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What to do in an emergency

If an emergency happens, your first priority is the safety of you and your employees. Then you can look at protecting your business and assets. There's a range of support available to help you get your business back up and running. Find out what to do in an emergency, how to keep up-to-date, and how to get help.

Natural disasters and emergency situations can strike without warning. It's important to be ready for all sorts of emergencies, whether:

- natural – such as floods, drought, fire, landslides and storms
- human caused – such as crime, terrorism or riots
- technological – such as explosions, building or bridge collapse.

Follow our steps to help keep you, your employees and business safe.

1. Follow emergency procedures

When faced with an emergency situation – in addition to following your [business's emergency procedures](#) (<https://business.gov.au/planning/business-plans/develop-an-emergency-management-plan>), you may wish to use our take action checklist. This is designed to be completed when an emergency happens.

Download the take action checklist.

[Take action checklist](#)

↓ DOCX · 0.04 Mb

https://business.gov.au/-/media/business-information/templates-and-tools/take-action-checklist-doc.docx?sc_lang=en&hash=57900FADF836C36C30555A09A2EE155B

2. Think safety first

Be guided by emergency services personnel. It's important to listen to their advice if you need to evacuate.

If you do evacuate, take your emergency kit and ensure everyone is accounted for and in a safe location. Check in with the people on your emergency contacts list.

Depending on the emergency, you may have time to:

- switch off electricity, gas and water
- board up windows

- sandbag entryways.

3. Know the emergency risks

Be aware of any immediate emergency risks by following government social media channels and websites such as the:

- Department of Home Affairs' [Emergency management](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/emergency-management) (<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/emergency-management>) information
- [Bureau of Meteorology](http://www.bom.gov.au/) (<http://www.bom.gov.au/>) for weather warnings
- state or territory emergency services for local warnings and updates.

If you can, listen to your local radio or television for updates. Ensure you and your staff are aware of all emergency warning systems in your area.

4. Assess the impact on your business

If a natural disaster impacts your business, the business recovery checklist can help you check what to do. Use the checklist and your business [emergency management plan](https://business.gov.au/planning/business-plans/develop-an-emergency-management-plan) (<https://business.gov.au/planning/business-plans/develop-an-emergency-management-plan>) to:

- assess the impact on your business
- prioritise your efforts in your business recovery
- understand what you need to consider before you can return to business.

Download the Business recovery checklist.

[Business recovery checklist](https://business.gov.au/-/media/business-information/templates-and-tools/business-recovery-checklist-doc.docx?sc_lang=en&hash=2103F24B5D4FA0EC2FFD965718228CC3)

↓ DOCX · 0.05 Mb

[https://business.gov.au/-/media/business-information/templates-and-tools/business-recovery-checklist-doc.docx?](https://business.gov.au/-/media/business-information/templates-and-tools/business-recovery-checklist-doc.docx?sc_lang=en&hash=2103F24B5D4FA0EC2FFD965718228CC3)

[sc_lang=en&hash=2103F24B5D4FA0EC2FFD965718228CC3\)](https://business.gov.au/-/media/business-information/templates-and-tools/business-recovery-checklist-doc.docx?sc_lang=en&hash=2103F24B5D4FA0EC2FFD965718228CC3)

5. Decide what to do with your business

Once you have assessed the impact on your business, you'll have to consider what it will take to recover your business. If you're not sure your business can recover, it's a good idea to seek advice and support from an accountant or business adviser.

If there is no option but to close your business, our information on [closing your business](https://business.gov.au/exiting/closing-your-business/close-your-business) (<https://business.gov.au/exiting/closing-your-business/close-your-business>) can help you understand what you need to do.

[Use our adviser search tool to find an adviser in your area.](#)

(<https://business.gov.au/expertise-and-advice>).

→ Expertise and advice

6. Help your employees

If a natural disaster affects your business, it's likely to impact on your employees too. You and your employees can get help from personal counselling services, and may be eligible for the [Australian Government's Disaster Recovery Allowance \(DRA\)](#).

(<https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Pages/disaster-recovery-allowance.aspx>) The DRA provides short-term income support to people with a demonstrated loss of income as a direct result of a major disaster.

