

Hazard 3 Flood



Floods are New Zealand's number one hazard in terms of frequency, losses and declared civil defence emergencies. Floods can cause injury and loss of life, damage to property and infrastructure, loss of stock, and contamination of water and land.

Floods are usually caused by continuous heavy rain or thunderstorms but can also result from tsunamis and coastal storm inundation. A flood becomes dangerous if:

- the water is very deep or travelling very fast
- the floods have risen very quickly
- the floodwater contains debris, such as trees and sheets of corrugated iron

Getting ready before a flood strikes will help reduce damage to your home and business and help you survive.

Before A Flood

- Find out from your local council if your home or business is at risk from flooding. Ask about evacuation plans and local public alerting systems; how you can reduce the risk of future flooding to your home or business; and what to do with your pets and livestock if you have to evacuate.
- Know where the closest high ground is and how to get there.
- Develop a **Household Emergency Plan**. Assemble and maintain your **Emergency Survival Items** for your home as well as a portable getaway kit.
- Check your insurance policy to ensure you have sufficient cover.

During a flood or if a flood is imminent

- Listen to your local radio stations as emergency management officials will be broadcasting the most appropriate advice for your community and situation.
- If you have a disability or need support, make contact with your support network.
- Put your household emergency plan into action and check your getaway kit. Be prepared to evacuate quickly if it becomes necessary.
- Where possible, move pets inside or to a safe place, and move stock to higher ground.
- Consider using sandbags to keep water away from your home.
- Lift valuable household items and chemicals as high above the floor as possible.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks and storage containers with clean water in case water becomes contaminated.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities as it can help prevent damage to your home or community. Unplug small appliances to avoid damage from power surges.
- Do not attempt to drive or walk through floodwaters unless it is absolutely essential.

After a flood

- It may not be safe to return home even when the floodwaters have receded. Continue to listen to your local radio station for civil defence instructions.
- Help others if you can, especially people who may require special assistance.
- Throw away food including canned goods and water that has been contaminated by floodwater.
- Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you are certain it is not contaminated. If in doubt, check with your local council or public health authority.
- Look for and report broken utility lines to appropriate authorities.
- If your property is damaged, take notes and photographs for insurance purposes. If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company as soon as possible.



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