

Lifestyle Block Emergency Preparedness Handbook

Te Whakarite Paraka Noho Mō Ngā Mōrea Ohotata



Emergencies can happen at any time and when you live on a lifestyle property, you might have to deal with them on your own until outside help arrives.

This handbook gives you detailed advice on how to prepare for an emergency, what to do and who to reach out to. Now's the time to create a detailed emergency plan to keep you, your whānau and animals safe. You'll find all the help you need right here.

Team effort to keep you safe

The information in this handbook has been developed by key organisations who understand rural emergencies and have developed specific guidance to help you.

Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management (WCDEM) and Auckland Emergency Management (AEM)

Civil Defence Emergency Management works in partnership with emergency services and other organisations to prepare for, and coordinate an effective response and recovery to and from, emergency events.

Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)

The Ministry for Primary Industries is charged with overseeing, managing and regulating the farming, fishing, food, animal welfare, biosecurity, and forestry sectors of New Zealand's primary industries. During emergencies, MPI provides information on emerging issues from the primary sector and coordinates an animal welfare response.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ)

Fire and Emergency New Zealand is an integrated fire and emergency services organisation providing a wide range of vital services for communities. Its principal objectives are reducing the incidence of unwanted fires and the associated risk to life and property, protecting and preserving life, and preventing or limiting injury, damage to property, land and the environment.

Farmer's Mutual Group (FMG)

FMG is a specialist rural insurer, offering advice and insurance to farmers, growers, lifestyle block owners, businesses and those living in rural and provincial New Zealand. They are able to help rural communities prepare and recover from unexpected events, better understand their risks and how to reduce them where possible, and make sure they have the right cover in place.

Thank you to MetService, Rural Support Trust, Healthy Waters, Dairy NZ, Rural Directions, Red Cross, GeoNet, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, Farmlands, Federated Farmers, Helping You Help Animals (HUHA), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Ministry of Health and Kate Brennan from lifestyleblock.co.nz for their valuable comments and contributions.

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Section 1: Introduction

- What’s in this handbook
- Potential hazards and emergency situations on your property
- Emergency alerts and warnings
- Get to know your neighbours and networks

What’s in this handbook and how will it help you?

Living on a lifestyle block gives you the space to live the way you’d like to, but it does come with added responsibilities and potential hazards. This handbook gives you practical, detailed information on how to prepare, plan and recover from emergencies. You’ll learn how to make your property more resilient to emergency events, with step-by-step advice on how to make a plan and what to do in specific events.

Every emergency has its own challenges, but most can be overcome if you know what to do and act early. So, let’s get started.

Emergency events that could impact your property

An important first step to being prepared is knowing which emergency events could affect you. This will help you create an emergency plan that is relevant for your whānau, your property and any animals you may have.

While every property is different, emergencies that could affect you include:

- Severe weather and storms.....47
- Tornadoes50
- Flooding.....51

- Fire.....56
- Drought.....67
- Volcanic eruption71
- Earthquake and tsunami77

It’s a good idea to talk to your neighbours to find out if and how emergency events (like severe weather) have impacted your area in the past.



Go to the **Waikato regional hazard viewer map** to find out what emergency events may affect your property.
waikatoregion.govt.nz/regional-hazards-portal/

Emergency alerts and warnings

In an emergency, alerts and warnings are often issued to tell people to take a specific action if there’s a danger to lives or property. The emergency alerts and warnings will be specific about what action to take, such as ‘evacuate’.

Alerts and warnings can be sent out in several ways:

Emergency Mobile Alerts

Emergency Mobile Alerts are emergency messages sent by authorised emergency agencies to mobile phones. The alerts are broadcast to all capable phones from targeted cell towers to areas affected by serious hazards. They’re only sent when there’s a serious threat to life, health or property, or in some cases, for test purposes.



See more information about **Emergency Mobile Alerts** at bit.ly/emergency-mobile-alert

Hazards By Red Cross

The Hazard App is a FREE mobile app for Android or iOS, to help you identify hazards, reduce risks and stay informed when you need it most.

The Hazard app:

- Uses trustworthy information from the National Emergency Management Agency and your local Civil Defence offices.
- Is preloaded with information about hazards including floods, earthquakes, tsunami, fire, weather and biosecurity risks. This means you have instant access to all information, even without cell phone reception or an internet connection.
- Sends you alerts about earthquakes, tsunami, floods and other hazards in your area, and even if you don't have mobile coverage, it will still work over WiFi.
- Allows you to monitor more than one location at once, which is great for parents, grandees and planned travel destinations.

The app works on Android OS version 11 and above, and iPhone and iPad iOS14 and up.

Download the app and watch the video at: bit.ly/hazard-app



Download the **Red Cross Hazard App** at
bit.ly/hazard-app

Media

In an emergency, the media will provide regular updates. Listen to the your local radio station and follow trusted news sites.

Social media

Follow Waikato Civil Defence on Facebook **@WaikatoCivilDefence**.



Informal warnings

Informal warnings might come from friends, family, neighbours, workmates, community Facebook pages and other social media. Remember, you might need to verify the information.

If you have the time, always reach out to your neighbours, whānau and friends to make sure they've heard the alerts and warnings.

Weather warnings

It's important to stay updated on weather events, especially if your property's susceptible to flooding.

MetService (**[metservice.com](https://www.metservice.com)**) provides land-based severe weather alerts through a system of Outlooks, Watches and Warnings - depending on the certainty and severity of the event.

When a Watch is in place, stay alert and keep an eye on your local forecast for updates. Watches are used when severe weather is possible, but not imminent or certain.

Severe Weather Warnings for heavy rain, strong wind or heavy snow, are classified into two categories: Orange Warnings or Red Warnings.

Orange Warnings

An Orange Warning means you need to be prepared to take action as there could be some disruption to your day and a potential risk to people, animals and property.

Red Warnings

A Red Warning means you need to act immediately to protect yourself, your whānau, animals and property from the impact of the weather. This is reserved for only the most extreme weather events.

Watches and Warnings are also issued for severe thunderstorms which may bring torrential rain, large hail, squally winds or possibly a tornado. Unlike other warnings that normally have a longer lead-time, thunderstorm warnings are issued when severe storms are observed on the weather radar, so the time to prepare and take shelter could be less than one hour.

The Red Cross Hazard App is an excellent way to receive all watches and warnings from MetService for your current or specified location.

For more information about MetService's weather Watches and Warnings, see Appendix 1.

Get to know your neighbours and networks

It's important to know your neighbours and the support networks you can tap into.

A support network includes all sorts of people like your immediate neighbours, whānau, other lifestyle block owners, online groups, local community groups, your vet and members of the wider rural community.

If anyone from your support network will be working with you on the property in an emergency, make sure they know what their job is and that they're able to do it safely and competently. Emergencies will always be challenging, so it's good to remember that emotional support is just as important as physical and financial support. Be kind and supportive to others and you'll see it come back to you in spades.

If you're reasonably new to an area, it's also a good idea to talk regularly with your neighbours, including local farmers, who've lived in the area for longer. They'll have great information on things that've happened in the past. These are some handy questions to ask:

- What events or emergencies have happened in the area in previous years?
- What do you think might happen this year?
- Where are the best places to source additional feed and water?
- Would you be willing to look after my animals in an emergency, if I couldn't?

When you get to know your neighbours, you're more likely to feel comfortable looking out for each other, especially during and after an emergency. Share contact details so you can get in touch if needed. Tell them about your emergency plan and ask about theirs, and find out who can help you and who might need your help in return.

If it doesn't already exist, think about setting up a community phone tree so you can quickly check on all your neighbours and make sure everyone's safe.



Neighbourhood support
neighbourhoodsupport.co.nz/



Rural Support Trust
rural-support.org.nz/

Important contacts

In an emergency

Dial **111** if:

- there is a fire or medical emergency
- someone is badly injured or in danger
- there is a serious risk to life or property, or
- you've come across a major public disruption, like trees blocking a road or a dangerous situation that's happening now or has just happened.

Call your council for:

For building control, animal control, council information and welfare assistance during an emergency.

Fill in your council number here:

Health services (available 24 hours a day, seven days a week)

Healthline **0800 611 116**

Lifeline - Free call and/or text the services below any time for support from a trained counsellor

- Free call or text **1737**
- Lifeline **0800 543 354** or text **'Help'** to **4357**
- Suicide Crisis Helpline **0508 828 865**
- Youthline **0800 376 633** or text **234** for people under 18

Ministry of Social Development

For financial and emergency

accommodation assistance **0800 559 009**

Waka Kotahi NZTA

For road conditions and closure go to nzta.govt.nz



Ministry for Primary Industries

For animal welfare advice or assistance **0800 00 83 33**

Federated Farmers

For support and assistance in sourcing water and supplementary feed, finding a safe place to contain your stock or pasture advice **0800 327 646**

Feed Suppliers

Call **0800 BEEFLAMB (0800 23 33 52)** or **0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969)** for feed planning and coordination assistance.



Section 2: Making an emergency plan

- Evacuating your property
- Taking care of animals
- Emergency survival kit
- Transporting animals
- Shelter at home
- Sheltering away from home
- Practise your plan

Make a plan to stay safe

Winging it in an emergency won't help you or your whānau. Time is of the essence, so if you have a solid plan already in place, and know what to do, you have a better chance of getting through it and recovering faster.

In an emergency event you'll have to take swift and effective action in case you have to:

- evacuate your property
- take care of animals
- shelter in place for several days if it's safe to do so, or
- shelter elsewhere if it's not safe to stay at home. You might not be home when an emergency happens and unable to access your property for several days.

Putting your plan together

Evacuating your property

Evacuate immediately if told to do so by emergency services or Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management. You'll only be asked to do this when there is a real risk to life, so please leave immediately.

Having a getaway kit ready and waiting is a major part of being prepared. While you might not have all these items in one place, it's important you know where to find them for quick access.

