

WHAT TO DO WHEN VISITING QUEENSLAND AND A NATURAL DISASTER STRIKES

Queensland is renowned for its natural beauty and diversity of landscapes: from ancient rainforests and the Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef to the glittering Gold Coast strip.

But due to its unique climate and environment, Queensland can experience extreme weather events and natural disasters like cyclones, floods and bushfires. When visiting Queensland, you need to be prepared and ready to act in the event you will be affected by an emergency.

Tune in to a local radio or television station for weather and warning updates. Use a battery-powered radio if you have one. You can find a local radio station at <http://radio.abc.net.au/help/offline>

Log on to www.bom.gov.au for weather updates and warnings. Monitor www.qld.gov.au/alerts for emergency alerts and links.

Listen out for the standard emergency warning signal (SEWS) for serious emergency warnings and for Emergency Services personnel who may use sirens or door-knock your area with warnings.

Act **IMMEDIATELY** on advice provided. Have essential items ready to go (important documents, essential medication, battery powered radio/torch, water, first aid kit, small amount of cash).

If you are holidaying, or intending to travel to a destination, contact your holiday accommodation manager, or check the local council website for information on the local emergency and evacuation plan. Find local councils at www.bettercouncils.net.au

The Emergency Services use a range of methods to warn the community about severe weather events. When warnings are issued, you may need to consider taking the following actions as the event progresses:

ALERT	THREAT ESCALATION	IMPACT
Secure personal items.	Follow emergency plan.	Shelter in accommodation, or in a cyclone shelter or evacuation centre if you have evacuated.
Check with accommodation provider about emergency plan.	Emergency Services may recommend voluntary evacuation, or direct you to evacuate. It is in your best interest to follow safety advice. You can find out where to go from: local radio station, accommodation provider, Emergency Services personnel, or local council. Usually a cyclone shelter (in a cyclone) or an evacuation centre is recommended.	IF LIFE OR PROPERTY IS THREATENED, DIAL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR POLICE, FIRE OR AMBULANCE.
If you are in a warning area, you may choose to leave for a safer location, if safe to do so.	If you need to evacuate, ensure you carry any essential items with you.	Remain indoors until it is safe to leave.
Finalise preparations.	Shelter and wait for further updates.	Do not re-enter evacuated buildings until safe to do so.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A NATURAL DISASTER DISRUPTS YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

If a natural disaster such as a cyclone or flood occurs in the area you are holidaying in or planning to travel to and you need to postpone or cancel your trip, you have certain rights under Australian Consumer Law.

There may also be other instances when you are required to leave an area, or are prevented from entering it in the first place, such as when the accommodation has been destroyed, access roads have been closed or the authorities have advised that the area is not safe to enter.

CONTACT THE TRAVEL PROVIDER

Contact the travel provider (for example, travel agent, accommodation provider, airline, bus or train service) to either cancel the booking and seek a refund for any items/services that are not provided (e.g. unused nights of a hotel stay), or seek compensation for the difference in value between the service delivered and what was paid for it.

For transport bookings such as airline flights, contact your provider prior to the departure date to check whether it has been delayed or cancelled. If it has, some providers may offer options including refunds and rescheduling.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

If you cannot resolve your request with the provider, you may be able to claim costs incurred through your travel insurance. Contact your insurance provider to discuss your cover.

Benefits may be paid if you are ordered to evacuate, or a natural disaster renders your accommodation uninhabitable.

If you miss a cruise/tour or are delayed as a result of a natural disaster, benefits may be paid to reimburse unexpected costs.

CREDIT CARD

If you've booked using a credit or debit card (and you selected 'credit' when you paid), you can seek a chargeback from your bank.

Banks can reverse a payment if your travel agent or supplier does not deliver the services as requested, in accordance with card scheme rules set by Visa, MasterCard or American Express. This means the money goes back onto your credit card.

Contact your credit card provider to discuss whether this might be an option for you.

USEFUL CONTACTS FOR SAFETY INFORMATION AND ADVICE

- » **FOR ADVICE ON HOW TO PREPARE FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF NATURAL DISASTERS, INCLUDING CHECKLISTS FOR EVACUATION AND EMERGENCY KITS AND INFORMATION IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH:**
Get Ready Queensland (visit www.getready.qld.gov.au)
- » **FOR ROAD CONDITIONS AND CLOSURES:** RACQ (go to www.racq.com.au) or Queensland Traffic (search www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au)
- » **FOR ADVICE AND WARNINGS:** Visit Smart Traveller (go to www.smarttraveller.gov.au) or Queensland Police (go to www.police.qld.gov.au) – real time updates on Facebook and Twitter
- » **TO LET YOUR LOVED ONES KNOW YOU'RE SAFE AND MAKE IT EASIER TO CONTACT YOU IN AN EMERGENCY:**
Log in to Register.Find.Reunite (go to www.register.redcross.org.au) or Facebook safety check (if you have an account, you will receive a notification to check in if you are in the impact area)
- » **FOR NATIONAL PARKS, WILDLIFE AND CAMPING INFORMATION:** Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (go to www.npsr.qld.gov.au)
- » **FOR SURF AND BEACH SAFETY:** Surf Life Saving Queensland (go to www.lifesaving.com.au)
- » **FOR LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE – TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING SERVICE – FREE SERVICE:**
(go to www.tisnational.gov.au or call 131 450)

For further information, contact your local consumer protection agency.

Queensland Office of Fair Trading
13 QGOV (13 74 68)
www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au



**Queensland
Government**

Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development
and the Commonwealth Games