, advising management that you are staying, and keep well informed about the situation.

HEED WEATHER REPORTS AND WARNINGS >>

It is important that you listen to and understand weather reports and warnings before, during and after events occur.

Regular radio updates will be the best source of information from local authorities regarding progress of the event and where to obtain medical care, clothing, shelter and assistance with food and water if required.

If in doubt, ask accommodation management for advice.

EVACUATION >>

Most buildings in Townsville, including tourist accommodation facilities, have been built to withstand severe cyclones and you will be safest inside.

In the unlikely situation that officials believe an evacuation will be necessary due to high winds, potential flooding, or other reason - advice will be advertised extensively on local radio and TV regarding evacuation shelters for each area, safe routes and when to move.

If evacuating to a local shelter, follow Police and Emergency Services directions and stay together. Take your emergency items with you, and wear protective clothing, strong shoes (not sandals or thongs) and your mobile phone. If you have to stay where you are, stay tuned to local radio for updated advice.

AFTER THE EVENT >>

Keep listening to local media for official warnings, advice and further information.

Don't go outside or return from evacuation until officially advised it is safe to do so.

Beware of debris, fallen powerlines, damaged buildings and trees, and floodwaters.

Do not go sightseeing or enter flood waters.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS>>

Police, Fire and Ambulance – call 000

If activated, a disaster evacuation centre hotline will also be advertised over local media.

FURTHER INFORMATION >>

Contact Council on 4727 9000 or visit Council's website at www.townsville.qld.gov.au

You can also find more information on Townsville City Council's emergency information website:

www.townsville.qld.gov.au/community/resident/emergency