What to put in your getaway kit

- Cash and personal identification.
- Key documents like insurance policies, birth certificates, pet vaccination books.
- Torch and radio with spare batteries.
- Emergency water and easy-to-carry food rations like energy bars and dried foods. If you have any special dietary requirements, make sure you have extra supplies.
- First aid kit, including prescription medications and anything else you might need like dentures, eyeglasses, hearing aids and extra batteries, and mobility aids.
- Essential items for infants or young children like formula and food, nappies and a favourite toy.
- Change of clothes - wind/waterproof clothing and strong outdoor shoes.
- Toiletries - towel, soap, toothbrush, sanitary items, toilet paper.
- Blankets or sleeping bags.
- Face and dust masks.
- Car keys and house keys.

Taking care of animals

As an animal owner you have certain legal responsibilities.

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 states that **you, the animal owner, or person in charge of the animal, must take all reasonable steps to ensure the animal's physical, health and behavioural needs are met.** This 'duty of care' applies under all circumstances including during and following an emergency.



Your animals are your responsibility, so you need to include them in your emergency planning.

Check out mpi.govt.nz/getpetsthru for checklists and emergency plan guides to help you plan for all your animals.

Think about the best way to evacuate your animals including transportation to a safe place and plenty of provisions like food and water. Also make plans for someone to care for your animals if you can't get home.

With a well thought out plan you'll be prepared to evacuate fast or stay put with sufficient supplies when a disaster strikes – and avoid putting your life and others at risk.

Pets

Make sure your pets are microchipped and your dogs are **registered** and wearing their current registration tag. Also check your animal ID is current and your personal details are up to date on relevant microchip databases. Go to animalregister.co.nz for more information.



Livestock

Ensure your **National Animal Identification and Tracing system (NAIT)** details are up to date. Go to mpi.govt.nz/animals/national-animal-identification-tracing-nait-programme for more information.





In the 2011 Canterbury earthquake, 80 percent of microchipped animals were reunited with their owners versus 20 percent for non-chipped animals. Pretty much any companion animal can be microchipped!

Emergency survival items

Store a copy of all documentation in your getaway kit.

- Add an ID tag to your pet's collar or for large animals, like horses, to their halter, lead and cover. Make sure the tag clearly shows their name, your name, phone number and (if space) your address. Include a backup in your emergency survival kit.
- Store a current photograph of your pets and horses in a waterproof container, including notes on any distinguishing features, name, sex, age, colour and breed. Also include a photograph of you and your animals together to help prove ownership if you get separated.
- Store copies of any medical and vaccination records in a waterproof container. Include your vet's name and phone number, in case you have to move your large animals to another property, boarding, or place your pets in foster care.
- Follow this QR code for a free printable wallet card:



TIP: Save all your important information online for easy access from wherever you are.



■ **In an emergency**

- call 111

■ **If your animals are effected in an emergency**

- Local Council: _____
- MPI: 0800 00 83 33

■ **Further information**

■ **For further information and details about animal welfare in emergencies visit**

- email awem@mpi.govt.nz
- www.mpi.govt.nz/getpetsthru
- Phone: 0800 00 83 33

■ **NZ Companion Animal Register**

- www.animalregister.co.nz

■ **Lost your pet? Go here:**

- www.lostpet.co.nz

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[New Zealand Government](http://www.govt.nz)

**Animals in
Emergencies**

MY ANIMALS
ARE
HOME ALONE

If I am sick or injured in an emergency situation, please contact the person on this card

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



■ **In case of an emergency please contact:**

NAME: _____

MOBILE: _____

■ **Animals at home**

ANIMAL NAME: _____

SPECIES/BREED/DESCRIPTION: _____

MICROCHIP/IDENTIFICATION: _____

ANIMAL NAME: _____

SPECIES/BREED/DESCRIPTION: _____

MICROCHIP/IDENTIFICATION: _____

Transporting your animals to a safe, secure place

Lead/halter/harness/muzzle

Know where these things are as well as any other equipment that will help you move your pets and animals, particularly horses, in an emergency evacuation. Make sure the device is sturdy and has an ID tag attached. Dogs may need to be muzzled. Even if your dog is friendly, emergency personnel may refuse to handle them unless they're restrained.

Cage/carrier

You'll need these for safe transportation and to prevent your animals, particularly pets, from escaping. The cage or carrier should be sturdy, e.g. made from metal or plastic, not cardboard, which might disintegrate if it gets wet. The cage or carrier should be large enough for animals to comfortably stand in, turn around, lie down and have adequate ventilation. Your pet may have to stay in there for some time so include bedding, blankets and a favourite toy to reduce stress levels.



Float

Floats are the safest form of transportation for horses and will ensure they can't escape. Keep in mind the horse may need to stay in the float for some time.

Flammable gear

On high-risk fire days, remove flammable gear such as rugs, harnesses, halters and fly veils, as well as anything that contains metal. Most rugs are a polyester/cotton blend and if they catch fire will melt onto the animal's skin.

Only take your animals with you if it won't delay you. Don't spend time looking for them and do not return to get them if you're not at home. When planning, consider the time needed to collect and transport your animals or the time needed to move them to a safe place to shelter.

If time allows, move your animals to a safe place that's easily accessible in case they need assistance, supplementary feed or veterinary treatment. Discuss your evacuation plan with your neighbours as they might be able to help if you're unable to access or return to your animals.

If you don't have the time to move your animals, open gates to allow them to move to higher ground if needed. This is particularly important if your property is at risk of flooding.

When you're evacuating, use travel routes specified by local authorities. Some areas might be impassable or dangerous, so avoid shortcuts and do not drive through floodwater. If you come across a barrier, follow posted detour signs.

Euthanising animals

Sometimes, no matter how well you've planned and prepared, the unexpected will happen, and you'll be faced with having to humanely kill (euthanise) one or more of your animals. Ideally, this should be done by a trained professional like a veterinarian, however, during a rapidly developing emergency event that might not be possible.

In order to avoid causing unnecessary pain and distress to the animal, and to minimise the risk to yourself, it's important you either know how to properly euthanise an animal and are willing to do so, or have identified someone in your support network (see section one for more information) who's willing and competent to perform euthanasia.

It's a difficult thing to have to contemplate, but it's important to be prepared. You'll find information on how to conduct euthanasia humanely and correctly in the relevant Codes of Welfare, published by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).



See **Codes of Welfare** for more information, go to mpi.govt.nz/animals/animal-welfare/codes/



Shelter at home

Sometimes, emergencies make it unsafe to leave your home and property for extended periods. If this happens, **stay in your home until emergency services and/or Waikato Civil Defence say it's safe to leave.**

If you do have to stay, be sure you, your whānau and animals have everything you need for several days. Remember, you might have no electricity and limited cell phone coverage.

Shelter at home checklist

- What will you eat and drink?
- What will your animals eat and drink?
- How will you cook your food?
- How will you keep warm?
- What will you use for lighting?
- How will you wash?
- What will you use as a toilet?
- What will you do if you get sick/have an accident?
- How will you keep up to date with what's going on?
- How will you keep in contact and support your neighbours?

Ensure you have:

- torch with spare batteries or a self-charging torch
- radio with spare batteries
- wind and waterproof clothing, sun hats, strong outdoor shoes
- first aid kit and essential medicines
- blankets or sleeping bags
- pet supplies
- toilet paper and large rubbish bags for your emergency toilet
(getready.govt.nz/en/prepared/household/)

- face and dust masks
- non-perishable food (canned or dried)
- food, formula and drinks for babies and small children
- water for drinking
- water for washing and cooking
- a primus gas cooker or gas barbeque to cook on
- a can opener.

Do's	Don'ts
<p>Turn off utilities if told to do so. You might be asked to turn off water or electricity supply to prevent damage to your home.</p> <p>Where possible, use battery operated lighting if the power goes out. If candles are the only source of light, use them on a stable, flat surface or holder away from anything flammable and never leave them unattended while burning.</p>	<p>Don't turn off gas unless you're explicitly advised to do so by the emergency services and/ or Waikato Civil Defence. You'll need it for heating and cooking. If you do turn gas off, a licensed professional is required to turn it back on and it could take weeks for a professional to respond.</p> <p>Don't use outdoor gas appliances like patio heaters, camping cookers and barbecues indoors. These appliances don't have safety systems to shut off the gas supply when oxygen levels are depleted, and high levels of carbon monoxide are present. If this happens, you could die.</p>

For your animals

Make sure you have plenty of water and food for your animals and organise that before you need it. Buy a bit more than you think you'll need to avoid increasing prices. You can always sell it later if you don't need it.

For stock, introduce a little supplementary feed to their diet early on so they're used to eating it when their normal food runs out.

Store supplementary feed in an area safe from flooding. It's not safe to feed flood contaminated food to your animals.



Sheltering away from home

If you're away when an emergency happens, you might not be able to get back to your property for several days. Talk to your neighbours sooner rather than later to put any plans in place, especially if you have animals that need to be cared for.

- Give them your contact details.
- Give one, or more, of your neighbours a key to your house and sheds.
- Let them know what animals you have on your property, where you store your animal feed, equipment and medications.
- Offer them the same support in return.

Practise and review your plan

It's important to practise your plan regularly. That way, everyone knows what they need to do. It's also important to familiarise your animals with being handled and moved around the property.

Review your plan at least once a year and after every emergency event so you're sure it's still fit for purpose.

Communities are always important, especially in emergencies. Work with your neighbours and wider community to create individual and community plans so you can all help each other when you need it most.

Section 3: Managing water on your property

- How to manage your water tanks and septic system
- Understanding water drainage to avoid flooding

Water supply

If you're not connected to the municipal water supply, the supply of water for use in your home and on your property is your responsibility.

It's really important you have the right number and type of water tanks for your property. Rainwater tanks come in different shapes and sizes and the right tank for you will depend on several factors:

- what you use water for (drinking, hygiene, outdoor use, laundry, toilet, livestock, etc.)
- how much water you can collect from your roof
- how much space there is for a tank (underground or above ground)
- the number of household occupants and/or animals the tank will cater for.

