

Severe weather preparedness checklist

SEPTEMBER 2023

Being prepared, with a plan that looks to best protect you, your team and the business and property during severe weather events will put you in a stronger position after the event. The safety of you and your employees, and your customers, is the priority.

Here is a checklist to help you prepare for a severe weather event. Tick them off as you go.



Have a plan

- **Monitor weather updates**, www.metservice.com.
- **Monitor local emergency information** hubs and [civil defence advice](#).
- Keep up to date with hospitality-specific guidance at the **Restaurant Association's emergency response hub**: www.restaurantnz.co.nz/emergency-response-hub/
- **Create a business continuity plan**. Detail every realistic scenario and plan the action you'd take to minimise the risks they present. Consider:
 - What would you do if your supplier couldn't reach you?
 - If your building wasn't accessible?
 - If your customers couldn't get to you?
 - How long would it take you to get back up and running in different scenarios?
- **Talk to your team** about your plan and what would happen if your business is impacted. Remember flexibility and adaptability of the plan will be necessary depending on eventualities.
- **Review your insurance policies** to ensure your business is adequately covered.
 - Know how to contact your insurance provider if needed
- Consider having a **back-up power source**. Some businesses are able to operate during power outages if they have generators etc.
- Consider how you would manage if the **water supply** was impacted.
 - What other source of water could you access and use? MPI recommendations are that if a 'boil water' notice is in effect, use a supply of bottled drinking water if you need to use water as an ingredient in food while the notice is in place.



Communications

- Ensure you have **up to date, and complete contact details** for all of your staff.
 - Does anyone else in your organisation know where to find this information if you are not there?

- Have a clear **communication plan** in place for reaching out to your staff and suppliers in case of an emergency. *What's App groups, Facebook groups and phone trees are some examples.* Be aware, after some disasters power and phones can be unavailable.
 - Do your staff and their families have a plan for communicating with you in a crisis? Who do they contact, on what number, or through what communication channel?

- Have a plan for **communicating with your customers**
 - Be aware that things may change and bookings could be cancelled. However, there may not always be the need to cancel. Some of the feedback we have had has been that bookings are cancelled often well in advance and at times unnecessarily so be sure to keep in touch with your customers.

- Remember that the nature of severe weather events can be unpredictable and there is a need to be flexible and adapt your plan. Impacts on staff can influence your decisions and recovery plan.



Securing the business

- **Secure your stock, equipment and furniture**
 - If you have stock outdoors, ensure you have a process for moving it indoors or store stock in any other area that may be less prone to flooding.
 - If you can't move furniture, look to how you can make it as secure as possible?

- Move everything that you can off **floors and undercover.**
 - Cleaning chemicals and/or toxic materials should be stored above ground to avoid any water contamination if flooding occurs.

- Turn off **ice machines** and post mix machines if there is risk of the water supply being impacted.

- **Secure and back up your systems**, such as computers POS.
 - Can you access your work email etc from off-site?
 - What about your customer contact lists, process manuals, important contracts?
 - Is the information stored on your mobile phone also stored elsewhere?
 - Is there always a backup copy (securely held) off-site?

- Make sure you have **copies of important documents** that you may need to access - your insurance policy, financial and banking or any

other important documents. Save a copy securely in the cloud, or on a memory stick or external drive that can be quickly and easily retrieved.

- Complete a **stocktake**.

- Take **photographs**, especially of high-value items.

- Check your **emergency supplies** and **first aid** kits.

- Make sure your business has adequate supplies of
 - torches,
 - fresh batteries,
 - brooms,
 - mops,
 - buckets, as well as a backup water source.
 - It is also a good idea to have a first aid manual, battery powered radio, torch and spare batteries and a waterproof bag for valuables.

- Ensure that there are **no obstructions** disturbing the flow of water down any storm water drains near your business to avoid flooding.
 - If possible, check roofing to ensure it is secure
 - Check gutters and clear of debris

- Do a **walk through of the business** and clear any materials around the area that can be easily considered a flying debris during severe wind, including a cyclone.

- Work with a professional landscaper or gardener to ensure there are no **tree branches** growing near or above the utility poles and wires.

- Ensure **vehicles** are away from low lying areas (and car insurance is up to date).