For useful advice on paying your employees when they're not working read the Fair Work Ombudsman's [Pay during severe weather & stand down](#) (<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/pay-and-wages/penalty-rates-allowances-and-other-payments/pay-during-severe-weather-and-stand-down>).

7. Re-establish your business

You may need to relocate your business to a temporary location such as:

- a temporary business centre
- hotel
- someone's home
- an office provided by a service provider.

Consider arranging a virtual office service such as:

- a telephone answering service
- mail forwarding
- a remote secretarial service.

Arrange a start date with employees. Consider arrangements so they can work from home or a temporary location while you rebuild.

8. Seek advice to boost your recovery

A range of small business services can advise you on business recovery:

- Find your nearest business adviser by using our [search tool](#) (<https://business.gov.au/expertise-and-advice>).
- Find your nearest [Business Enterprise Centre](#) (<https://becaustralia.org.au/>).

- Get tips on how to recover from disasters, as well as current information on disaster recovery assistance by visiting the [Disaster Assist](https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx) (<https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx>) website.
- Contact your industry association for specific information, or your local council to see if there are seminars, workshops or networking events for local businesses.

9. Improve your cash flow

There are a range of ways to improve your cash flow, such as:

- **Make an insurance claim** – make a claim as soon as possible, so the insurance company can process it quickly. If you aren't the only person affected, expect additional delays as your insurance company processes numerous claims. Talk to the [Financial Ombudsman Service](http://www.fos.org.au/) (<http://www.fos.org.au/>) if there is a dispute about your insurance claim.
- **Talk to your creditors** – explain your current financial situation to your creditors. Your bank or building society may agree to freeze your loan or offer you an interest only arrangement until you're able to recover.
- **Chase up your debtors** – contact as many debtors as you can and explain your current financial situation. Chase up any money owing to you.

10. Get financial help

Find government financial support

The level of assistance available may depend on the severity of the disaster and where you're located.

You can also search our [Grants and assistance tool](https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs) (<https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs>) to find grants that apply to your situation.

Natural disaster funding

Urgent financial assistance from the Australian Government may be available to disaster-affected communities. This is delivered through state and territory governments. You can find information on the local government areas eligible for assistance and the types of assistance available on the [Disaster Assist](https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx) (<https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx>) website. Check the website regularly – it is updated as disasters unfold.

Financial counselling services

Go to the Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) MoneySmart website for a list of [free financial counselling services](https://moneysmart.gov.au/managing-debt/financial-counselling) (<https://moneysmart.gov.au/managing-debt/financial-counselling>).

You may be eligible for financial counselling services through the [Rural Financial Counselling Service](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/rural-financial-counselling-service) (<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/rural-financial-counselling-service>). Find out more on the Rural Financial Counselling Service website or by calling [1800 686 175](https://business.gov.auTel:1800686175) (<https://business.gov.auTel:1800686175>).

Tax and lodgement help

Visit the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) website for information for businesses [dealing with natural disasters](#) (<https://www.ato.gov.au/General/Dealing-with-disasters/>). For help deferring outstanding taxes or reconstructing your tax records, call the ATO emergency support information line on [1800 806 218](https://business.gov.auTel:1800806218) (<https://business.gov.auTel:1800806218>).

Having trouble paying?

If you're a company having difficulties with lodgements, notifications, and fee payment, speak to ASIC.

You can also speak to ASIC if you lose or damage your company records. Contact ASIC on [1300 300 630](https://business.gov.auTel:1300300630) (<https://business.gov.auTel:1300300630>) or through the [ASIC](https://asic.gov.au/about-asic/contact-us/) (<https://asic.gov.au/about-asic/contact-us/>) website.

11. Protect your business online

To protect your business from scams after an emergency, visit the [SCAMwatch](https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/get-help/protect-yourself-from-scams) (<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/get-help/protect-yourself-from-scams>) website and learn how to protect yourself from scams.

For detailed advice and tips on how to protect your business online, visit the [Australian Cyber Security Centre \(ACSC\)](https://www.cyber.gov.au/) (<https://www.cyber.gov.au/>) website.

