

Respond

ACTIONS TO TAKE WHEN A SEVERE WEATHER EVENT THREATENS YOUR FARM BUSINESS

If a severe weather event is approaching and likely to affect your district, you need to be ready to respond quickly and effectively to make best use of whatever time is available.

The RESPOND step in the PPRR process is about the actions that need to be taken immediately before and after a severe weather event to help

- minimize potential impacts
- avoid as much damage as possible to your crops, farm and business and
- ensure the safety of family, staff, livestock and pets.

While the focus is often on making preparations around the property, there are also important administrative tasks to do.

It is a good idea to have a written emergency response plan to guide the tasks of all members of your team.

BEFORE THE EVENT

The specific management actions required will be different for every farm business, however, some matters to consider:

Farm team

- Review emergency, evacuation and safety plans with family and staff
- Check on neighbours
- Prepare to evacuate if necessary.

Farm tasks

- Shut off electricity in areas exposed to flooding /storm damage, if necessary
- Move equipment / vehicles to protected/elevated locations
- Move pumps
- Secure fuel, chemical, fertiliser stores
- Check, secure and prepare buildings / sheds
- Check property for loose items (especially iron/metal/timber)
- Trim vegetation
- Crop / orchard maintenance
 - Early harvest, if appropriate
 - De-leaf or cut back trees to better withstand high winds, if appropriate/ recommended for your crop

- Manage livestock and pets
- Prepare to switch to alternate power sources, if necessary.

Farm administration

- Check / finalise business emergency kit and emergency contact list
- Make back-ups of essential data or records to USB drives or portable hard drives
- Ensure mobile phones/tablets/laptops and spare batteries are fully charged
- Review back-up/alternate power plans for essential areas of farm business and home
- Check orders/deliveries and cancel if necessary/ possible
- Advise customers / supply chain partners of potential disruption to supply
- Have plenty of cash available for post disaster purchases if power is out

Communications

- Stay tuned to media/internet for alerts and warnings
- Make use of social media (Twitter, Facebook)
 - The Queensland Police, the Australian

Red Cross, some city / regional councils and rural fire services use Twitter to share critical information with followers during and after emergency events

- To see if an organization is part of the emergency alert service program, check out their Twitter profile
- To subscribe to alert notifications, users can go directly to an organisation's twitter account set-up page at [twitter.com/\[username\]/alerts](https://twitter.com/[username]/alerts) – for example the Brisbane City Council's username is @brisbanecityqld and the Queensland Police is @QPSmedia

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EVENT

The specific actions required after a severe weather event will be different for every farm business and will depend on the extent of damage. Be aware that if the weather event was very severe and the impact significant, people may go into emotional shock, which can affect their ability to act or make decisions.

Some matters to consider:

Safety

- Be aware of any safety risks around your home, properties or farm buildings

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following a severe weather event

- Check that all people on-site are safe
- Stay away from fallen power lines
- Turn off electricity and gas before doing any work on the property
- Arrange for licensed electrical / gas contractors to inspect or reconnect power/appliances/switch boards and get safety/test certificates.

Communications

- Tune into news or alerts for your district
- Have your emergency and recovery contact lists handy for easy reference
- Social media can be a good way to keep in touch with family and friends without tying up phone lines. For example, through Facebook posts, you can:
 - Let family and friends know if you are ok or need help
 - Inform business and supply chain partners of your status
 - Provide property access information
- If all phone and internet connections are down, old technologies like two-way radio and ham radio might have a role.

Farm tasks

- Record damage with photographs / video when it is safe to move around the property
- Assess crop damage and whether any produce is recoverable/marketable
- Prepare a preliminary assessment of impacts, damage and losses using the standard industry form www.growcom.com.au/disaster-recovery
- Share your preliminary impact assessment information with Growcom or your industry organisation.

Farm team

- Check that team members / staff are safe

Having purposeful work to do can help people overcome shock/trauma, so allocate tasks to team members, if appropriate.

Road conditions and closures

- Department of Transport and Main Roads
Phone 13 19 40
Website <http://131940.qld.gov.au/>
Facebook www.facebook.com/TMRQld
- 24 hour statewide road reports
1300 130 595.

Growcom

- Following a significant severe weather event or natural disaster, Growcom coordinates its staff to contact as many growers as possible in the districts affected by the event. We do this to check in with growers, to begin scoping the extent of damage, and to let growers know about any immediate assistance that has been made available.
- Any information that Growcom can gather during these calls is used to help assess the need for industry assistance. If required, Growcom will work with Regional Councils, Queensland Farmers Federation, DAFF and others to prepare a case for government assistance through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). Our aim is to mobilize support and resources for the horticulture industry as rapidly as possible.
- Growcom will maintain disaster preparedness, response and recovery information on our website and social media.