

» stay healthy during natural disasters



February 2020

» Cleaning up

- Electrical equipment and hot water systems exposed to floodwater or water damaged in any way should be inspected for safety by a licensed electrician before use.
 - Gas appliances and gas bottles affected by floodwater should be inspected by a qualified person before use.
 - Never use an electricity generator indoors.
 - Wash out mud, dirt and debris from your house with a hose, starting at the highest point and working down to ground level.
 - Rake yards to remove debris. If necessary, hose down the yard, apply lime and wet down (lime can be purchased at your local hardware store).
 - Where possible, remove all wet items such as floor coverings, rugs, mats, furniture, bedding, linen and clothing. If floor coverings are removed, the floor underneath should be thoroughly cleaned and dried before any new material is laid.
 - Start drying out the house as soon as floodwaters recede. On dry days keep all doors and windows open to assist with drying. Fans may also help. Attempt to drain water away from under the house to increase airflow and assist drying. Check for trapped water or mud in walls or floor cavities.
 - Mould or mildew may be removed with household bleach, however take care as the strength of the product may ruin some household items.
 - Soft toys or moulded plastic children's toys with air injection holes that have been affected by floodwaters should be discarded. Solid toys should be washed and disinfected.
 - All equipment and surfaces affected by floodwaters need to be cleaned (eg refrigerators and cupboards).
 - Floors, walls, benches and sinks should be thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water and then disinfected by wiping or spraying surfaces with a chlorine bleach solution or a product labelled as a disinfectant. Once disinfected, allow to dry. Always wear gloves and protective clothing and do not touch face or eyes while using disinfectants.
- Linen, blankets and clothing should be washed in hot water (if instructions allow) or dry-cleaned.
 - Flood-affected mattresses are difficult to treat and may need to be discarded. Foam rubber mattresses may be thoroughly washed with a hose. A detergent solution should then be squeezed through the mattress and allow to dry. Other foam furniture, such as lounge chairs, may be air-dried in the sun then sprayed thoroughly with a disinfectant solution. Check with a furniture renovator if you are unsure about their condition.

» Make a cleaning solution

Fill a 10 litre bucket with water, add either

- 50ml (1/4 cup) of 4% chlorine household bleach

or

- 8-16ml (dessertspoon) of 12.5% chlorine liquid pool chlorine

» Coastline and beach erosion

If visiting local beaches, please exercise extreme caution particularly on beach access tracks and coastal dunes that may have been impacted by storm erosion.

If beaches are closed, please stay away and extreme caution will be needed even after the weather event due to erosion.

» Power lines and electricity

Report fallen power lines to your power bill provider:

- Ausgrid 131 388
- Endeavour Energy 131 003
- Essential Energy 132 080
- Evoenergy 131 093

»» *Fallen trees*

For assistance with fallen trees on private land, call NSW SES on 132 500.

If trees have fallen across a road, call Council on 1300 864 444 or after-hours service on 6626 6954.

»» *Closed roads*

All road signage should be complied with and closed roads should never be driven through. Offences for disregarding 'Closed Road' signs attract fines exceeding \$240 and 2 demerit points (issued by police).

Disregarding road signage during natural emergencies risks not only the safety of those in the vehicle but also the lives of rescuers.

For up to date information on road conditions refer to myroadinfo.com.au

»» *Food*

Food that has come into contact with floodwater or has an unusual odour, colour or texture should be thrown out.

If power is cut for more than four hours, food stored in the fridge should be disposed of. If the freezer door is kept shut, frozen food will not spoil for 24 hours. Never refreeze food that has defrosted during a power failure.

The consumption of unsafe food may cause serious illness. If in doubt, throw it out!

»» *Personal hygiene*

- It is critical to practice basic hygiene during the flood and clean-up period. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and clean water after handling flood-affected items or participating in any flood clean-up activities, after going to the toilet and always before handling or eating food.
- Wear suitable protective clothing including boots, gloves and eye protection while cleaning up.
- Avoid coughing or sneezing on others and avoid the use of common or unclean eating utensils, toothbrushes, towels or handkerchiefs.
- Avoid all unnecessary contact with mud and floodwaters. If you must walk through mud or enter floodwaters, always wear solid shoes, not thongs or sandals. Keep children out of flood-affected areas.
- All cuts and abrasions should be cleaned, treated with antiseptic and covered immediately. If a deep cut or wound has had contact with floodwaters or if a wound develops redness, swelling or discharge, seek immediate medical attention.
- If you have severe diarrhoea or vomiting, please seek immediate medical assistance. The best fluids to take are those that contain a mixture of special salts (electrolytes) and sugars (eg Gastrolyte).

»» *Mosquitoes*

Avoid being bitten by mosquitoes by using insect repellent on exposed skin areas and cover up as much as possible with loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing.