12. Consider counselling

Lifeline Australia provides free, confidential and anonymous, 24-hour telephone counselling for business owners needing emotional support. Call Lifeline on [13 11 14](https://business.gov.auTel:131114) (<https://business.gov.auTel:131114>) or visit [Lifeline Australia's](https://www.lifeline.org.au/) (<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>) their website.

13. Celebrate your recovery

Once your business recovers from an emergency, it is important to re-connect with your customers. Check our marketing information and use our free marketing plan template to help create your marketing efforts.

State and territory emergency resources

Find information on what to do in an emergency in your state or territory.

Australian Capital Territory

Emergency services updates, alerts and warnings

- [ACT State Emergency Service \(http://esa.act.gov.au/\)](http://esa.act.gov.au/)(ACTSES)
- [ACTSES Twitter feed \(http://twitter.com/ACT_SES\)](http://twitter.com/ACT_SES)
- [ACT ESA Facebook page \(http://www.facebook.com/actemergencyservicesagency?sk=wall\)](http://www.facebook.com/actemergencyservicesagency?sk=wall)
- [ACT ESA RSS feed \(http://www.esa.act.gov.au/feed\)](http://www.esa.act.gov.au/feed)
- [ESA incidents map \(http://esa.act.gov.au/community-information/incidents-map/\)](http://esa.act.gov.au/community-information/incidents-map/)

Rural fires

- [ACT Rural Fire Service \(http://esa.act.gov.au/actrfs\)](http://esa.act.gov.au/actrfs)(ACTRFS)
- [ACTRFS Twitter feed \(http://twitter.com/ACTRFS\)](http://twitter.com/ACTRFS)

Police

- [ACT Policing Twitter feed \(http://twitter.com/ACTPol_Traffic\)](http://twitter.com/ACTPol_Traffic) for updates on current traffic alerts
- [ACT Policing Online News \(https://www.policenews.act.gov.au/\)](https://www.policenews.act.gov.au/)

Road closures

- [ACT Government City Services - Road closures \(https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/roads-and-paths/act_public_road_closures\)](https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/roads-and-paths/act_public_road_closures) website or phone **13 22 81** (<https://business.gov.au/tel:132281>)

New South Wales

Emergency services updates, alerts and warnings

- [NSW State Emergency Service \(http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/\)](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/)(NSWSES) website
- [NSW SES Facebook page \(http://www.facebook.com/NSW.SES\)](http://www.facebook.com/NSW.SES)
- [NSW SES Twitter feed \(http://twitter.com/NSWSES\)](http://twitter.com/NSWSES)

Other emergency services

- [NSW Rural Fires Service \(http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/\)](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/) website
- [NSW Rural Fires Service Twitter feed \(https://twitter.com/nswrfs\)](https://twitter.com/nswrfs)
- [NSW Police Twitter feed \(http://twitter.com/nswpolice\)](http://twitter.com/nswpolice)
- [NSW Police Facebook page \(http://www.facebook.com/nswpoliceforce\)](http://www.facebook.com/nswpoliceforce)

Road closures or delays

- [Live Traffic NSW website \(https://www.livetraffic.com/desktop.html\)](https://www.livetraffic.com/desktop.html)
- [Live Traffic NSW Facebook page \(http://www.facebook.com/livetrafficnsw\)](http://www.facebook.com/livetrafficnsw)

Other information

- [Responding to](https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/for-the-community/community-service-workers/how-to-help-clients-prepare/during-an-emergency/during-an-emergency.aspx) (https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/for-the-community/community-service-workers/how-to-help-clients-prepare/during-an-emergency/during-an-emergency.aspx) and [recovering from](https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/for-the-community/community-service-workers/how-to-help-clients-prepare/after-an-emergency/after-an-emergency.aspx) (https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/for-the-community/community-service-workers/how-to-help-clients-prepare/after-an-emergency/after-an-emergency.aspx) emergencies at Emergency New South Wales
 - [Small business fire safety recovery](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=73) (http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=73) at NSW Government Fire and Rescue
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Northern Territory

