



Flood damaged business property



Deep flood water inundates a Coffs Harbour business

## Prepare yourself

Some basic measures you can take right now include keeping a list of emergency numbers near the telephone and assembling an Emergency Kit.

Your Emergency Kit should contain at all times:

- A portable radio with spare batteries
- A torch with spare batteries
- A first aid kit with supplies for your business
- Candles and waterproof matches
- A waterproof bag for valuables
- Emergency contact numbers
- Copies of any business emergency plans (including your Business FloodSafe Plan)

Your business should have a Business FloodSafe Plan. A copy of the Business FloodSafe Toolkit is available on the SES website. Keep a copy of your Business FloodSafe Toolkit handy and ensure that the Business FloodSafe Plan is complete and up to date.

You should decide where you will move stock and equipment to and how it will be transported. Keep backups of important records and store these in a flood free location.

Check your insurance policy. Where possible ensure shop fittings can be easily moved or are able to resist water damage. Keep a supply of boxes to move stock and records if flooding is likely.



## How the SES can help you

The State Emergency Service is responsible for dealing with floods in NSW. This includes planning for floods and educating people about how to protect themselves and their property.

During floods, the SES will provide flood information, safety advice, evacuation, rescue and essentials to people cut off by flood waters.

[www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)

FOR EMERGENCY HELP IN FLOODS AND STORMS CALL THE SES ON  
**132 500**

- SES website [www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)
- Coffs Harbour City Council (business hours) 02 6648 4000
- Coffs Harbour City Council website [www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au)
- Bureau of Meteorology website [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)



Protecting yourself from a flood 

Heavy rainfall and flash flooding affect the Coffs Harbour business area



## Are you at risk from floods?

Coffs Harbour has a long history of flash flooding from Coffs Creek. The Coffs Creek catchment is relatively small, but highly populated. The creek flows through the middle of the residential and commercial areas of Coffs Harbour to the Pacific Ocean at the southern end of Park Beach. In Coffs Harbour there have been at least 12 significant floods since 1917. The November 1996 flood would appear to be the largest flood reported. It has been estimated that some 260 residential homes and 200 commercial properties were inundated above floor level.

In major floods, similar to that which occurred in November 1996, hundreds of homes and numerous businesses would be flooded and/or severely damaged. Floods larger than the 1996 event are possible.

The entire CBD is subject to inundation during severe floods with smaller areas of the CBD potentially affected by smaller floods. Businesses should be prepared for flooding. This flooding may originate from Coffs Creek or from localised flash flooding.

Flood waters can be very dangerous. Never drive, ride or walk through flood water. If trapped by flooding it is safer to shelter within the highest part of your building, rather than trying to evacuate through dangerous flood waters. They can be deeper and faster flowing than expected and can contain debris.

You can also be indirectly affected by flooding even if your property is not actually inundated as roads may be closed and power, water and the phone may be cut.

Plan ahead now. Decide what you will do in a flood. Put together a Business FloodSafe Plan (the Business FloodSafe Toolkit is available from the SES) that is applicable for flash flooding and your business.

To seek further advice on how flooding can affect your property, contact Coffs Harbour City Council.

## Stay informed

Coffs Harbour City SES Unit can give you information on what you can do to reduce the effects of flooding on your family and your property.

Coffs Harbour City Council may be able to provide information on how flooding can affect your property. Further flood information is available on their website: [www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au)

This brochure and general information on preparing for floods can be found on the SES website at [www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)

## How you will be advised of a coming flood

Severe Weather Warnings and Severe Thunderstorms Warnings, warning of Flash Flooding will be broadcast over radio stations:

2CS	FM 106.3
Star FM	FM 105.5
ABC	92.3FM

Bureau of Meteorology Severe Weather Warnings and Severe Thunderstorm Warnings are available on their website [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

Very heavy rainfall is a natural warning sign that flooding may occur.



Business in Park Avenue affected by flood water



Inadequate drains in Park Avenue

## When flash flooding is likely

When a Severe Weather Warning or Severe Thunderstorm Warning is issued including warning of flash flooding or when very heavy rain occurs.

- Be alert, keep an eye on the weather and keep listening to a local radio station for further information and advice.
- Locate and activate your Business FloodSafe Plan
- Locate and check your Emergency Kit
- Locate important papers and put in your Emergency Kit
- Follow the instructions of authorities

## During a flash flood

- **Never drive, walk or ride through flood water – this is the main cause of death during floods as water may be deeper or faster flowing than people think and contain hidden snags and debris.**
- Where possible, raise stock, records and equipment
- Secure objects that are likely to float and cause damage
- If flood waters rise around your car, get out and move to higher ground immediately. Cars can be easily swept away in moving water
- If you are inside your business stay there until advised otherwise. Shelter in the highest part of the building
- If you are away from your business, don't try and return until you are sure it is safe.
- Keep listening to a local radio station for further information and advice

## If you are advised to evacuate

- Leave before flood water arrives. You may only have minutes to evacuate
- Take your Emergency Kit with you
- Be aware of fallen power lines, trees and debris
- Never drive, ride or walk through flood water
- Shelter at a neighbouring business, that is not flooded, or on higher ground away from creeks or drains

## After the flood

Flood dangers do not end when flood waters begin to recede

- Before returning inside your building ensure its safety is checked. Checks should investigate at least:
  - o Structural safety of the building
  - o Safety of electrical and gas supplies and equipment
  - o Potential slips, trips and falls with mud and water
  - o Prevalence of venomous spiders and snakes
  - o Debris
- Wear strong non-slip footwear, protective clothing and puncture-resistant gloves while cleaning up, and use disinfectant
- Never eat or drink food that has been in contact with flood water
- Keep away from areas where power lines, trees or debris has fallen

A local recovery centre may be established by the Department of Community Services (DoCS). This centre will be staffed by representatives from a range of government departments and community agencies to help you return to normal living. At the centre you will be able to get advice on everything from insurance to counselling.

In the event of a flood, information will also be available from the DoCS State Disaster Recovery Centre on 1800 018 444.