To avoid creating mosquito breeding sites in your yard, empty out pot plant bases, remove all water-holding rubbish and try to encourage drainage from your yard.

»» *Missing and found animals*

If your pet is missing, report it to Council online using the 'Report a Missing Pet' form at ballina.nsw.gov.au or contact Council on 6686 1210 or after hours on 6626 6954.

To report straying stock in public areas such as roads and road reserves, call Council's Rangers on 6686 1210.

To report animals in distress and to report cruelty issues, ph RSPCA on 1300 278 358 or contact police.

»» *Farm chemicals*

- Flood damaged chemical storage sites pose a serious risk to human and animal health and to the environment.
- If floodwater surrounds your chemical storage site or you can see visible damage, approach with caution and only enter if safe to do so.
- Do not enter the site if there is severe damage and it's evident that chemical contamination has occurred.
- Treat water within the site as contaminated, avoid contact with your skin.
- If the water from your chemical storage site has spilled outside, divert it away from nearby water bodies using sand or soil.
- Triple rinse and puncture through empty containers and dispose via a commercial disposal program (eg DrumMuster, ph 1800 008 707) or approved waste management facility.
- Dispose of unwanted concentrated chemicals via a licensed waste disposal company or chemical collection program (eg ChemClear, ph 1800 008 182).
- If you have any concern about flood affected farm chemicals, contact Fire & Rescue NSW on 000.

»» *Asbestos*

Material containing asbestos should never be cleaned using a high pressure water cleaner.

Information regarding the cleaning and removal of asbestos materials can be found online at asbestosawareness.com.au or at ballina.nsw.gov.au

»» *Drinking water*

Drinking water supplies can be affected by floods. If a 'boil water' alert has been issued in your area, observe it strictly to prevent illness. Water for eating and drinking (including brushing teeth, washing raw food, making ice and pet's drinking water) should be brought to a rolling boil and then allowed to cool. Under no circumstances should non-boiled water be consumed until the alert is lifted. When the 'boil water' alert is lifted, follow Council's instructions about flushing the household water pipes.

If you use a water bore for domestic purposes and it has been inundated with floodwater, NSW Health recommends you use an alternative source (eg bottled water or rainwater) or bring the water to a rolling boil before use.

If you are not sure about the quality of your drinking water, contact Council.

»» *Rainwater tanks*

Rainwater can be disinfected by bringing to a rolling boil, and allowed to cool before drinking.

If you suspect that water in the tank is contaminated, it can be chlorinated by adding powdered swimming pool chlorine (calcium hypochlorite, 65% chlorine) or liquid chlorine (sodium hypochlorite, 12.5% chlorine). You should not use stabilised chlorine (chlorine cyanurates).

Use 5 milligrams of chlorine per litre to disinfect your tank. This is equivalent to 7 grams of calcium hypochlorite (level dessertspoon) or 40 ml of sodium hypochlorite per 1000 litres of water. A lot of the chlorine may be used up during disinfection. There should be at least 0.5 milligrams per litre free chlorine, 30 minutes after the chlorine is added - you can use a pool chlorine test kit to measure how much chlorine is in the water (note that milligrams per litre is the same as parts per million).

To maintain safe water supply after the initial dosage, 1 gram of calcium hypochlorite or 4 ml of sodium hypochlorite per 1000 litres should be added to the rainwater tank and allowed to stand for a minimum of two hours. The water will be safe to drink provided the chlorine smell is not too strong.

»» *On-site sewage management*

If you suspect damage has occurred to your on-site sewage management system, eg septic tank or disposal field, have it professionally inspected and/or serviced by a qualified plumber.

»» *Swimming and water quality*

Floodwater and leftover debris may be contaminated with sewage. To prevent illness, contact with floodwater should be minimised.

Avoid swimming at least one day after heavy rain at ocean beaches and for three days in rivers, lagoons and estuaries.

Always check for submerged objects when swimming, especially when visibility is limited.

For further information on beach safety, visit the Beachwatch website environment.nsw.gov.au/beach

»» *Further information*

Police, Fire, Ambulance

Ph 000

NSW SES

Ph 132 500

Ballina Shire Council

Ph 1300 864 444

After Hours service ph 02 6626 6954

ballina.nsw.gov.au

NSW Health Lismore

Ph 02 6620 7500

emergency.health.nsw.gov.au

Emergency Management NSW

emergency.nsw.gov.au

RSPCA

Ph 1300 278 358

DrumMuster

Ph 1800 008 707

ChemClear

Ph 1800 008 182

Asbestos Awareness

asbestosawareness.com.au

»» *If you have any questions or concerns please contact:*

Ballina Shire Council 1300 864 444
ballina.nsw.gov.au