Emergency services updates, alerts and warnings

- [secureNT](https://securent.nt.gov.au/) (https://securent.nt.gov.au/)
- [secureNT Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/secureNT) (http://www.facebook.com/secureNT)
- [secureNT Twitter feed](http://twitter.com/secureterritory) (http://twitter.com/secureterritory)

Other emergency services

- [NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services website](http://www.pfes.nt.gov.au/) (http://www.pfes.nt.gov.au/)
- [NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northern-Territory-Police-Force/143359822402689) (http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northern-Territory-Police-Force/143359822402689)
- [NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services Twitter feed](https://twitter.com/ntpfes) (https://twitter.com/ntpfes)
- [NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services RSS feed](https://pfes.nt.gov.au/news.rss) (https://pfes.nt.gov.au/news.rss)

Road closures or delays

- [Road Report website](http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/roadreport) (http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/roadreport)

Other information

- [Business security and emergency recovery coordination](https://dcm.nt.gov.au/strong-community/safety-and-security#heading2) (https://dcm.nt.gov.au/strong-community/safety-and-security#heading2) from Department of the Chief Minister
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Queensland

Emergency services updates, alerts and warnings

- [QLD Emergency services and safety](https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency) (https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency) website
- [Queensland Fire & Emergency Twitter feed](https://twitter.com/qldfes) (https://twitter.com/qldfes)

Other emergency services

- [Queensland Fire and Emergency Services](https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/) (https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/)(QFES) website
- [QFES Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/QldFireandEmergencyServices/) (https://www.facebook.com/QldFireandEmergencyServices/)
- [Queensland Police Service website](http://www.police.qld.gov.au/) (http://www.police.qld.gov.au/)
- [Queensland Police Service Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/QueenslandPolice?sk=wall) (http://www.facebook.com/QueenslandPolice?sk=wall)
- [Queensland Police Service Twitter feed](http://twitter.com/qpsmedia) (http://twitter.com/qpsmedia)

Road closures or delays from Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)

- [Queensland interactive traffic map](https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/index.html) (https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/index.html)
- [TMR Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/TMRQld) (http://www.facebook.com/TMRQld)
- [TMRQld Twitter feed](http://twitter.com/TMRQld) (http://twitter.com/TMRQld)

Other information (Queensland Government)

- [Preparing your business for natural disasters](https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/protecting-business/disaster-resilience/preparing-disasters) (https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/protecting-business/disaster-resilience/preparing-disasters)
- [Disaster resilience and recovery](https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/protecting-business/disaster-resilience) (https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/protecting-business/disaster-resilience)

South Australia

Emergency updates, alerts and warnings

- [South Australian State Emergency Service](http://www.ses.sa.gov.au/) (http://www.ses.sa.gov.au/)(SASES) website
- [SA SES Twitter feed](http://twitter.com/sa_ses) (http://twitter.com/sa_ses)
- [Alert SA](https://alert.sa.gov.au/) (https://alert.sa.gov.au/)

Fires

- [South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service](https://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/) (https://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/) website
- [South Australian Country Fire Service](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp) (http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp) website
- Current [warning and incidents](https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/warnings-and-incidents/) (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/warnings-and-incidents/)
- Current [fire bans and ratings](https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/bans-and-ratings.jsp) (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/bans-and-ratings.jsp)
- [SA Country Fire Service Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/countryfireservice) (http://www.facebook.com/countryfireservice)

Police

- [South Australia Police](http://www.police.sa.gov.au/sapol/home.jsp) (<http://www.police.sa.gov.au/sapol/home.jsp>)
- [SA Police Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/SouthAustraliaPolice/) (<https://www.facebook.com/SouthAustraliaPolice/>)
- [SAPoliceNews Twitter feed](http://twitter.com/sapolicenews) (<http://twitter.com/sapolicenews>)

Road closures

- [South Australia Police](http://www.police.sa.gov.au/sapol/safety_security/emergency_road_closures.jsp) (http://www.police.sa.gov.au/sapol/safety_security/emergency_road_closures.jsp)_website

Other information (South Australian Government)

- [Preparing your emergency plan](https://business.sa.gov.au/tools/preparing-your-emergency-plan) (<https://business.sa.gov.au/tools/preparing-your-emergency-plan>)