You'd be surprised by how much water you, your whānau and animals use each day. For information on average household water requirements and daily litres used per person and animal see Appendix 2.

Monitoring your water use

It's important to keep an eye on the water level in your tanks, especially during the drier summer months. You'll find a range of inexpensive and easy to install water tank level gauges available at most DIY stores. Fit them to all your water tanks and check the levels regularly.

Think about installing flow restrictors on taps and showers as well. They're cheap to buy and can seriously reduce the volume of water used without affecting the quality of your shower or waterflow from taps.

Don't forget that drier than normal conditions often result in long wait times for private operators to deliver water. Long dry spells could get more frequent due to the impacts of climate change.

TIP: Make sure you know who your local water supplier is and book your water deliveries early to avoid running out of water.



Keeping water safe for use

Unless you keep an eye on them, water supplies can become unsafe. Roof water can be corrosive or become contaminated with ash, dust, leaves, agricultural spray, and bird or possum droppings. Sediment can become an issue when tank water levels are low.

To improve the quality of rainwater you collect from your roof:

- Ensure your roof surface is suitable for collecting quality rainwater.
- Inspect your tanks annually and get them cleaned if necessary. Ideally, tank cleaning should be carried out by tank cleaning contractors.
- Install a filter or screen to prevent leaf debris getting into your water tank from the roof. If you can't cover all the guttering, make sure you have the filter or screen over the spouting downpipes.
- Keep a copy of your tank operation and maintenance manual.
- If you're concerned about the quality of your drinking water, contact an Environmental Health Officer at Auckland Council.

Even if your property is connected to the municipal water supply, you might want to consider installing a rainwater tank. It'll save you money and ensure you have water if the network is damaged.

WARNING: If you enter the tank to clean it, ensure there is adequate ventilation, and another person is present.

Wastewater

A septic tank, or onsite wastewater system, works by separating wastewater into three layers:

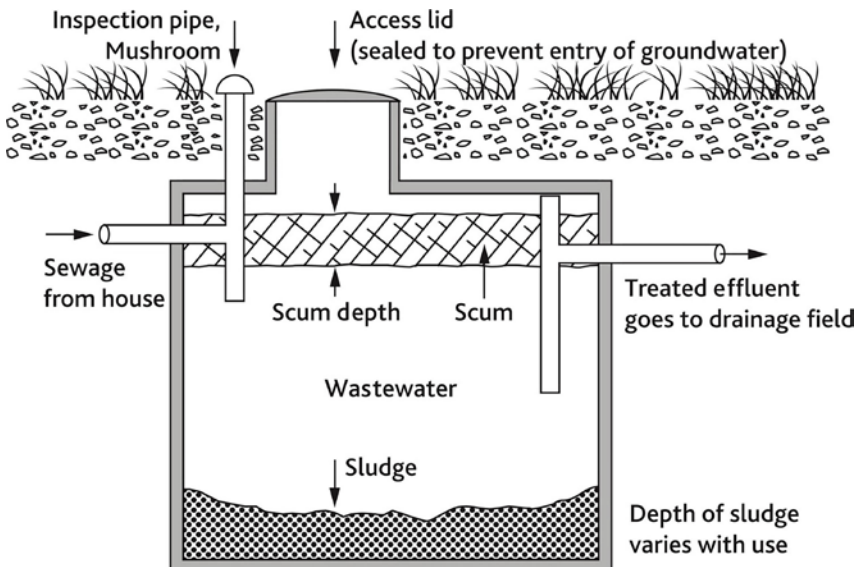
- scum, which floats on the surface
- liquid, middle layer
- solids/sludge, which sink to the bottom of the tank.

The liquid layer is treated in the tank, reducing pathogens and excess nutrients. The liquid is then distributed into the disposal field where it can soak into the ground. Your whole septic system needs to be checked and serviced every three years to keep it working well. Several companies can help with servicing your wastewater system. Sludge and excess scum should be pumped out of your tank as needed so it continues to work well.

High-tech treatment systems are available if a standard septic tank isn't compatible with your needs. These systems are designed to treat wastewater to a higher quality using pumps, aeration or filters and need maintenance and servicing every six months. They're a good option for smaller sites.

You could also consider composting toilets and vermiculture systems. They still need regular checks but are generally more resilient to power cuts and provide an option for greywater separation.

It's worth noting that powered wastewater systems won't operate in the event of a power cut. They're generally built with additional capacity so they can cover at least one day without power.



Looking after your septic tank

Septic tanks need careful management and maintenance to manage wastewater and protect the environment. Here are a few simple rules:

- Get your whole system checked regularly.
- If something smells, or flashes, get it checked.
- Fit an outlet filter to prevent solids entering the disposal field.
- Watch what you put down the toilet and drains – use septic friendly or natural cleaning products and minimise the use of antibacterial cleaners.
- Avoid flooding your system – spread out your laundry, dishwasher use, and shower to avoid a water ‘rush hour’.



“Help protect our special places by maintaining your septic tank or high-tech on-site wastewater systems”
- A Homeowner’s Guide by Auckland Council bit.ly/maintain-septic-tank

Water drainage

As a landowner you’re required to keep all watercourses on your property clear of any blockage or obstruction, which could lead to flooding. A watercourse is a natural or man-made open channel where water collects and flows. It can be a river, stream, gully, ditch, drainage channel, culvert or pipe that replaces a natural open channel.

Rivers and streams

The best way to manage a river or stream is to use nature to do the work for you. The right selection of plants, combined with the careful placement of rocks and logs, can often achieve the same result as more expensive, engineered solutions like concrete channels or culverts.

The healthiest rivers and streams are those with trees and plants on their banks - a riparian buffer. The vegetation works like a sponge by slowing the flow and helping protect the land from flood damage.



There's more information on planting a riparian buffer on the Dairy NZ website - bit.ly/planting-waterways

Stormwater pipes and drains

You are responsible for maintaining private stormwater assets on your property. This includes catchpits, drains, rain tanks, ponds, wetlands, detention tanks and soakage pits and bores.

Surface flooding

Waikato is prone to bursts of intense rainfall that can cause significant amounts of surface water. This surface water will naturally concentrate and flow downhill to the sea or a lake.

This overland flow happens naturally and can be effectively managed across private property by following some simple guidelines.

- Avoid altering the ground level around an identified overland flow path. There is a regional map viewer online to help you identify an overland flow path in your area.
- Ensure your driveway and other surfaces have appropriate shape and levels to direct surface flow away from your garage and house.
- Avoid blocking the path of overland flow at both the upstream and downstream boundaries of your property.
- Ensure ground levels around your home direct surface water away from your house.
- Keep your ditches and storm water channels free of plants and debris so the water can run away.

Section 4: Power and phone outages and property access

- What to do when the power goes out for an extended period of time and the mobile phone network goes down.
- How to ensure you and the emergency services can access and leave your property during an emergency.

Power outages

Storms, floods, slips, fallen trees, lightning strikes on transformers, washed out bridges and even traffic accidents can cause power outages. Occasionally, major faults at substations or with transmission lines some distance away can cut power and take a long time to repair.

What will a power outage mean?

If you don't have a back-up generator, power outages could have significant implications for your property.

Water pumps not working

Where possible make sure you can retrieve water from your tank if there's a power outage. Having some gravity flow to the house is great, or a tap you can turn on to get water from your tank without the pump running. Also think about storing bottled water.

To get water from an underground tank, you'll need a bucket and rope to draw up water through the lid.

Your toilet can still operate if you have a source of water to manually flush with. If your septic tank system isn't operational, and you don't have other options, call a company to hire a temporary toilet.

No cooking or heating

Make sure you have a barbecue or camp stove with plenty of fuel for cooking. A fireplace or pot belly stove and plenty of dry accessible wood can be used for warmth, heating water and drying clothes.

WARNING: Never use outdoor gas heaters inside or try to use your BBQ for indoor heating.

Electric hot water in some parts of the Waikato may be on separate lines from the network for electric power. This means you could have power but no hot water.

If your power and hot water lines have been restored but your hot water cylinder isn't reheating six hours after the hot water line is reconnected, contact your lines provider for advice.



Loss of refrigeration

If the power goes out, eat the food from your fridge first, then your freezer, before you eat the food in the cupboard or your emergency supplies. Keep your fridge and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Throw away freezer food after three days without electricity.

If you, a member of your household or animals have medication that requires refrigeration, make sure you have a backup plan in place.

Pets at risk

Pets are just as likely to become sick by eating unsafe food. If you're throwing away food that's not safe for you to eat, it's not safe for your pets to eat either. If you're boiling water for safe drinking water, do the same for your pets.

Lights out

Make sure you have torches and batteries where everyone can find them in the dark. Solar lights and camping lamps are also handy.

TIP: Avoid using candles as they can be easily knocked over. Avoid using kerosene lamps as they require lots of ventilation and aren't recommended for indoor use.

Loss of cell phone/computer power and broadcast media

In an emergency you could lose access to radio and television or ways to power computers or mobile phones. If you don't have a battery-operated radio, use your car radio. Conserve phone batteries by limiting mobile calls and data use.

Make sure you have a car charger for your mobile phone so you can recharge it from your car or tractor.



Losing power to electric fences

If you have animals, they might stray onto roads or unsafe areas on your property. Your neighbours' animals could also push through boundary fences and enter your property.

Think about installing 7-wire, post and batten fencing or an electric fence power system that doesn't require electricity (e.g. solar, battery or generator).

Impacts on stock drinking water

If your stock drinking water supply is reliant on power to fill troughs, you'll need to ensure an emergency supply of water.

Portable troughs can be used during prolonged power outages. They're smaller than regular troughs and can be refilled manually. Also consider gravity fed water systems which pull water from a creek or pond or your water tanks.

