

Top Priority – Severe Weather Warning – QLD & Northern NSW

A major flood event has impacted communities from Maryborough in Queensland to Grafton in New South Wales, with Brisbane's CBD inundated and a record-breaking flood in Lismore.

The Brisbane River peaked at 3.85 metres on Monday morning, 28th February 2022.

The rain has largely stopped in Queensland. However, major flood warnings remain for the Mary, Logan, Brisbane and Bremer rivers, and Warrill Creek.

Thousands of residents required evacuating, with many rescued from their roofs after flood waters breached the levee before dawn. The entire QLD CBD remains under water. The town recorded 181mm of rain in 30 minutes at one stage. At 3pm on Monday, the Wilsons River level was 14.37 metres and steady.

As well as Lismore, evacuation orders were in place in Murwillumbah, Brunswick Heads, Billinudgel, Ocean Shores, Mullumbimby, Coraki and Southgate. The flood levee has been breached in Murwillumbah, and river levels there and in nearby Tumbulgum and Chinderah have already surpassed flood records. Major flooding is occurring at Grafton, Ulmarra and Maclean, similar to the March 2021 event, with the BoM advising further rises are possible.

Further riverine flooding is expected for the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast on Monday, and will extend further south to the Central Coast, Sydney, Illawarra and South Coast catchments Tuesday into Wednesday. Major flood warnings remain current for the Tweed, Wilsons, Richmond, Clarence, Orara and Bellinger rivers.

Trains, buses, and ferries have been suspended across much of south-east Queensland and other major highways have been cut by flood waters. However, the Bruce Highway north of Brisbane is set to reopen on Monday.

Brisbane Residents should check the following link regarding current information on Evacuation Centres, Council Updates & Impacts, Road Closures and Further Flood Forecasts.

<https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/>

Overnight flows from the upper catchments and local inflows into the Brisbane River are likely to coincide with morning and afternoon high tides.

This could result in water entering properties in areas including Brisbane City, Bulimba, Hamilton, Milton, New Farm, Newstead, Norman Park, Oxley, Rocklea, South Brisbane, St Lucia, Teneriffe, Toowong, West End, Windsor and Yeronga.

Be aware that water levels will fluctuate over the coming week and the Local Council will monitor and use controls, including backflow devices, to protect potentially impacts properties where possible.

Stock up on sandbags at Council's depots at:

- Darra - South Depot, 38 Shamrock Road
- Morningside - Balmoral Depot, 9 Redfern Street
- Zillmere - North Depot, 33 Jennings Street.

Flood Warnings

Since the beginning of the Queensland/Northern NSW weather event, 27 Flood Warnings been issued from the BoM.

Please keep up to date with the current warnings using the link below:

Queensland warnings

<http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/warnings/index.shtml>

New South Wales Warnings

<http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/warnings/>

AJ Grant Directive in Flood Zones:

- DO NOT attempt to drive into ANY flood waters
- Tie down all materials on job sites and store whilst not in use
- Check all tarps on sites are secured properly
- DO NOT attempt to get up on a roof or work at heights in high winds or wet weather
- If you are unsure about the risk/hazard – DO NOT attempt it

If you have any concerns or questions, please call AJG To discuss

Protecting yourself and your Teams

PREPARE:

1. Have an Emergency Plan for your employees if the weather suddenly changes
 - Where will you meet up if you need to evacuate?
 - How will you have continuous contact with each other?
 - i. Emergency Radio in each Car
 - ii. WhatsApp Group
 - iii. Portable Phone Charger
 - What are your routes to get from place to place?
 - i. Have you checked for road closures?
 - ii. Have you checked for weather forecasts for the day?
 - iii. Could you potentially become isolated?

2. Have an Emergency Kit with helpful supplies and ideally that should sustain you for 72 hours:
 - Battery-operated radio with spare batteries
 - Torch with spare batteries
 - First Aid Kit & Manual (Must have antiseptic Cream/Spray)
 - Toilet paper and essential toiletries, including sunscreen & Hand Sanitiser
 - Strong and sealable plastic bags (for clothing, valuables, documents)

- A mobile phone & Portable Phone Charger
- Non-perishable foods (dried and canned)
- Min. 10 litres of bottled water
- Spare change of dry clothing
- Prescription Medications
- Calamine Lotion (insect bites)

3. PPE

- Long Work Pants & Long sleeve work top
- N95/P2 Disposable Mask (asbestos & mould)
- Gumboots or waders
- Thick Gloves
- DEET Cream
- Hat
- Eye protection

4. Location of Shelters & Evacuation Centres in the area

- [QLD Evacuation Centres](#)
- [NSW Evacuation Centres](#)

5. Planning your Travel

Motorists in high-risk flood areas should be aware of evacuation routes and be prepared before extreme weather events. During floods, motorists should follow the advice of authorities and adjust their route accordingly to avoid driving into danger. Conditions in floodwaters can change quickly. Roads or crossings that may have appeared safe a short time ago may quickly become dangerous. If in doubt about being able to cross, the safest choice is not to enter floodwaters.

