

PLAN. PREPARE. SURVIVE

Shelter and Evacuation Options

for residents of the Townsville region



People living in a cyclone-prone area should have a household emergency plan, which includes evacuation and shelter considerations. Residents and visitors should plan and prepare to shelter in a safe and secure structure either at home or with family and friends, or relocate outside the warning area.

Natural disasters can pose a significant risk to our community. The major risk to the Townsville region is from Tropical Cyclones.

Tropical cyclones can contain a range of dangerous hazards that include:

- **gale force winds** that can extend for hundreds of kilometres from the calm 'eye' or centre of the cyclone where wind speeds can reach over 280 km/h;
- **local rises in sea level** known as storm tide. When a storm surge arrives on top of a high tide, the resulting inundation can reach areas that might otherwise have been safe; and
- **torrential rainfall** that can lead to rapid rises in water levels of rivers, creeks and drainage systems causing flash flooding and inundation of areas not usually prone to flooding.

These hazards have the potential to cause isolation of local communities and interrupt essential services such as power, water and communications.

Shelter and evacuation options

Prior to each cyclone season, Townsville residents need to develop their own household emergency plan that includes evacuation and shelter considerations based on their circumstances and exposure to risk.

Follow these key steps to determine your best sheltering option in the event of a cyclone:

1. What is your risk?

- **Consider the location of your home.**
Council has identified areas that may need to evacuate if a storm tide or localised flooding threatens. Find out if you live in a storm tide evacuation zone by visiting www.townsville.qld.gov.au and follow the links to disaster information. If you do live in an evacuation zone, you need to plan and prepare now so you can quickly evacuate and shelter in a safer place.
- **Consider the construction and condition of your home.**
Do you live in an older home (built before 1982) that is poorly maintained, or do you live in a caravan or temporary dwelling? If you do, you need to plan and prepare now so you can quickly evacuate and shelter in a safer place when the need arises.

- **Consider your needs.**

If you live alone or if you have special care needs, you need to plan and prepare now so you can quickly evacuate and shelter in a safer place when the need arises. Your plans must also include what you will do with your pets as they are not permitted in commercial accommodation nor Public Cyclone Shelters or Places of Refuge.

2. Consider your shelter options:

- **Shelter in Place.**

If you live in a well constructed home located outside of a storm tide evacuation zone, your best option is to plan and prepare to shelter in place in your home with your family, friends and pets. It is important you identify the strongest, most protected part of your home to shelter in. This is usually the smallest room in the house with the least number of windows and external walls.

- **Evacuate to Shelter in a Safer Place.**

If you are potentially at risk, your best option is to pre-arrange your evacuation so you can shelter in a safer place, such as:

- » With friends or family that live in a safer location:
 - a) Friends or family who live outside the storm tide evacuation zone and in a well maintained structure / home, or
 - b) Friends or family who live in another community outside the cyclone warning area,
- » In commercial accommodation (such as a motel) in another community outside the warning area.

If evacuation is not required for a storm tide and your home is well-constructed and maintained, then your best option is to shelter in place with family and friends, in your own home.

3. Further considerations when planning for your evacuation so you can shelter in a safer place include:

- Plan to leave early, well before strong winds start to impact your area;
- Allow time to secure and protect your property;
- You may need to sustain yourself and your family for a few days, so ensure you have prepared supplies to take in your evacuation kit;
- Check in advance (with family or friends, who you may be sheltering with) whether you can take your pets with you and pack supplies for your pets in your evacuation kit; and
- For more information, read through the evacuation checklist in the *Get Ready Queensland* emergency plan template (www.qld.gov.au/getready) or information on council's web site (www.townsville.qld.gov.au).

Public shelter options:

Public Cyclone Shelters and local buildings activated as a Place of Refuge must be considered as the **last option** for residents that live in an evacuation zone, and after they have exhausted all other shelter options, or if they are unable to leave the warning area. Both types of facilities are intended as short term shelter options and have very basic amenities.

You and your family will be much more comfortable sheltering at home, or at a family member's or friend's home located in an area outside local evacuation zones or in commercial accommodation in a location outside the warning area.

Residents in evacuation zones with no alternative sheltering option will be advised via local radio and on council's web site, when the Shelters are activated. The location of these Shelters will be included in this advice.