What to do in a power outage

Keep away from affected sites

Don't go near affected sites until they've been properly inspected, and authorities have given the all-clear. Stay well away and don't attempt to cut or move trees that are in contact with power lines. Call 111 to report this as a risk to life and/or property. Report trees down on public land to your local council.

Contact your neighbour

Phone a neighbour and check if they have power. If they do, the fault may be with your property – perhaps a fallen tree. A quick check for obvious problems before phoning the power company could pinpoint the location and save a lot of time. Treat all electricity as live and never touch exposed electrical equipment.

Connect with community support

When power goes down, your community will often be able to help. Talk to your neighbours and find out who has a generator. You might also be able to charge your mobile phone and put food in their refrigerator or freezer.

If your local library or community centre has power, you could drop in to meet friends, charge your phone, use the free internet and stay warm.

If others are affected and you're not, reach out and offer help.

TIP: Some insurers provide cover for food spoilage as a result of a power outage. They might also cover the cost of temporary accommodation so check your policy or have a chat with your insurer to see what coverage you have.

Check with your electricity company

Your electricity company's power outage website will normally have information on the extent of the outage and estimated restorage time.



Powerco
**outages.powerco.
co.nz/**



Counties Energy
**countiesenergy.
co.nz/outages**



TVD
**ifstlc.tvd.co.nz/#/
Index**



WEL
outages.wel.co.nz/



WAIPĀ NETWORKS
**waipanetworks.
co.nz/outages/**



unison
**unison.co.nz/
outages**



Mercury
mercury.co.nz/help-and-support/outages-and-faults

Electricity companies are only responsible for connecting power to your property at the road. You, as a homeowner, are responsible for repairing any damaged lines from the road to your house or other dwellings on your property.

Always phone the power company, even if your neighbours have already phoned. The company may not realise your power supply is also out. If there's a widespread fault, they'll probably have an automated message telling you what areas are affected and when it will be fixed.

If power outages happen often where you live, you might want to look at having an alternative power supply, like solar panels. It could also be a good idea to buy a generator. Talk to your electrician about what generator would best suit your situation and make sure you have enough fuel to run it.

Loss of phone or internet connection

Check the cell phone service

Most cell phone towers have back-up power systems to maintain operations for a few hours, or days, in a power cut. If the cellular network is down, it's likely there are widespread problems. Listen to the local radio for information and consider a trip to the nearest town if that's feasible, to make any important calls.

Be prepared – get a UHF radio

If you don't already own a Public Radio Service (PRS) UHF radio, now could be the time to buy one. PRS radios are a great option for short range radio communication and can be purchased relatively cheaply from your local hardware or outdoor store.

Check with your neighbours to see who has a PSR radio and what channel you'll use to communicate with each other in an emergency. A good channel to use is 11, as it's available on both the newer and older radios, and is easy to remember.

Property access

In an emergency, your driveway or the only road onto your property could become blocked by fallen trees or power lines. It's important you have alternative ways to access and leave your property safely.

Talk to your neighbours

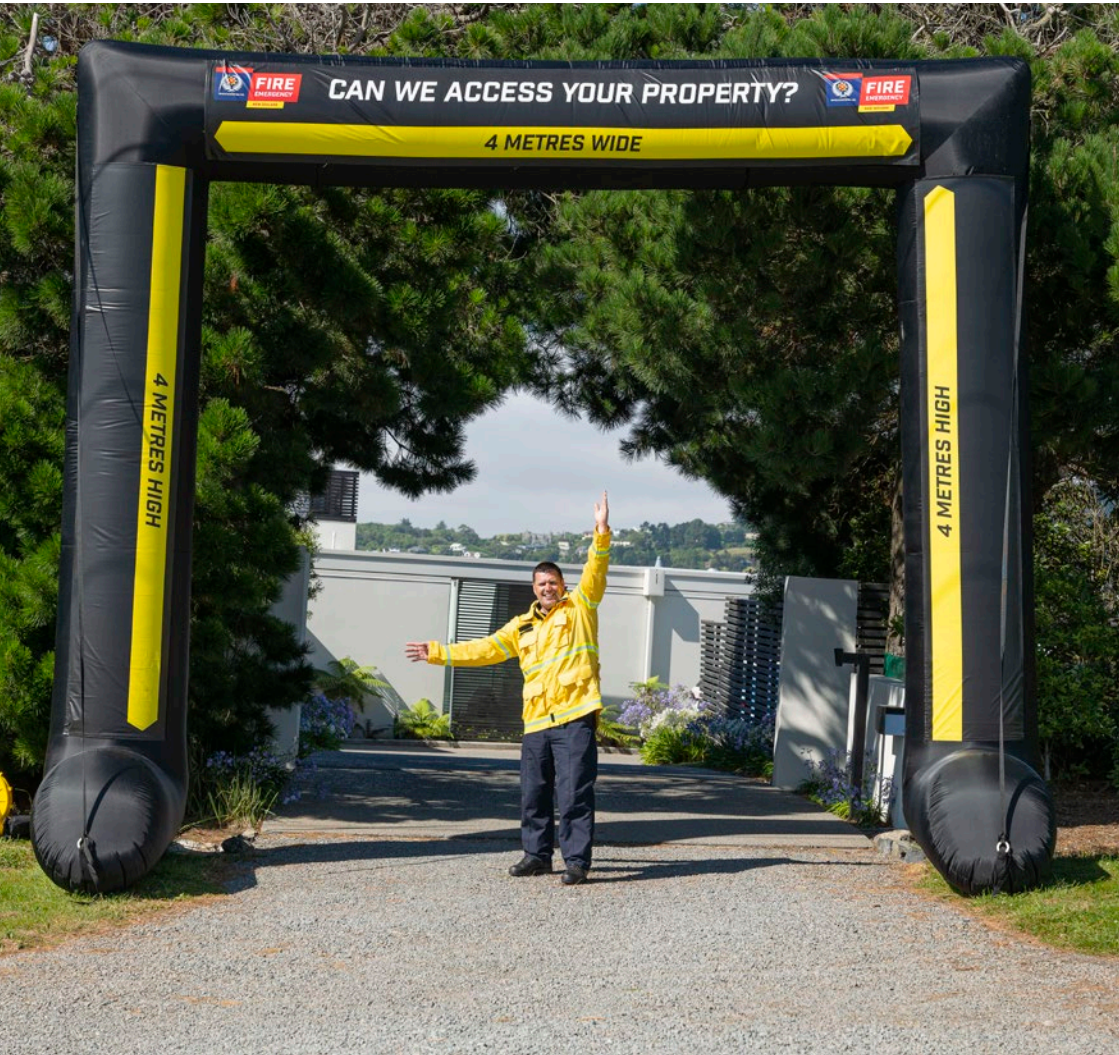
You might be able to access your property through your neighbours' properties, so check what private roads are available for use in emergency events.

If you have livestock, ask your neighbours if it would be okay to cut through boundary fences to let livestock onto higher land in an emergency – and offer the same in return.

Property Access for Emergency Vehicles

It's crucial emergency vehicles can access your property. To make access easier and faster:

- **make sure your driveway has clear access of at least 4 metres by 4 metres** so fire trucks, ambulance and other emergency vehicles can get to you, and
- ensure your street number is clearly displayed and visible from the road.



Section 5: Insurance

Having the right sort of insurance cover will help you recover from emergencies faster. You're in a far stronger position when you set your insurance up correctly and clearly understand what is and isn't covered.

Here are some important areas to consider before speaking to your insurance provider.

Assess your risks

Do you understand what risks you have on the property? Lifestyle blocks are prone to more insurance risks than city properties, including factors such as operations on neighbouring properties.

Consider future plans for your property

Your insurance requirements may change as you change or expand your operations. Commercial risk, sheds and horticulture and farming activities will all require additional insurance cover.

Check list of structures and items

Check if you're responsible, and have insurance cover, for the following structures and items on your property:

Power poles

Are you responsible for loss or damage to power poles on your property? This could be a significant cost if you don't have insurance cover for them.

Water tanks

How many water tanks are on your property? They won't all necessarily be covered by your house policy if they're primarily being used for non-household uses, such as water troughs for animals. Check with your insurance company to see if all your water tanks are covered in your policy.

Fencing

If there was damage to your fencing, would you have the necessary tools and skills to fix your fences? Maintaining fencing on a lifestyle block is a high priority, especially with livestock. If the fencing is shared, there could be even greater urgency to fix the fences to protect your stock as well as your neighbour's.

Sheds and garages

Sheds that are used for lifestyle block activities and equipment, such as housing your ride-on mower, fencing equipment and spraying gear, are often deemed as 'farm buildings', so may not be covered under a domestic policy.

Farm vehicles

Farm or off-road vehicles don't always meet the requirements for a personal use vehicle so they might need to be insured for off-road use. It's worthwhile checking with your insurer.

Ride-on lawn mowers might not be insured as part of a contents policy depending on what parts of the property they're used on – so do check that as well.

Animals

It could be worthwhile insuring your animals, especially if you are concerned about having to pay for some of the costs yourself.

Liability

Liability insurance covers things people usually think will never happen such as livestock getting loose and causing an accident where someone is seriously injured or killed. Most lifestyle properties should have liability insurance and it's important to understand what it specifically covers.

Check whether you're eligible for Earthquake Commission cover - EQCover

EQCover provides natural disaster insurance for residential homes and land (within limits) following earthquakes, landslips, storm damage, volcanoes, tsunami and hydrothermal activity. With storm or flood damage, EQCover is limited to residential land.

To make a claim for EQCover, which is the insurance provided by the Earthquake Commission (EQC), you must have a current private insurance policy for your home that includes fire insurance.

After an event, your insurance company will be your point of contact for any applicable EQCover.



For a complete list of what is and isn't included in EQCover, visit eqc.govt.nz

Financing your recovery

Think about what funds you might need to access to get you through an emergency event. Set up a contingency fund and have a chat to your bank about available finance options.