The floods have closed some major roads in QLD & NSW currently. If you are planning on travelling into the disaster area/s, make sure you familiarise yourself with the area and roads prior.

Check for the latest Road Closures here:

Queensland

<https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/index.html>

New South Wales

<https://www.livetraffic.com/>

RESPOND

How quickly you respond in the event of a sudden change in conditions and a flood is the potential difference between life and death.

Information on changing conditions is imperative and can be obtained in the following ways.

- **Radio**

Tune into your Local Radio Station for the Live updates and changes

QLD

<http://www.commercialradio.com.au/www-radioalive-com-au/find-a-station/state/qld>

NSW

<http://www.commercialradio.com.au/find-a-station/new-south-wales>

- **Weather Updates**

Local Brisbane Council

<https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/>

QLD Emergency Management Dashboard

<https://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/Warnings/Pages/default.aspx>

Lismore Emergency Management Dashboard

<https://disaster.lismore.nsw.gov.au/dashboard/overview>

Specific Hazards to this Flood Event

The following information outlines in detail the potential diseases and infections that may be present in the disaster zones you are entering:

- Flood water contamination
- Mosquitoes & Black Flies
- Mould
- Fallen Powerlines
- Fatigue
- Floating Debris
- Landslide & mudslides
- Solar Panels Water & Electricity
- Working of Roofs
- Asbestos

Floodwater contamination

Floodwater is often contaminated by sewage from overflowing sewerage or septic systems, and by agricultural or industrial wastes and chemicals. There is a higher risk of infection by meeting polluted water or soil. You could end up with wound infections, dermatitis, conjunctivitis or ear, nose, and throat infections.

While cleaning up homes, businesses, or public spaces, wear protective footwear and gloves to avoid being cut or scraped, especially if the area has been affected by floodwater. Treat any cuts with antiseptic and cover with a protective dressing immediately.

Tips to avoid infection

- Don't wade through water, even shallow water. If you must enter shallow water, wear solid boots or shoes for protection and gloves to avoid being cut or scraped, especially if the area has been directly affected by floodwaters.
- Try to avoid contact with mud and dirt.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water before handling food, and after handling pets that may have been in contact with water or soil.
- Change out of dirty clothes and wash clothes separately.
- Clean and dry dirty footwear

Cleaning up

- Any household items or areas that were contaminated by floodwater should be washed well, including hard surfaces such as floors and paved areas.
- Wear protective clothing and wash your hands well once you're finished.
- Grassed and bare dirt areas should be left to dry out naturally.
- Assume anything touched by wastewater is contaminated.

Mosquitoes and black flies

Mosquitoes

Mosquito numbers can increase after floods, storms and cyclones as standing water from heavy rainfall and flooding provides optimal conditions for mosquito breeding. Increased numbers of mosquito's lead to an increased risk of being bitten and mosquito-borne diseases.

The most common mosquito-borne diseases in Queensland & Northern NSW are caused by Ross River and Barmah Forest viruses. Outbreaks of dengue have been reported annually in north and central Queensland. Zika virus, Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) virus, and a strain of West Nile virus called Kunjin virus have also rarely been reported.

Symptoms

The incubation period for mosquito-borne diseases varies. Symptoms are usually present 3–15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Common signs and symptoms are:

- headache

- fever
- joint or muscle pain
- skin rash
- fatigue
- nausea

Most people infected with Kunjin virus, Zika virus and MVE viruses do not develop symptoms. However, those with symptoms typically experience:

- fever
- muscle pains
- headaches
- tiredness
- joint pain/swelling.

In rare cases, infection may result in brain inflammation (encephalitis). It is important to seek prompt medical assistance if symptoms are experienced.

Transmission

Mosquito-borne viruses are transmitted via bites by infective mosquitoes and cannot be transmitted directly from person-to-person. Different mosquitoes prefer to bite at different times of the day and night. It is important to be always vigilant and use the personal protection measures listed to prevent being bitten.

Treatment

If diagnosed with a mosquito-borne disease it is important to prevent being bitten again by mosquitoes to ensure the disease transmission cycle does not continue. Contact your doctor or healthcare professional for advice on the most appropriate course of action.

