

Practice Scenario: Flash-Flood

Late in the afternoon the Bureau of Meteorology begin to issue warnings that thunderstorms producing damaging winds and heavy rainfall is expected the following day in the late morning. It has already been a wet start to winter and so local dams are close to capacity and the ground is soft underfoot. Your organisation is located in a flood prone area and so begin to take precautions such as acquiring sandbags and placing items off the ground.



By 10am, rain has begun belting down and run-off begins to flood low lying areas. Strong winds knock down trees and power lines, causing blackouts and local dams and creeks begin to overflow their banks, creating more flooding. In total, 60ml of rain falls within a 30 hour period.

There are reports that in some areas, people are trapped in their homes or businesses due to the rising water, main roads have been closed as sections of the asphalt have been washed away and local schools have made the decision to keep students onsite because of safety concerns about bus transport.

Your organisation has sandbagged your entrance ways, and so have avoided the worst of the water damage to your workplace. However, access from one end of the street has been cut off due to the flood waters damaging the roads and you have no power or clean water onsite.

The next day, the flood water has begun to subside, leaving in its wake mud and debris. Power is expected to be restored by the evening as crews work to repair power lines and SES remove the fallen trees. A number of your clients have been badly impacted by the floods with damages to their homes, with many feeling very emotional from the experience. Local and State Governments have advised the community to boil water until otherwise advised due to the risk of contamination to the drinking water from the flood waters.

For your workplace, consider the following:

- Does your workplace have clients that either visit you onsite or are visited by your staff in-home? How will these appointments be managed with road closures and no essential services in the area?
- What advice and duties will you be giving your staff?
- What (if any) messages will you be communicating to your clients/ customers/ community members and when?
- How will the damage to your facility, a lack of power and clean water alter operations? What services will be essential to maintain? Are there any that will be delayed or cancelled?

In the case of a flood, remember:

- Stack possessions, records, stock or equipment on benches and tables. Place electrical items on top, move waste containers, chemicals and poisons above floor level.
- Secure items that are likely to float and cause damage
- Never drive, ride or walk through floodwater
- Be prepared to evacuate if advised by emergency services
- When returning after a flood, ensure electricity and gas are turned off before entering the property. Any electrical systems or equipment that has been exposed to flood water should be checked by an electrician before being used.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water until normal water supply has been declared safe.