Section 6: What to do in specific emergencies

- Severe weather or storms
- Tornadoes
- Flooding
- Fire
- Drought



Severe weather or storms

Before

If there are warnings of severe weather for your region:

- Be prepared – pay attention to weather forecasts, plan your travel around them and prepare yourself before the storm hits.
- Bring inside, or tie down, anything that can be broken or picked up by strong winds.
- Remove any debris or loose items from around your property. Branches, firewood and light farming equipment could become missiles in strong winds.
- Clear gutters and drains.
- Check trees for weak or diseased branches and remove any branches growing close to powerlines, your house and other buildings.

If you have pets or livestock:

- Bring pets indoors. Many animals are unsettled by storms and it's more comforting and safer for them to be with you.
- Ensure livestock aren't gathered under an isolated tree or anything that presents a risk from a lightning strike. Lightning can be fatal.
- Move stock to higher ground and ensure they have access to shelter and clean stock water, and are in a secure paddock.

During

- Pick a safe place in your home for everyone to gather during a storm, away from windows, skylights, and glass doors. A sturdy building is the safest place to be during a severe thunderstorm.
- Pull curtains and blinds over windows to prevent injury from flying glass, in case the window breaks.
- Close all interior and external doors. Closed doors help prevent damaging winds from entering rooms.
- Unplug appliances and avoid using the phone or any electrical appliances. Lightning follows the wire. Television sets are particularly dangerous at this time. Use a battery-powered radio or television. Leaving electric lights on, however, doesn't increase the chances of your home being struck by lightning.
- Consider protecting any essential appliances and equipment with surge protectors.
- Turn off air conditioners and heat pumps. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressor, resulting in a costly repair job.
- Avoid bathtubs, water taps, and sinks because metal pipes and plumbing can conduct electricity if struck by lightning.

If you're out and there's no building in sight, take shelter in a vehicle and keep the windows closed. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the hazard lights until the heavy rain subsides. Never drive through flood waters and always drive to the conditions.

As a last resort, and if no suitable structure or vehicle is available, go to a low-lying, open place away from trees, poles, or metal objects. Make sure the place you pick isn't subject to flooding. Crouch low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees and your head between your knees.

For cyclones: Be aware that the 'eye of the storm' is calm and quiet. Stay indoors because the winds will get stronger again.

After

- Listen to advice from Waikato Civil Defence and emergency services and follow instructions.
- Stay away from damaged areas. Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations and put you at further risk from the residual effects of floods, such as contaminated water, crumbled roads, landslides, mudflows, and other hazards.
- Continue to stay up to date with the latest weather information from MetService.
- Stay alert for extended rainfall and subsequent flooding.

If someone is struck by lightning, medical attention is needed as quickly as possible. Dial 111 and give first aid. People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge that can shock other people, and can be attended to safely.





Tornadoes

A tornado is a narrow, violently rotating column of air extending downwards to the ground from the base of a thunderstorm. They can be up to 100 metres wide, have tracks from 2 - 5 kilometres, and are short in duration.

- If you see a tornado funnel nearby, take shelter immediately.
- A basement offers the greatest safety. If underground shelter isn't available, move to an interior room or hallway without windows, on the lowest floor.
- Stay away from windows and exterior doors.
- For added protection, get under something sturdy like a heavy table or workbench. If possible, cover your body with a blanket, mattress or sleeping bag, and protect your head with your hands.
- If you're outdoors, lie down flat in a nearby gully, ditch or low spot on the ground. Protect your head with an object or with your arms.

If you're in a car, stop and get out of your car. Don't try to outrun a tornado in your car. Lie down flat in a nearby gully, ditch, or low spot on the ground.

Flooding

Floods are New Zealand's number one hazard in terms of frequency, losses, and declared Civil Defence Emergency Management emergencies.

They're usually caused by heavy or prolonged rainfall, but can also be triggered by failure of dams, high sea levels at river mouths, coastal storm inundation, and tsunamis.

Floodwaters can damage buildings, land, and infrastructure, including roads, bridges, power lines and phone lines. Crops can be flooded and livestock drowned. Floodwater can contaminate water and land.

Before

Talk to your neighbours about historical flooding on your property and check our hazard viewer to see if you're on a flood plain. Make sure baleage, hay bales or any other materials aren't stored in an area which could flood.

If there are flood alerts:

- move valuables off your property or place up high
- move stock out of paddocks susceptible to flooding
- move equipment out of areas that may flood.



During

Stay out of flood water as it can be contaminated with sewage, farm run-off, faecal matter from animals, household chemicals, petrol, oil, and other hazardous substances. Never try to walk, swim, drive through or play in flood water. If you do come in contact with floodwater, thoroughly clean your hands, clothes and any property touched.

The majority of all flood fatalities are vehicle related. The depth of the flood water isn't always obvious. As little as 30 centimetres of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle, including SUVs. If your vehicle stalls during a flood, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.

Flood water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.

After

If you've been evacuated, it may not be safe to return home even when the floodwaters have receded. Listen to emergency services and Civil Defence and don't return home until they tell you it's safe to do so.

When you do return home:

- Throw away all food and drinking water that's come in contact with floodwater, including things stored in containers. It's impossible to know if containers were damaged and the seals compromised.
- Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you're certain it's not contaminated. Follow any boil water notice instructions from your local authorities.
- If your gas meter has been affected by water or debris, contact your gas supplier.

- Take photos and videos of the damage and anything that needs to be thrown away before starting the clean-up, for insurance purposes.

It's important to clean and dry your house and everything in it.

Floodwater can make the air in your home unhealthy, because when things are damp for more than two days, they usually get mouldy.

There may also be germs and bugs in your home after a flood.

Some useful tips for cleaning your home after a flood:

- Wear a mask, gloves, goggles, long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Cover any open cuts or grazes and wash your hands thoroughly after each clean-up session.
- Use a shovel to remove surface contamination. Place it at the edge of your section, ensuring it doesn't block drainage channels. Natural processes such as sunlight, drying and wind will make your outside areas safer over the short to medium-term. Leave garden surfaces and lawns exposed to the air and sunshine to dry out naturally. Make drainage holes with a fork to aerate.
- If the outside area is heavily contaminated with sewage, use garden lime to disinfect the area. Garden lime can be bought from a garden or hardware store. Follow the instructions on the label.
- Hard surfaces, such as driveways, can be cleaned and disinfected with 1 litre of household chlorine bleach in 10 litres of cold water (a household bucket). Leave the disinfectant on for 30 minutes, then rinse with clean water.

If you start feeling unwell after exposure to floodwaters, seek medical advice as soon as possible.



Keeping your animals safe

Before

- If you have to leave your animals behind, make sure they're in a secure and sheltered place either inside or outside your home.
- If you have livestock or horses in paddocks near waterways that have the potential to flood (streams, rivers etc.), move them to higher ground. Ensure they're moved to secure paddocks with access to clean drinking water and shelter.
- High value stock or vulnerable stock (stock close to giving birth, young stock etc.) should be moved to easy-access areas in case they need assistance, supplementary feed or veterinary treatment.

The Ministry for Primary Industries or Civil Defence may be able to provide advice if you need assistance with evacuating your animals and finding a safe, sheltered place to contain them.

After

- Check all stock are contained and fences haven't been damaged by land slips, flooding or power cuts (in the case of electric fences).
- Move animals out of flooded paddocks as soon as it's safe to do so. If animals are left in contaminated water for long periods, they're at risk of bacterial infections, chemical burns and sloughing of their skin. If they are affected, you can cleanse their skin/coat by hosing them down with non-contaminated water.
- If you come into contact with an animal that's been in flood water, change your clothing and wash your hands thoroughly. If you can, wear protective gear such as overalls, gloves and a mask. Flooding increases the chance of the bacteria leptospirosis contaminating the environment, and poses a greater risk of infection through wounds on the skin. If you think you may be at risk of exposure to leptospirosis, contact the Ministry of Health.
- Check your paddocks for contamination by flood water and feed your animals supplementary feed, if necessary.



For more information about animals affected by flooding, follow advice from the Ministry for Primary Industries at bit.ly/animals-flood



“Recovering from flood fact sheet” by Beef + Lamb New Zealand beeflambnz.com/knowledge-hub/PDF/flood-recovery-fact-sheet.pdf

Fire

Areas that have multiple homes or other structures near forest, bush, scrub or grassland are known as urban/rural interfaces. Properties in these areas are at greater risk of wildfire due to the increased presence of nearby vegetation which can carry a fire. If you're living in a high-risk interface area you need to take this risk seriously and take steps to make your property safe.

Fire seasons and permits

There are three fire seasons in New Zealand. Depending on the season and type of fire you're planning, you might need a fire permit.

Open fire season

You can light a fire without a permit if you do so safely and responsibly. You must also have permission from the landowner.

Restricted fire season

Lighting a fire is riskier than usual, so you'll need a permit for most fire types. You may also need to meet specific conditions to help you light your fire safely and prevent it from getting out of control.

Prohibited fire season - Total Fire Ban

Fires are banned because it's too risky, with any existing fire permits suspended. Hāngī, umu and wood fire pizza ovens are permitted, subject to certain conditions.