Tasmania

Emergency updates, alerts and warnings

- [State Emergency Service Tasmania](http://www.ses.tas.gov.au/) (<http://www.ses.tas.gov.au/>)_website
- [Police Tasmania community alerts](https://www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts/) (<https://www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts/>)

Police and road closures

- [Tasmania Police](http://www.police.tas.gov.au/) (<http://www.police.tas.gov.au/>)_website
- [Tasmania Police Twitter feed](https://twitter.com/TasmaniaPolice) (<https://twitter.com/TasmaniaPolice>)

Fires

- [Tasmania Fire Service](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/) (<http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/>)_website
- [Current bushfires and other incidents](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/Show?pagelId=colCurrentBushfires) (<http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/Show?pagelId=colCurrentBushfires>)

Other information (Business Point Tasmania)

- [Preparing your business for natural disasters](https://www.business.tas.gov.au/preparing_for_disasters) (https://www.business.tas.gov.au/preparing_for_disasters)

Victoria

Emergency updates, alerts and warnings

- [Victoria State Emergency Service](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au/) (<http://www.ses.vic.gov.au/>)(VICSES) website
- [VICSES interactive map](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au/warnings/warnings) (<http://www.ses.vic.gov.au/warnings/warnings>)
- [VICSES on Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/vicses) (<http://www.facebook.com/vicses>)
- [Vic Emergency App](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/vicemergency-app/) (<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/vicemergency-app/>)

Police

- [Victoria Police](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/) (http://www.police.vic.gov.au/) website
- [Victoria Police Twitter feed](https://twitter.com/VictoriaPolice) (https://twitter.com/VictoriaPolice)

Road closures or delays

- [VicRoads](https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use) (https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use) website
- [VicRoads road closures and alerts interactive map](https://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au/) (https://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au/)

Fires bans, alerts and ratings

- [Country Fire Authority](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/) (http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/)(CFA) website
- [CFA Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/cfavic) (http://www.facebook.com/cfavic)
- [CFA data feeds](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/rss-feeds/) (http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/rss-feeds/)

Other information

- [Financial Crisis Support](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/emergencies) (https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/emergencies) information from Victorian Health and Human Services
- [Crisis management for tourism businesses](https://www.business.vic.gov.au/tourism-industry-resources/Business-Tools-and-Support/crisis-management-guide/assess-risks/dont-risk-it) (https://www.business.vic.gov.au/tourism-industry-resources/Business-Tools-and-Support/crisis-management-guide/assess-risks/dont-risk-it) from Business Victoria
- Download the free [CFA Fire Ready Kit](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fire-ready-kit/) (http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fire-ready-kit/)

Western Australia

Emergency updates, alerts and warnings

- [Department of Fire and Emergency Services](https://dfes.wa.gov.au/) (https://dfes.wa.gov.au/)(DFES) website
- [Emergency WA warnings](https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/) (https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/)
- [Emergency WA fire danger ratings](https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/#firedangerratings) (https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/#firedangerratings)
- [DFES Total fire bans](https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/totalfirebans/) (https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/totalfirebans/)
- [DFES latest news](https://news.dfes.wa.gov.au/) (https://news.dfes.wa.gov.au/)
- [DFES WA Twitter feed](https://twitter.com/dfes_wa) (https://twitter.com/dfes_wa)

Police

- [WA Police website](http://www.police.wa.gov.au/) (http://www.police.wa.gov.au/)
- [WA Police Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/WA.Police) (http://www.facebook.com/WA.Police)

Road closures or delays

- [Main Roads Western Australia](https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/travel-information/driving-in-wa/roadworks-closures/) (<https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/travel-information/driving-in-wa/roadworks-closures/>)_website
- [Perth Traffic Twitter feed](http://twitter.com/perth_traffic) (http://twitter.com/perth_traffic)

Other information

- [State security and emergency coordination](https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/office-of-state-security-and-emergency-coordination) (<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/office-of-state-security-and-emergency-coordination>)_from WA government
 - [Cyclone smart publications](https://publications.dfes.wa.gov.au/?hazard=Cyclone) (<https://publications.dfes.wa.gov.au/?hazard=Cyclone>)_from the Fire and Emergency Services Authority
-