(https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/disaster-types/cyclone-severe-storm)

Cyclones and severe storms

Cyclones and severe storms can produce hail, flooding (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/disaster-types/flood) rains, lightning, winds greater than 200km/h and storm surge (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/disaster-types/storm-surge).

Pay attention to weather forecasts during storm season (November–April)—keeping informed will help you protect your family and property.

Prepare your home (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/prepare-for-disasters/prepare-home) for cyclones and severe storms before they happen.

When you hear a severe storm or cyclone warning

- Stay tuned in to warnings
- Contact family and neighbours to make sure everyone knows
- Shelter and secure animals
- Secure outdoor furniture, and any other loose outside items: these can become dangerous missiles during high winds
- If you have a swimming pool, submerge plastic outdoor furniture to prevent it flying around in high winds
- Move wheelie bins inside or fill with water
- Park vehicles under shelter or cover with firmly tied tarpaulins or blankets
- Unplug all electrical items, aerials and computer modems
- Turn off electricity and gas main supplies if instructed by authorities
- Fill buckets and baths with clean water in case the water supply becomes. restricted (make sure you have water purification tablets to make water drinkable)
- Secure windows

- If windows have shutters, close them
- Close curtains or blinds
- If you have a boat, secure it.

Category wind gusts (km/h) and typical impact

Category	Strongest Gust	Typical effects
1 - Tropical Cyclone	Less than 125 km/h Gales	Minimal house damage. Damage to some crops, trees and caravans. Boats may drag moorings.
2 - Tropical Cyclone	126-164 km/h Destructive winds	Minor house damage. Significant damage to signs, trees and caravans. Heavy damage to some crops. Risk of power failure. Small boats may break moorings.
3 - Severe Tropical Cyclone	165-224 km/h Very destructive winds	Some roof and structural damage. Some caravans destroyed. Power failure likely.
4 - Severe Tropical Cyclone	225-279 km/h Very destructive winds	Significant roofing and structural damage. Many caravans destroyed and blown away. Dangerous airborne debris. Widespread power failures.
5 - Severe Tropical Cyclone	More than 280 km/h Extremely destructive winds	Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction.

Evacuate or stay at home?

Find out from your council (https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/local-government/for-the-community/local-government-directory/search-the-local-government-directory) if your home is in a storm tide evacuation area. If it is, stay with friends or family who live in secure accommodation, in an area further inland and on higher ground.

If you don't live in a storm tide evacuation area, staying in your home is often the best option. However, if you live in a home built before 1982, or have special needs, it may be safer to stay with family or friends in a newer home.

Consider any special medical needs you may have, such as access to power, clean water (for dialysis) or oxygen.

Make sure you have an evacuation plan (https://www.getready.qld.gov.au/get-prepared/3-steps-get-ready/step-1-have-plan) and kit (https://www.getready.qld.gov.au/emergencykit).

Cyclone shelters

Consider a cyclone shelter only as a last resort—cyclone shelters have very basic facilities and are intended as short-term shelter.

Your local council will decide when to open a cyclone shelter. It will be announced on local ABC radio (ABC frequency finder (http://www.abc.net.au/radio/frequency-finder/)) and other media.

The Department of Housing and Public Works maintains a register of cyclone shelters. These shelters are multi-purpose and are available for year-round use as community sports facilities.

Please contact your local council (https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/local-government/for-the-community/local-government-directory/search-the-local-government-directory) for more information about your nearest cyclone shelter.

During a severe storm or cyclone

If **at home:**

- stay tuned in to warnings (keep a battery-powered radio in your emergency kit (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/prepare-for-disasters/emergency-kit))
- activate your emergency plan (https://www.getready.qld.gov.au/get-prepared/3-steps-get-ready/step-1-have-plan)
- stay inside and shelter well clear of windows, doors and skylights
- don't use a landline telephone or taps during a severe storm—lightning can travel down phone lines and plumbing.
- If the building starts to break up, shelter in the strongest part (cellar, internal room, hallway or built-in wardrobe) under a mattress, strong table or bench.

If **outdoors**, seek solid enclosed shelter.

If **driving**, stop clear of trees, power lines and streams.

After a cyclone

The time immediately after a cyclone is often as dangerous as the event itself. People have been injured or killed while sightseeing in the aftermath.

Once authorities have advised that the cyclone has passed, remember to:

- listen to your radio and remain indoors until advised it is safe to go outside
- use recommended safe routes to return to your home
- **not** go sightseeing
- check on your neighbours if necessary
- **not** use electrical appliances that have been wet, until they are checked for safety
- boil or purify your water until supplies are declared safe
- stay away from damaged powerlines, fallen trees and flood water

- contact your local council (https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/local-government/for-the-community/local-government-directory/search-the-local-government-directory) if you need help, or if your home is uninhabitable due to cyclone damage.

More information

- Warnings and alerts (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/warnings-alerts)
- Emergency kit (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/prepare-for-disasters/emergency-kit)
- Evacuation plan (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/evacuation-plan) and kit (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/prepare-for-disasters/evacuation-kit)
- Preparing your home (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/prepare-for-disasters/prepare-home)
- Flooding (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/disaster-types/flood)
- Storm surge (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/disaster-types/storm-surge)

Cyclone watches and cyclone warnings —what's the difference?

The Bureau of Meteorology issues cyclone 'watches' or 'warnings' (http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/about/warnings/advice.shtml) depending on how immediate the threat is.

Cyclone watch—issued when cyclonic winds are expected within **24 to 48 hours**.

Cyclone warning—issued when cyclonic winds are expected **within 24 hours**.

Beware the calm eye of the cyclone

Some people go outside in the eye of a cyclone, mistakenly believing that the cyclone has passed. The eye is in the centre of the cyclone and can vary in size, from 10km to 100km, depending on the severity of the storm.

Due to the least amount of air pressure in the eye, it produces clear weather with light wind, no clouds, no rain and some sunshine. But, the storm is not over yet, it is only the middle of the storm.

Depending on the wind gusts, the eye may pass in a few minutes or in a few hours. Stay inside until you hear official advice that it’s safe to go outside.

Don't ignore the dangers

Don't drive through floodwater

Each year, emergency services receive calls for help from people who have ignored traffic signs and road closures and become stranded in floodwater—putting themselves and their rescuers at risk. Think about the consequences of your actions. Don't risk your life or the lives of others.

Don't play in or around floodwater

Children drown every year in floods. Warn children of the dangers—don’t let them play in or around floodwater.

Last updated: 6 March 2025