Limitations of Public Cyclone Shelters and designated Places of Refuge:

These facilities have limited capacity and will be used to accommodate as many people as possible. This means that there will be limited space and you will need to be aware of the following limitations and conditions:

- **You will be allocated a limited space and** will not be able to lie or sit on a mattress or stretcher (there is not enough space for bedding);
- **Domestic pets and other animals will not be allowed in the Shelter** and you will need to make other arrangements prior to the cyclone season for sheltering your pets. Note: Assistance animals are permitted to enter the Shelter and stay with owners;
- **All personal belongings are to be kept in a backpack or small bag.** You will need to be self-sufficient and support yourself and your family for the duration of the shelter period, so you need to include personal medications, essential non-perishable food and refreshments, identification papers and essential personal items. Anything deemed oversized and / or unnecessary will not be permitted into the Shelter;
- There are no cooking facilities, limited bathroom facilities, and limited medical support;
- There will be limited transport and parking options; and
- **When using a Public Shelter: You may be in the facility for up to 18 hours or more.** During this time the building will be "locked down" for a period when the cyclone is passing. To ensure the structural integrity of the building and the safety of occupants during this time, there will be no ability to enter OR leave the Shelter.

Public Shelter Conditions of Entry

All persons seeking entry to a Public Shelter will be required to agree to conditions outlined in the Public Shelter Code of Conduct (see below).

Any person unable or unwilling to abide by these conditions will need to make alternate sheltering arrangements (e.g. sheltering with family or friends located outside the storm tide evacuation zone or leaving the area that will be subject to the cyclone and storm tide impacts).

Shelter occupants who do not comply with the Code of Conduct prior to lock down may be required to leave

the facility. Occupants who do not comply with the Code of Conduct after lock down may be subject to prosecution.

Prohibited Items

It is a condition of entry that prohibited items must not be brought into the Shelter, these include:

- All alcohol;
- All weapons including knives or similar edged items;
- All illicit drugs and associated items; and
- All aerosols (except personal medications such as asthma puffers etc.)

People seeking entry to the Shelter will be required to surrender any prohibited items. You and your belongings may be searched by a Queensland Police Officer securing the facility, if officers have a reasonable belief that such items have been taken into the Shelter.



Public Shelter Code of Conduct

All people occupying the Shelter will:

- Provide the required registration details to Shelter staff prior to entry to the Shelter;
- Comply with directions of Shelter staff;
- **Not to use anything that is dangerous or interferes with the health and comfort of yourself and others (this includes the consumption of alcohol, illicit drugs or tobacco products / smoking). Non-compliance with this requirement may result in prosecution;**
- Be mindful of the large number of persons within a small space and conduct yourself in a calm manner that does not create any unnecessary disruption, disorder or conflict with fellow shelter occupants;
- Not intentionally cause damage to Shelter building, furniture, fittings and fixtures and immediately report any accidental damage, incidents of vandalism, theft and / or other illegal activity to Shelter staff;

- Supervise children closely. Children remain the responsibility of parents or guardians and must be accompanied to the toilets and showers by a parent or guardian;
- Wear footwear at all times for safety and hygiene reasons;
- Occupy the area allocated to them by the Shelter staff and stow personal items in that area. Occupants are responsible for the security of their own valuables;
- Keep walkways and emergency exits clear;
- Remain in the main area of the Shelter and not enter storerooms, kitchens or office space unless requested or permitted by Shelter staff;
- Respect others and not shout, yell or use loud obscene language;
- Use earphones to listen to battery powered personal music / electronic devices;
- Not use electronic devices with Shelter power outlets, unless approved by Shelter staff;
- Maintain cleanliness and dispose of rubbish in the bins provided; and
- Notify Shelter staff of any medical emergency or other critical incidents.

Post event support for impacted residents:

Depending on the scale of the event, other sites may be established to provide short term accommodation for impacted residents (Evacuation Centres) and Recovery Centres to support impacted residents with a range of recovery services.

Advice on the activation and location of such centres will be provided after the event by local authorities at the appropriate time.

SUMMARY

Prior to each cyclone season, Townsville residents and visitors should consider their level of risk regarding cyclones and their associated hazards and take precautionary measures to prepare themselves for sheltering and/or evacuating from their homes if necessary.

For further information:

Council Resources:

- www.townsville.qld.gov.au
- Council Call Centre: 1300 878 001
- Council social media:
 - »  TCC_NEWS
 - »  Townsville Disaster Information

Local Radio:

- ABC Local Radio (630AM)
- 4TO FM (102.3FM)
- Hot FM (103.1 FM)
- Zinc (100.7 FM)
- MIX FM (106.3 FM)
- Triple T (103.9 FM)

Other Resources:

- www.qld.gov.au/getready
- www.QldAlert.com
-  QldSES or QPSmedia
-  QldSES or QueenslandPolice
- Bureau of Meteorology - QLD Tropical Cyclone Warnings:
 - » 1300 659 212
 - » www.bom.gov.au/qld/warnings

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