Prevention

The best way to prevent mosquito-borne diseases is to prevent mosquitoes from breeding. You can reduce the number of potential breeding sites by:

- removing any pools of standing water around you—this may involve clearing debris from ditches, cutting small channels to help pooling water drain, or filling in holes and vehicle wheel ruts
- cleaning up debris deposited by flood waters. While a lot of this debris may be half-buried, it often contains enough water to produce large numbers of mosquitoes.

Rain or floodwater may have also collected in containers, so make sure you tip the water out of the containers and store them in a dry place or dispose of them responsibly. Common mosquito breeding sites include:

- pot plant bases (inside and outside)
- tyres

- tarpaulins
- plants e.g. bromeliads, palm fronds, coconut shells
- buckets
- tin cans and plastic containers
- boats
- roof gutters (if blocked by leaf debris).

Rainwater tanks can also be a potential breeding site for mosquitoes. You can reduce risk by

- checking the mosquito screens and flap valves on rainwater tanks—particularly in-ground tanks— to ensure that the screens and flap valves are still in place
- making any necessary repairs.

Avoid being bitten

There are several simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes including:

- applying insect repellent (in accordance with manufacturer's instructions), especially when outside at dawn or dusk. Personal repellents containing DEET or picaridin are more effective than other repellents
- wearing long, loose, light-coloured clothing
- using flying insect spray or plug-in insecticide devices to kill mosquitoes indoors
- using bed nets, if available
- repairing defective insect screens

See a doctor immediately if you become unwell with fever, headache, skin rash, joint or muscle pain.

Black flies

The number of black flies (genus *Austrosimulium*) can increase following a flood or heavy rain, particularly in inland areas. While black flies do not transmit disease, allergic reactions and bacterial skin infections may occur from bites and scratching the bites.

Black flies are aggressive biters that are found in areas around streams and rivers. They breed in running water—but once flood water recedes the number of black flies rapidly decrease. Black flies are active only during the day and do not bite at night. Their peak activity period tends to occur from sunrise to mid-morning (10 am) and late afternoon (4 pm) to sunset.

Female black flies are blood feeders—their bites can itch and persist for several days. Anticoagulants—a blood thinner that stops the blood from clotting—injected into the bite site by black flies can cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals.

Signs and symptoms

The range of signs and symptoms associated with bites can include:

- painful, itchy bite lesions
- urticaria (itchy raised skin rash)
- cellulitis (hot, red, swollen and painful skin and underlying tissue infection).

Treatment

Black fly bites should be managed to prevent secondary skin infections by:

- applying calamine lotion or another anti-pruritic preparation to bite areas to prevent itching
- cleaning inflamed bites with soap and water at least once daily, applying an antiseptic lotion and keeping the bite covered with a dry dressing
- keeping affected limbs elevated
- washing hands before and after touching open wounds
- observing skin sores. If skin sores become hot, red, swollen and painful, seek medical attention immediately.

Prevention

Black fly bites can be avoided by:

- applying insect repellent in accordance with manufacturers recommendations.
- where possible, avoiding outdoor activity during the morning and afternoon
- wearing light coloured loose fitting clothing when contact with black flies is likely
- keeping shirt sleeves and your shirt front closely fastened (shirts with zippered fronts keep flies out better than buttoned shirts), and tucking trousers inside socks or high boots
- ensuring insect screens on doors and windows are intact
- using a knock-down insect spray in living areas.

Personal repellents containing DEET or picaridin tend to last longer than other repellents depending on the concentration.

Mould

Floods are usually associated with excess moisture, long periods of heat and humidity, and pooling of water. These factors all help to create an environment that is favourable to the growth of mould. People can be exposed to mould through inhalation, skin contact or ingestion.

People with a normal immune system are unlikely to be affected by mould. However, for some people, such as those with a true allergy to mould, asthma or lung disease, elderly people, or people with chronic diseases like diabetes or people with low immunity, such as people on cancer chemotherapy, exposure to mould may cause them to develop health problems.

Identify mould

Sometimes you can see mould when it discolours walls, ceilings and other surfaces. If you can't see it you might be able to detect a musty, unpleasant odour instead.

Air out the rooms

When returning to a flood-affected house or building, dry it out quickly by opening all the doors and windows. If possible, use fans, or air-conditioners on dry mode, to speed up the process. If the roof space was flooded, it also will need extra ventilation to speed up the drying process.

Porous items that can't be easily cleaned and have been wet for more than two days should be thrown out. This includes items such as mattresses, carpet, leather goods and ceiling insulation.

Plants and bushes growing on or close to outside walls help to hold in moisture and promote mould growth. Try to clear plants, bushes and soil away from walls.

Clean mould

Abrasively cleaning mould from a surface, such as with a dry brush, is **not recommended**. This could release spores into the air, which may cause adverse health effects and spread mould to other areas.

