SAFETY in FLOOD AFFECTED



This brochure has been developed to promote awareness of safety precautions to minimise the risk of injury or illness when working in areas affected by flood.





The following should be considered:

PERSONAL PROTECTION

- Personal protective clothing/equipment should be worn at all times when working in floodwaters.
- Clothing and equipment should be washed after your activity is completed.
- Sunscreen should be applied and reapplied as appropriate to exposed parts of the body when working outdoors during daylight hours. Also seek shade when taking rest breaks.
- Dehydration may occur if you are exposed to the sun or wind for prolonged periods without appropriate fluid intake. When working in hot conditions you should drink at least one litre of water per hour and take a rest break every 15 minutes.
- It is recommended that insect repellent be applied when in or around flood affected communities as mosquito breeding increases after rain or flooding.
- Conditions and activities undertaken can be physically demanding and lead to fatigue. Signs of fatigue include: Being distracted easily; having difficulty concentrating; becoming irritable; being argumentative, frustrated or withdrawn; having bloodshot eyes; constantly yawning; heavy eyelids; and excessive blinking. If you are fatigued it is important that you have an adequate rest break.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Check with local authorities to ensure the water is safe before drinking or using for sanitation purposes. If the water supply is contaminated boiled or bottled water should be used.
- Dispose of any food or medication that may have come into contact with floodwaters.
- If you come into direct contact with polluted water there is an increased risk of disease, wound infection, dermatitis, conjunctivitis, and ear, nose and throat infections. Avoid wading in floodwaters even if they are only shallow as they may be contaminated. If you must enter shallow floodwaters wear appropriate protective clothing and cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof dressing.
- People with diabetes should take extra care to protect themselves against wound infection.
- If you sustain any injuries that might be contaminated with floodwaters or mud you should apply first aid and seek medical advice.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Power should be turned off. Do not turn it back on until you are certain it is safe to do so. Never turn it back on if water is still evident.
- Have all electrical items professionally tested prior to use.
- Appropriately dispose of water-affected household electrical items.
- Do not perform your own electrical work under any circumstances.
- Stay away from fallen powerlines and always assume that they are live. Fallen powerlines should be reported.
- Stay away from switchboards if they are damaged by water and warn others to do the same.
- If mains power is lost report this to your electricity provider.
- People using portable generators after a network power failure should be aware that power from generators can be dangerous if used incorrectly. You must not connect the generator to your house electrical wiring (such as by using a power point). This is not only illegal it is very dangerous as it could energise the powerlines and cause an electric shock to anyone coming into contact with them. A proper generator change-over switch and appropriate socket must be installed by a licensed electrical contractor. You must also be aware of risks, including electrocution and poisoning/suffocation from carbon monoxide exhaust gases. Always run generators outdoors or in a well-ventilated area, don't exceed the generator's load rating and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- With rooftop solar systems, remember that even if the electric utility has turned off the mains supply, your solar panels will continue to produce lethal voltages during the daytime. If the solar system is not turned off by switching off the array isolators next to the inverter and on the rooftop, there may be some risk of electric shock and/or electric arcing. For more information about this contact your installer or licensed electrician.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

- Make sure you keep abreast of what is happening. Up-to-date and relevant information can be obtained from local authorities and by listening to local radio for official warnings and advice.
- Animals such as snakes and rats may have been moved by floodwaters. Exercise caution when undertaking clean up activities as such creatures may be hiding amongst debris or in enclosed areas. Appropriate advice should be sought to manage deceased animals

DRIVING

- Roads may have been damaged by floodwaters and access may be restricted. It is important to check the conditions of the road and if a road or bridge is closed, do not attempt to cross it without seeking approval from local authorities. If a road or bridge has restrictions in place make sure you observe these.
- You should not drive or operate equipment if fatigued.

MANUAL HANDLING

- Flood recovery activities may involve manual handling or repetitive tasks. Seek assistance from other people where you can and check that there is sufficient space and no obstructions for lifting and moving with correct posture and body movements. Where possible loads should be lifted and placed at waist height. You should also keep your back straight and bend your knees.
- If you are performing repetitive tasks make sure you have regular rest breaks and try to alternate the tasks with the other people helping you.

MORE INFORMATION

- Contact your local council to find out more about the specific flood risk to your property
- To report fallen powerlines or report a power outage contact ETSA Utilities on 131 366. For general information visit www.etsautilities.com.au
- For details about road closures visit www.police.sa.gov.au. Road closure information can also be found at www.dtei.sa.gov.au
- Weather information can be found at www.bom.gov.au
- General flood safety preparedness information and advice can be found at www.ses.sa.gov.au
- For welfare assistance after a flood visit the Families SA website via www.dfc.sa.gov.au
- For health related advice visit www.sahealth.sa.gov.au
- For emergency flood response telephone 132 500
- For life threatening emergencies telephone **000** (triple zero).