Fire and Emergency New Zealand has a dedicated website to explain the current fire season, fire types, and information on how to reduce the risks of a fire getting out of control. Visit **checkitsalright.nz**

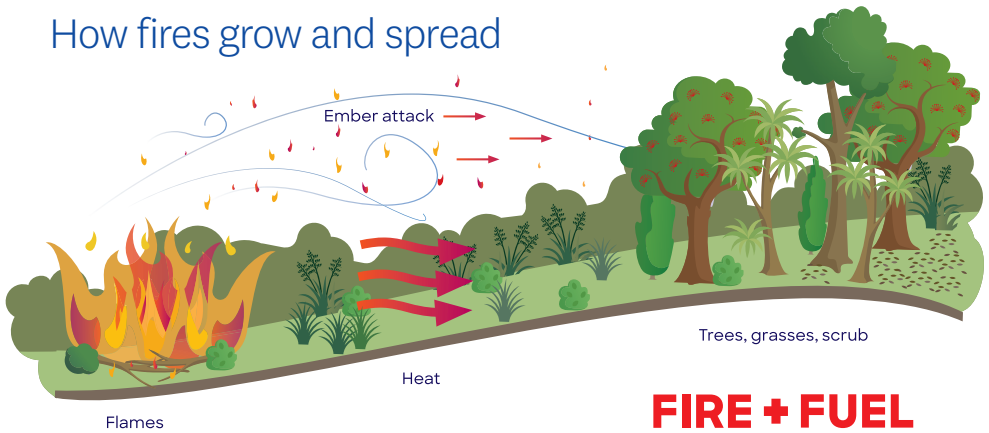
TIP: Fire season and fire danger information is now available on [MetService.com](https://www.metservice.com) and [MetService app](#) when you look up the weather of a location.

Protecting your home from wildfires

Your home could be at risk of damage or loss due to the spread of wildfire. Homes far away from fire stations could also face a longer response time from firefighters.

It's important to understand how fires grow and spread so you can take steps to reduce the risks around your home. **Embers can travel more than two kilometres from a wildfire.** Your greatest risk is that these embers reach your home and ignite a fire. Wildfire travels faster uphill, and homes on a steep slope or at the crest of a hill are at greater risk.

How fires grow and spread



Although every property has specific risks, and you'll need to consider your own situation, there are simple steps you can take to greatly reduce the risk of fire to your home.

Create a 10-metre safety zone around your house and other structures on your property by:

- clearing combustible materials and vegetation (e.g. leaves, dead branches and stacks of firewood).
- keeping your lawns short.
- regularly clearing material from gutters, spouting and areas around decks. Consider screening with mesh.
- planting low flammability plants and trees.

Low flammability plants aren't fireproof, but they don't readily ignite and have the following characteristics:

- moist supple leaves
- little accumulation of dead wood and dry dead material within the plant
- watery sap that doesn't have a strong odour
- low levels of sap or resin

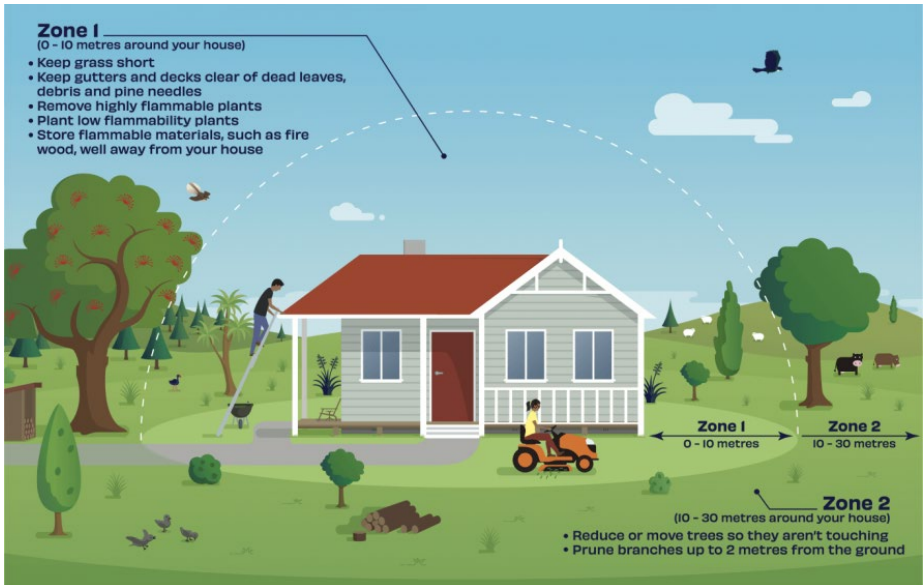


For more information about what to plant, visit the Fire and Emergency New Zealand website at **bit.ly/plant-flammability**



Complete the FENZ Rural Home Fire Safety Checklist **fireandemergency.nz/home-fire-safety/fire-safety-checklists/rural-home-fire-safety-checklist/**

TIP: If your property is close to Department of Conservation (DoC) or Council land, check with them on what you can do before removing any vegetation, as DoC and councils have rules around the removal of vegetation.



This diagram shows how to manage vegetation and fuel sources in Zone 2 (10-30m) around your house and other structures.

Evacuation

Fire moves extremely fast – have a plan to ensure you and your family know what to do in a fire and how to get out safely.

- Know your neighbours and talk to your community about what you'll do in the case of a fire or emergency, and make sure you look after people who may not be able to look after themselves.
- Dial **111** immediately if there's a fire. Leaving early is always your safest option and make sure you know how to get away and where you'll go.
- **Don't wait for an official warning to leave.** Wildfires can start quickly and threaten lives and homes within minutes.
- If you have evacuated, don't return home until you're advised that it's safe.



Home Fire Safety

Most house fires Fire and Emergency New Zealand attend are started by **unattended cooking or unmaintained or overloaded electrical appliances.**

- Don't leave the room while cooking and switch off before you walk off. Keep any flammable items well away from cooking and don't drink and fry.
- Keep your electrical appliances well maintained and don't overload power boards.
- **You're four times more likely to survive a house fire if you have working smoke alarms.** Working smoke alarms alert you early or wake you up when sleeping, giving you and others the best chance of escaping alive. Install and maintain long life photoelectric smoke alarms in the living area, hallway and every bedroom of your home, but don't install them in your kitchen, bathroom, laundry or garage. Smoke alarms in these areas are prone to false alarm, so get heat alarms in those areas instead. Never assume your smoke alarm is working. Press the button to check regularly and replace after 10 years, or as required.
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand offers **free Home Fire Safety Visits** to discuss fire safety in your home, escape routes and install a free smoke alarm should you require one. To request a Home Fire Safety Visit, go to <https://fireandemergency.nz/hfsv/> or call **0800 693 473**.



A house fire can kill in three minutes. It's terrifying to safely get everyone out of a burning house when it's hot, dark and smoky. That's why it's essential to have an escape plan in place, to practise it regularly, and to know how to get to safety quickly. You can easily create your own 3-Step-Escape plan at [escapemyhouse.co.nz](https://www.escapemyhouse.co.nz)

Machinery safety

Fires can start from the smallest spark, so take care using machinery and equipment like mowers and chainsaws when conditions are hot, dry and/or windy. When you're driving through stubble or long grass, exhaust heat or sparks from your mower or vehicle can cause a fire. Mowers and scrub cutters can also start fires by hitting rocks in dry grass.

Try to avoid using machinery when the local fire danger is high, very high or extreme and keep an eye on what's happening around you. If the work is unavoidable, wet down your work area and have firefighting equipment on hand.

Check that your machinery has no mechanical defects that could start a fire. Birds like to make nests in larger machinery so regularly check for any nests around motors throughout the day, especially after taking breaks, and clear them away before starting any work.



For more tips on maintaining your machinery to reduce fire danger, go to **checkitsalright.nz/reduce-your-risk/mowers-chainsaws**



Also use **checkitsalright.nz** to check whether the activity you're planning is a good idea or not on that particular day.

Hot work

Hot work is any job that involves using tools that could start a fire. On rural properties, this might include welding, grinding or cutting.

- Don't do hot work outdoors during prohibited fire seasons unless you have a special permit.
- Where possible, perform hot work indoors at a designated safe location, like a welding bay. If this isn't possible, make sure you move any fire hazards or flammable materials out of the area before starting.
- Thirty minutes after you've finished the hot work, do a final check for any hot spots that might cause a fire.
- Always have firefighting equipment (e.g. a garden hose) on hand, and know how to use it, in case a fire starts.



Fire Blankets and Fire Extinguishers

If you have fire blankets or a fire extinguisher in your home, workshop and/or sheds, you'll be better prepared to put out small fires before they become big ones.

Fire blankets are useful for covering cooking related fires, and for wrapping around a person to smother a clothing fire.

Fire blankets are made of fabrics that are fire resistant and can be purchased at most hardware stores.

Store fire blankets in a location close to your kitchen.

Fire extinguishers are useful for fires caused by cooking oils or fat in the kitchen.

Familiarise yourself with how to operate your fire extinguisher and only use when it's safe to do so.

Remember, life is more important than property. Always make sure you have your escape planned before tackling any fire and don't put yourself or others at risk.

Access and water supplies for fighting fire

For firefighters to safely enter a home to check for missing people, fight a fire and protect nearby buildings from the effects of fire, they must have 4m x 4m clearance to access your property and access to water. See page 41 for information on Property Access for Emergency Vehicles.



Water tanks/ponds must be accessible and preferably have vehicle access so fire trucks can get close enough to get to the water. Ideally, tanks should have a connection that's compatible with those used by firefighters. You can find out more about this and information about water for firefighting by visiting **fireandemergency.nz**

Keeping your animals safe

During prohibited fire seasons

- Don't oil fences, posts and rails. It may stop horses from chewing them, but it's fuel for a fire.
- On a total fire ban day or extreme fire danger day, turn off electric fences to reduce risk of igniting a fire.
- Make sure farm buildings have no gaps (walls/floors/ceilings) so embers are prevented from entering. Metal fly wire keeps embers out from under buildings while still allowing airflow.
- Damp or incorrectly cured hay can spontaneously combust. Don't store it next to animals or farm equipment.
- Protect your assets by keeping flammable materials away from farm buildings.
- Keep grass away from buildings and lay gravel so there's nothing to burn.
- On high-risk fire days, remove any flammable gear, such as rugs, harnesses, halters and fly veils, and anything that contains metal (in the case of horses). Most rugs are a polyester/cotton blend, so if they catch fire, they'll melt onto the animal's skin.
- If you need to move your animals, ask your neighbours if they're able to contain them on their property.

