



# Responding to Tropical Cyclones

Before the commencement of the cyclone season (1 November) a 'Plan of Action' should be in place for all employees to read and understand their role in the plan.



## Know your risk

### Take the necessary precautions – Tropical Low in region, weather deteriorating

- If a storm/cyclone/flood threatens, secure your building. Owner/Pharmacist in charge delegate's one staff member to monitor Bureau of Meteorology, news feeds for changes in weather.
- Normal trading continues, may see rush of people for prescription medications.
- Employee contact numbers organised and updated and circulated to staff (laminated).

### Protect data with backup files

- Make sure to back up data.
- If dependent on data processing, consider an alternate site to keep backup discs.

### Protect employees

- Employee safety comes first! Prepare, distribute and exercise your business emergency response plan and recovery.
- Establish a rendezvous point and time for employees in case damage is severe and communications are disrupted.
- Establish a call-down procedure for warning and post-storm communications.
- Be prepared to work with limited supplies of cash and be without water, sewer or power for at least a week. Store emergency supplies at the pharmacy.

### Contact customers and suppliers

- Share your communications and recovery plan in advance with Guild NT.
- Prepare a list of vendors to provide disaster recovery services.

### Review insurance coverage

- Have copies of insurance policies and customer service/home numbers.
- Have in place a procedure for insurance assessing after the event.
- Remember, flood damage may require separate coverage and may not be covered under other insurance programs.

### Electrical equipment

- Unplug all electrical equipment in case of power surge/water damage.

### Electricity Supply available

- Normal trading continues.
- Owner/Pharmacists in charge delegates one staff member to look at 'Cyclone Kit' which would contain: 2 large torches with batteries, radio/batteries, bottled water, large strong garbage bags, roll of large tape, laminated list of staff and staff contact numbers, police, fire & emergency, NT Guild office, Royal Darwin Hospital, insurance company with policy number for pharmacy.



### **Electricity Supply not available**

- Normal trading cannot continue (unless availability of generator).
- Pharmacies located within shopping centres need to abide by that Centre's policies.
- Light may be an issue for some pharmacies, torches/ lanterns to be used.
- Owner/Pharmacist in charge delegates a staff member to stand at entry to assist/direct customers to appropriate areas.
- Transactions to be manually recorded and once all customers served pharmacy may close.
- Secure cash and drugs.
- Staff informed of situation (either Cyclone Watch/ Warning) and advised accordingly.
- Owner/Pharmacist in charge to note situation in Incident Register (QCPP).
- Secure all external doors and windows.
- Cover windows.
- Cover and move equipment/furniture to a secured area, with plastic/waterproof material and keep away from windows.
- Place important documents in waterproof containers.
- Make provisions for alternate communications and power.
- Turn off all computers and cover them with plastic (large strong garbage bags).
- Lock all drawers and filing cabinets.
- Refrigerated medicines need to be monitored when power supply cut for extended periods.
- Equipment and products located near windows/doors to be moved. Windows may be taped – this won't stop glass breaking but will hopefully minimise damage.
- Pharmacies located within shopping centres need to abide by Centre's policies.
- Staff to secure homes and maintain contact with owner/ pharmacist in charge.

### **Tropical Cyclone Watch announced**

- Coastal and island regions affected within 48 hours.
- Pharmacy opened depending on electricity supply/ generator access.
- Cyclone kit already prepared.
- Decision to close pharmacy at a particular time made and staff advised.
- Pharmacies placed within shopping centres need to abide by that Centre's policies.

### **Tropical Cyclone Warning announced**

- Coastal and island regions affected within 24 hours.
- Consider the need to close pharmacy and process to secure contents commenced.
- Staff safety to be taken into consideration as roads may be flooded, staff given adequate warning to go home and make preparations.
- Ensure a mobile phone contact is available for the pharmacy and advise the Guild of the number for communication purposes.
- Unplug all electrical equipment in case of power surge/ water damage.
- Disconnect all electrical equipment; do not use telephone landlines due to lightning strikes.

### **Tropical Low moves away from Darwin Region**

- Staff called to return to work when safe to do so – as per NT Emergency Services advice that it is safe to travel on roads.
- Electricity restored.
- Pharmacy trading and returning to normal. All equipment unpacked and in use.
- In the weeks following Owner/pharmacist in charge to review cyclone procedures for improvements/ amendments.
- Cyclone kit to be restocked.
- Staff to be debriefed.



### Useful websites

- To keep up to date with the latest warnings and weather trends:  
<http://www.securent.nt.gov.au>
- Cyclone Information: Australian region tropical cyclone warnings, forecasts, seasonal outlooks, cyclone history, climatology and related information. NT Forecast Areas Map, observations, Darwin observations, all NT observations, rainfall and river conditions:  
[www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/](http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/)
- Preparing for a Cyclone: Northern Territory Emergency Service preparing for a cyclone information kit:  
[www.nt.gov.au/ntg4/Subject?myLevel=4...cn...cn=Cyclone](http://www.nt.gov.au/ntg4/Subject?myLevel=4...cn...cn=Cyclone)
- Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA): This website contains the information available to assist individuals, primary producers, small business and councils who have been directly affected by a natural disaster:  
<http://www.nt.gov.au/ntt/NDRRA/index.shtml>
- Flood Information (Katherine): Flood rains in the Katherine River catchment are caused by tropical monsoonal depressions and decaying tropical cyclones which normally occur between November and the end of April. The catchment area covers about 8,000 square kilometres and is mainly in the escarpment country above Katherine Gorge. The narrowness of the Gorge tends to prolong high water levels in the river during a flood:  
<http://www.katherine.nt.gov.au/Notices/Latest-News/Flood-Information>
- Having an emergency management and recovery plan can help your business recover from unpredictable situations. Whether it's a bushfire or burglary, emergencies can disrupt your business and prevent it from operating. You don't have to start with a blank sheet of paper. The free MyBizShield iPad app provides a template to help you get started. It guides you through the process of creating an emergency management and recovery plan to help you protect your livelihood.  
<http://www.business.gov.au/Business-Apps/Pages/MyBizShield.aspx>

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