There are many effective products for killing and removing mould from walls, floors, and other hard surfaces. Household cleaning agents or detergents can do an effective job if used correctly, as can white fermented vinegar cleaning solution.

Using bleach is not recommended because it's not an effective mould killer. However, bleach will help to eliminate other disease-causing organisms that may be present because of contaminated floodwaters. Mixing cleaning agents is **not recommended**. For example, mixing bleach and ammonia can produce toxic fumes.

Non-porous items such as glass-ware and some plastics can be washed in hot water with a bleach solution or with a good quality disinfectant and air dried. If using a dishwasher, clean and disinfect it first. Do the wash using a full cycle and hot water.

Air conditioning and other ventilation units are a good environment for moulds and other bacteria to grow. Using the unit without cleaning it properly first can cause mould spores to become airborne and be inhaled or spread to other areas. It's recommended that you have air conditioners and ventilation units serviced by a qualified technician.

Protect yourself

Wear good quality rubber gloves while touching and cleaning mouldy items to protect your hands and nails. Protect your eyes by wearing safety goggles with closed in sides.

If you have a lot of mould to clean or have allergies, wear an N95/P2 disposable respirator. Standard dust masks do not protect you from microscopic spores and bacteria. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions and fit the mask properly.

Wear protective clothing that can be thrown away or washed easily.

Prevent mould growth

Reducing the amount of moisture is the best way to control mould growth. While you can't control factors like rain, you can repair other sources, like leaky plumbing, roofs and other fixtures, as soon as possible.

If you're repainting walls or other hard surfaces you can add an anti-mould solution to the paint to help slow down mould growth. Ask your painter or hardware supplier for details.

Plants growing on or close to external walls can hold in moisture and promote mould growth. Make sure your walls and weep holes are clear of plants and soil.

Fallen Powerlines

Trees, high winds, fast water currents and debris can bring down overhead powerlines. Take care when you clean up and if you find something you think may be a powerline, don't take any chances. Assume every fallen powerline is 'live' and dangerous even if there are no sparks. Stay well away, warn others, and call 000 or the emergency number 13 16 70.

Fatigue

In the event of a severe weather event, the simple stress of the event combined with long working hours and possible long driving periods can increase fatigue. Fatigue increases risk of incidents.

If you feel fatigued or if there are periods of work ahead that you may become fatigued, we urge you to STOP immediately and Contact your AJG Representative to discuss further.

Floating Debris

Following a flood or heavy rain event it may take some time for water to subside even if it is sunny and good weather outside. Strong currents may exist, and submerged hazards might not be readily seen. Do not attempt to access these areas until clearance is given by the relevant authorities. Even shallow flooded areas can change quickly. Unidentified submerged hazards can cause serious injuries and even death.

Landslide or Mudslide

Landslide and Mudslides occur when masses of rock, earth material, or debris flows move down a slope due to gravity. Landslides can occur on any terrain if the conditions are right and cause significant damage and casualties to people and property.

Do not attempt to access these areas as there could be a significant danger of further landslides occurring. Clearance must be given by the relevant authorities or engineers before accessing the site.

Solar Panels

Be careful around solar panels after a severe storm or flood. They could still be 'live' even when the power is out. Call a professional technician to check before touching or attempting to repair.

Water and Electricity

Never use electrical equipment or appliances that have been affected by water.

Do not enter a house that is flooded until an electrician has verified the electricity is disconnected and there is no chance of electrocution while walking through the flood water indoors.

Working on Roofs

High winds and rain combined increase the chance of falling from height. DO NOT get on a roof if it is raining or if it has finished raining and still wet. Ensure that your company processes and procedures are being followed.

Asbestos

If there is damage to the property or surrounding structures and you suspect it may be Asbestos; treat it as if it is Asbestos.

AJG Directive:

1. Do a thorough inspection of the damage to the property to determine if there could be damaged asbestos
2. If inspecting, assessing, or working in the dark use adequate lighting so you can properly identify the damaged materials.
3. If you identify a damaged material that could potentially contain asbestos. **STOP WORK**
4. Take a photo of the damaged Fibro/material, upload it to the job photos and send it to the supervisor.
5. Immediately contact the supervisor or your local AJ Grant office so we can organise correct asbestos removal ASAP.
6. **If you think it could be asbestos, treat it like it is!**



**RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL
BUILDING SERVICES**
a quality partnership built on **trust**

NEVER:

1. Leave unsecured eave sheets or possible asbestos containing materials on site without advising your AJ Grant supervisor
2. Disturb asbestos containing materials
3. Continue work once you reveal possible asbestos containing materials after beginning work

AJG are committed to keeping all our Contractors Safe. If you have a concern, STOP WORK and speak to your AJG Supervisor immediately.

Thank you

AJ Grant Building