Useful links



“Animals affected by fire. Advice for livestock, lifestyle block, horse and pet owners” from MPI

bit.ly/animals-fire



“Protecting your home and livestock” from Fire and Emergency **checkitsalright.nz/reduce-your-risk/protecting-your-property**

After a fire

- Animals may panic and flee to escape the smoke and heat, taking out any obstacles in their way. Check your animals, including their hooves, pads, feet, or udders for wounds and injuries.
- While external burns to the skin may be easy to see, your animals could also be suffering from internal burns, particularly to the lungs due to smoke inhalation. Seek veterinary advice.
- Make sure all animals have access to clean water. If the water isn't safe for you to drink, it isn't safe for your animals.
- Check water tanks supplied by roof collection and clean the roof and gutters for any ash.
- Check if irrigation lines to the water trough have melted in the fire. Remove any ash and debris from stock water.
- Pasture and stored feed may be contaminated by fire or ash. Make sure you have supplementary feed available for your animals.





Drought

Drought or dry conditions are likely to become more common with climate change. Check MetService long range weather forecasts and make sure you're prepared for extended periods with no or little rain.

Make a plan

Include steps to ensure you:

- have enough water for you and your whānau's use.
- have adequate water for your animals.
- have sufficient supplementary feed for your animals. Purchase supplementary feed early as it might not be available when you need it urgently.
- can reduce the number of animals on your property if necessary. This could include arrangements to graze stock elsewhere or even selling your animals. Use feed budgeting tools to ensure you have the right stock for your land.
- have the necessary financial arrangements in place to cover the cost of purchasing water and supplementary feed.

Refer to Section 3: Managing water on and off your property, for information about managing water tanks.

Look after your animals

- Contain livestock in paddocks where there's adequate shade for every animal. Don't contain livestock in confined spaces such as sheds or yards with little shade or air flow.
- **When it's very dry and hot, your animals could consume three times as much water as usual.** Make sure you have a reliable source of stored water with a reticulated system. Your rivers or ponds may no longer be able to sustain your livestock's water needs.
- Check the water supply is still drinkable. Low dams or ponds might be surrounded by mud or sludge. Fencing off these areas will prevent animals from potentially becoming stuck.
- During dry times and drought, pasture quality is often poor and limited. Ration feed and try to maintain ground cover. You might need to bring in supplementary feed or move animals off the property.
- Animals will need more feed depending on growth, stage of pregnancy, lactation and weather conditions. The type of feed will also dictate water intake. The drier the feed, the more water the animal will need.



Supplementary feed

If you need supplementary feed, such as hay or grain, place an order with a feed supplier as soon as possible. Animals need to be gradually introduced to supplementary food so they can adapt to it and to prevent digestive problems.

Talk to your vet or feed supplier to get advice on the best feed for your animals and situation.



Follow advice from the Ministry for Primary Industries on animals affected by drought at:

bit.ly/animals-drought

TIP: Consider planting fodder trees to assist in times of drought. They can also provide shade and shelter from the wind.



Reducing stock numbers

Your stocking rate needs to be compatible to the amount of feed you have available, or else you risk animal welfare issues associated with underfeeding stock. Pasture growth and quality changes throughout the seasons, along with seasonal change such as sunlight, temperature and rain. Feed planning is an essential tool when caring for livestock.

Overstocking means animals don't get the nutrition they need and can cause animal welfare problems.

It's usually more cost-effective to sell animals than to buy feed in. If you wait too long, your stock may become unsaleable. You could try selling through a stock agent, farmer, or through online sites.

Alternatively, you could contact your local processing plant or agent. Make sure you contact them as early as possible to check what their protocols and current wait times are. Some meat processors will allow you to bring your own stock by trailer, but others may only accept them via commercial transport operators. There could also be longer wait times if you have a small number of stock, or don't already have a relationship with the meat company.

Try working with your neighbours to develop workable solutions, like combining stock numbers from several properties and utilising their relationships with meat companies.

For more information about strategies to reduce the effects of drought, go to:



“Strategies used by farmers in drought” by Beef + Lamb New Zealand beeflambnz.com/sites/default/files/factsheets/pdfs/fact-sheet-160-strategies-used-by-farmers-in-drought.pdf



“Drought guide” from Farmlands farmlands.co.nz/Help/FarmingAdvice/

Volcanic eruption

Waikato is at risk from the impact of volcanic eruptions from the Auckland Volcanic Field and from volcanoes in the Central North Island (e.g. Ruapehu, Taranaki, Taupō, etc.).

If there is volcanic activity, follow official advice provided by Waikato Civil Defence and the emergency services. **The main risk to lifestyle block owners from volcanic activity is likely to be ash fall.**



If there's been a volcanic eruption in New Zealand, GeoNet will provide ash fall forecasts at **[geonet.org.nz/volcano](https://www.geonet.org.nz/volcano)**. These will also be communicated in the media.



Before

- If possible, get home before ash fall starts to avoid exposure to, and driving, during ash fall.
- If you have respiratory or heart conditions, keep your relief medication handy and use as prescribed. If you have any concerns, call your doctor.
- Take steps to keep ash out of your house by closing all doors and windows, turning off all heat pumps and air conditioning units and setting up a single entry/exit point for your house.
- Move vehicles and machinery under cover if possible, or cover them to avoid ash causing corrosion damage.
- Cover spa pools and swimming pools as ash can clog filters.
- Disconnect downpipes from gutters to allow ash and water to empty from gutters onto the ground.
- Disconnect roof catchment rainwater storage tanks from downpipes to prevent contamination.
- Seal any openings in water storage tanks (e.g. poorly-fitted covers), to prevent the entry of ash.
- Cover any open gully traps or drains with a sheet of plywood or similar, to prevent ash from entering the wastewater or stormwater systems.
- Cover vegetable gardens with tarpaulins, to prevent ash contamination.
- Check on friends and neighbours who may need assistance.

During

Volcanic ash is made up of fragments of rock, minerals, and volcanic glass. It's highly abrasive.

Dos	Don'ts
<p>Stay indoors. If you must go outside use protective gear such as masks and goggles and keep as much of your skin covered as possible. Wear eyeglasses, not contact lenses, as these can cause corneal abrasions.</p> <p>If outside at the time of eruption, seek shelter in a car or a building. If you're caught in volcanic ashfalls, wear a dust mask or use a handkerchief or cloth over your nose and mouth.</p> <p>Listen to the radio for updates and check Our Facebook page @WaikatoCivilDefence. Follow any instructions from emergency services, local authorities and Waikato Civil Defence.</p>	<p>Don't attempt to clear ash from your roof while ash is falling.</p> <p>Don't undertake non-essential driving. If you have to drive, drive slowly, maintain a safe following distance behind other traffic, use headlights on low beam, and avoid using wipers as ash can scratch windscreens.</p>

After volcanic activity

Dos	Don'ts
<p>Look after your family, friends and neighbours.</p> <p>Continue to follow official advice provided by Waikato Civil Defence, local authorities, and emergency services.</p> <p>When it's safe to go outside, safely clear rooves of ash fall using protective gear.</p> <p>Listen to advice regarding your water supply.</p> <p>You can eat vegetables from the garden but wash them first.</p>	<p>If you've been evacuated, don't return home until told it's safe to do so.</p> <p>Don't remove ash by using water. Ash is very heavy and can cause buildings to collapse, especially if dampened by rain.</p> <p>Avoid driving in heavy ash fall. Driving will stir up volcanic ash that can clog engines and stall vehicles. Abrasion can cause damage to moving parts, including bearings, brakes and transmissions.</p> <p>Don't go into designated restricted zones.</p> <p>Don't let animals near ash fall and possible hot spots.</p>



For information about how to protect yourself and clean up ash during volcanic eruptions, check out the Beef + Lamb New Zealand Fact Sheet - <https://beeflambnz.com/knowledge-hub/PDF/volcanic-eruption.pdf>

Keeping your animals safe

Before

- Move all animals indoors, where possible. Airborne ash can cause eye and skin irritation and can accumulate in sheep fleece.
- Ensure animals have supplementary feed. If feed is stored outside, make sure it's covered to avoid ash contamination.
- Ensure livestock have access to clean drinking water. Cover open water troughs with a sheet of plywood or similar, to avoid contamination by ash fall.



After

- Check all stock are contained and fences haven't been damaged or affected by power cuts (in the case of electric fences).
- Move animals out of paddocks that could be affected by volcanic debris as soon as it's safe to do so. The most common scenario is ash fall. Contamination can still occur long after the initial eruption, so you may need to feed your animals supplementary feed until the pastures are safe.
- If animals have ash on their coat or in their eyes, remove it immediately by washing with water. The ash is highly abrasive and can cause damage to the eyes and create excess warmth and bacterial infections if not removed.
- Provide water and feed to your animals as soon as possible. Winds and rain may distribute contaminants making pastures unsafe for animals to eat. Give your pets bottled or boiled water.
- Check machinery such as water pumps as they may be affected by ash.
- Soil and pasture growth can be severely affected by volcanic ash and acidic rain. Toxic chemicals may significantly change soil characteristics such as pH balances. This can cause pastures and plants to either die or be contaminated. The rehabilitation length of soil and plants is dependent on the amount of ash and rain deposited. Soil testing and trusted pasture advice is highly recommended.
- Make sure water tanks supplied by roof collection, and troughs are all free from ash. Don't allow animals access to water unless you're sure it's safe.



For more information to help you care for your animals affected by a volcanic eruption, follow advice from the Ministry for Primary Industries at:

bit.ly/animals-volcanic-eruption

Earthquake and tsunami

A tsunami is a series of powerful waves caused by large, sudden disturbances on or near the ocean floor. Tsunami can hit the coast with massive force, creating strong currents and can travel considerable distances inland across low-lying areas, flooding coastlines.

They're usually caused by earthquakes, but earthquakes aren't the only sign of an impending tsunami. Natural warning signs such as unusual sea behaviour, including sudden rising or falling sea levels or unusual sounds at the coast, might indicate a tsunami threat.

All of Waikato's coastline is vulnerable to tsunami threat.

Waikato's highest risks for tsunami are from the Tonga-Kermadec Trench, approximately 300 km to the east of New Zealand, or from a distant source tsunami, generated from earthquakes around the Pacific Rim. Tsunami can also be generated by volcanic eruptions or underwater landslides.



Check our **Regional Hazards Portal** to find out if you live, work or play in an area at risk of tsunami. If you live in a tsunami zone, learn and practise your tsunami evacuation route. [waikatoregion.govt.nz/regional-hazards-portal/](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/regional-hazards-portal/)



If you're on the coast and:

- **Feel** a strong earthquake that makes it hard to stand up or a weak rolling earthquake that lasts a minute or more.
- **See** a sudden rise or fall in sea level.
- **Hear** loud and unusual noises from the sea.

Don't wait for an official warning:

- **Go immediately** to the nearest high ground or as far inland as you can, taking the quickest route. **Do not stay at home.** If possible, run, walk or cycle when evacuating from a tsunami - you don't want to get stuck in traffic in a tsunami zone.
- **Don't go to the shore and watch.**
- **Listen** to the radio and follow the instructions of emergency services.
- **Stay away** from exposed areas until the official all-clear is given by authorities and emergency services.
- **Take** your getaway bag and pets with you if you can.

During an earthquake



Waikato has multiple fault lines under Hamilton, Morrinsville, Te Aroha and along the Kerepehi fracture areas and has experienced large earthquakes in the past. When an earthquake happens, remember, DROP, COVER, HOLD and wait until the shaking stops. To reduce the impact on your home, go to **getready.govt.nz**



For more information to help you care for your animals affected by earthquake, follow advice from the Ministry for Primary Industries at **bit.ly/animals-earthquake**



Section 7: First aid kits

Every home should have a first aid kit, and they're even more important when you live in the country.

They come in many shapes and sizes and can be purchased from St John or the Red Cross. You'll also find them in your local chemist or supermarket, or you can make your own.

What you need

A basic first aid kit should contain:

- plasters (in a variety of sizes and shapes)
- sterile gauze dressings (small, medium and large)
- sterile eye dressings (at least two)
- triangular bandages
- crepe rolled bandages
- safety pins
- disposable sterile gloves
- tweezers
- scissors
- alcohol-free cleansing wipes
- hand sanitiser
- sticky tape
- thermometer (preferably digital)
- skin rash cream (such as hydrocortisone)
- cream or spray to relieve insect bites and stings
- antiseptic cream
- painkillers, such as paracetamol (and infant paracetamol for children), aspirin (not to be given to children under 16), and ibuprofen

- cough medicine
- antihistamine cream or tablets
- any personal medication you or your family take
- distilled water for cleaning wounds
- eye wash and eye bath
- CPR breathing barrier with one-way valve (for protection during rescue breathing or CPR).

It's also a good idea to complete a first aid course. Your training could literally be life-saving. Giving first aid is about dealing with minor injuries and preventing them from getting worse, but it can also mean trying to keep someone alive until professional help arrives.

First aid kit for animals

These items could be added to your own first aid kit to cover your pets:

- elastic bandages
- vet-wrap
- your veterinarian's contact details
- towel
- tape
- wound ointment.



For more information about first aid requirements for your animals, please talk to your vet.

A detailed list of what to include in your pet first aid kit can also be found at mpi.govt.nz/getpetsthru

Pre-made first aid kits are available at local animal stores.

Section 8: Infectious diseases/pandemics

A pandemic environment often moves quickly. For the latest information and advice on how to protect yourself, your whānau, and visitors to your property, your first point of call should be to follow government guidelines and check for updates on the Ministry of Health website.

health.govt.nz



Prevention

Infectious diseases or pandemics can cause significant disruption to your whānau and lifestyle property.

The best treatment is prevention. Here are some quick tips to protect your personal wellbeing:

- Keep up healthy habits.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle.
 - stay physically active
 - eat a proper diet
 - get good sleep
 - stay connected with loved ones at home (email, phone, social media)
 - boost your mental health. For information about how to stay well, go to **farmstrong.co.nz** a nationwide wellbeing programme for the rural community.
- Use basic hygiene.
 - regularly wash and dry your hands
 - cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue or your elbow
 - clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Improve air ventilation in indoor areas.
- Practise physical distancing in public when possible.
- Keep track of where you've been.

Make a plan

It's important to have an infectious disease plan to ensure your property and animals can continue to thrive if you, or a family member tests positive for an infectious disease. You might be required to leave your property on short notice or to isolate at home.

Putting a plan in place, and having the right information available, will make it easier for someone to step in and help look after your animals and/or property if needed.

Encourage your friends, family, and neighbours to be involved in your planning. Share your feed plan, property map, health and safety plan, and animal health plan with them and keep your plans somewhere where others can easily find them.

Things to include in your plan:

- daily and weekly tasks and whether these involve people visiting your property, such as farmers, veterinarians and contractors
- a plan to move stock off or onto your property if needed and whether they can move in a contactless way
- ways to maintain physical distancing and minimise contact with suppliers
- masks, hand sanitiser and cleaning products for you, your whānau and people visiting your property
- ways to keep track of people visiting your property – QR codes or a sign in book
- options for people on your property to isolate away from the main dwelling, such as campervans, sleepouts etc.

TIP: Remember to have your NHI (National Health Index) number and medical history handy if someone from the Ministry of Health contacts you to assess your situation.

Infectious disease plan template

See Appendix 3 for a template to help you develop an infectious disease plan.



Appendices

Appendix 1 – MetService Severe Weather Criteria



Severe Weather

- what is it and how does MetService keep you informed?

What is ‘Severe Weather’?

- It’s weather that has the potential to seriously disrupt your day and could cause harm to you, your property or your possessions.
- The term is used to cover ‘heavy rain’, ‘heavy snow’, ‘strong winds’, and ‘thunderstorms’ and we use specific criteria and thresholds to define when these events are severe.
- MetService will issue a warning if criteria is expected to be reached.

How far in advance is severe weather forecast?



- Typically, MetService will issue advice six days out from potential severe weather through our ‘Severe Weather Outlook’. This applies to rain, wind and snow. The **Outlook** is a ‘heads up’ that although we can see something coming, there is some uncertainty about what might happen and where.
- As an event gets closer and we can be more specific about severe weather timing, location and intensity, we will issue a **‘Watch’** (with colour-code Yellow) or a **‘Warning’** (with colour-code Orange or Red depending on the severity of the event). See overleaf for an explanation of Watches and Warnings.
- Thunderstorms are different. They form incredibly quickly and are less predictable days in advance so our ‘heads up’ Outlook for a thunderstorm is, at best, 36 hours before the event. Because a severe thunderstorm has the potential to have significant impact and disruption, a Thunderstorm Warning will always be Red.

Criteria for Severe Weather



Heavy Rain

Widespread (broad-scale) impacts over an area of at least 1000km²

More than 50mm in six hours
or
More than 100mm in 24 hours



Strong Wind

Widespread (broad-scale) impacts over an area of at least 1000km²

Gales with a minimum mean speed of 90km/h
or
Frequent gusts exceeding 110km/h



Thunderstorms

Affects a localised area (small-scale) for a short period of time.

Rain of 25mm/h or more
or
Hailstones 20mm in diameter or larger
or
Wind gusts of 110km/h or stronger
or
Tornadoes with windspeeds of 116km/h or stronger



Heavy Snow

Widespread (broad-scale) impacts over an area of at least 1000km²

Snowfall below: 1000m in the North Island, South Canterbury and Otago; 500m in the rest of the South Island.

Snow depth of 10cm within six hours
or
Snow depth of 25cm within 24 hours

What size is 1000km²? It is about the size of a box drawn around the outside of Lake Taupo.

for more information visit [metservice.com](https://www.metservice.com)



Appendix 2 – Daily water use

Household water usage by the number of litres a person uses on average per day.

Household Use	Main Requirements	Litres/per person/per day
Drinking	Biologically and Chemically Safe	2
Cooking and Food Preparation	Biologically and Chemically Safe	3
Bathing/Showering/ Cleaning	Biologically Safe	100
Toilet Flushing	Not Discoloured or Stain Causing	80
Clothes Washing	Not Discoloured or Stain Causing	65
General Use	No Special Requirements	50
	Total	300

Number of litres different animals use on average per day.

Animal	Main requirements	Litres/per animal/ per day
Calf		20
Lactating Cow		40-70
Beef Cattle		30-50
Sheep		3-4.5
Deer		6-12
Horses		34-50
Goats	Milking	10-20
	Dry	3.5-7
Pigs	Mature	11-18
	Breeding Sows	22-35
	Pigs up to 120kg	7-11
Poultry	Laying Hens	.3-.45
	Non-Laying Hens/Chickens	.18-.29
	Turkeys	0.55-0.7
Dog		.03-.05L/kg
Cat		.06L/kg

Appendix 3 – Infectious Disease Plan Template

List key contacts who visit your property	
Feed supplier	
Regular veterinarian	
After hours veterinarian	
Stock agent	
Shearing contractor	
Farrier	
Home Kill	
Electrician	
Plumber	
Mechanic	
Power supplier	
Internet provider	
Wi-Fi details	
Other	
Back up animal and property carer (i.e. friends, neighbours, family). Name, number, email	

Describe how your property and chattels work

How the water and/or irrigation system works	
Trough operation/maintenance	
Fuel and chemical storage location and directions	
Vehicles and machinery operation	
Electric fence operation	
Other	

Your Animals	
Names, species, number of and registration if applicable	
Feed requirements	
Water requirements	
Grazing rotation	
Food requirements and location	
Vaccination status, medication location and directions	
Animal covers, gear location and instructions	
Other	





