

# Hastings District Severe Weather

## What support is available and where can I get help?

### Civil Defence Emergency Management

Hawke's Bay Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (Civil Defence) has practical advice for our residents affected by the localised rainfall event of Thursday 8 March.

If your home has suffered structural damage, or you are not able to stay in your home due to damage, please contact Hastings District Council to arrange an inspection and some assistance to find alternative accommodation.

**Hastings District Council      06 871 5000      (at any time)**

You should also contact your insurance company. If it's not possible to arrange an immediate visit from your insurance assessor, **take photographs or video** before you begin to move and discard damaged property.

If your home has been flooded, you should arrange for an electrician to check your wiring and/ or gas, etc. before you turn the power back on.

### Where to turn for help

The weather and flooding have affected a number of people and it's completely normal for you and your family to be emotionally and physically exhausted.

In any emergency, always call 111. If you are unwell but it is not urgent, contact your GP or community health centre. You can also call Healthline 0800 611 116, a 24/7 service staffed by qualified nurses.

If you are feeling stressed or anxious or you need some advice, then there are places you can go for more support, listed below:

- Your GP or community health centre
- Lifeline – 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE)
- Youthline – 0800 376 633
- Rural Support Trust – 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)
- Your employer, through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

### Benefits and payments

There are lots of ways the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) can help and they can point you in the right direction based on your situation. You don't have to be on a benefit to be eligible, though you may have to pay the money back depending on your situation.

MSD can help if – because of the storm – you have:

- Urgent or unexpected costs, such as petrol, food, furniture
- Urgent living expenses, such as medical costs, house repairs or maintenance, replacing appliances, bedding, food, rent, power bills
- Lost wages, i.e. if you can't work because you're sick, you have to stay home and look after your family members, your workplace is closed.

Everyone's circumstances are different so what you may be able to get depends on your situation. Call 0800 559 009 during business hours for more information.

## Tenancy Information

If you are the tenant or landlord of a rental property, you can find information on your rights and obligations at [www.tenancy.govt.nz](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz) or by calling on 0800 836 262 (0800 TENANCY).

## Support for rural communities

Rural Support Trusts have local people trained to offer assistance and support and their help is free and confidential. Call 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP) or visit [www.rural-support.org.nz](http://www.rural-support.org.nz).

If you need help on the farm, please contact Federated Farmers on 0800 327 646.

## Insurance and lodging an EQC claim

In all cases approach your insurance company about damaged goods before disposing of them.

If your home, contents or car has been damaged by the flooding, **take photos** before you remove or repair anything and report it to your insurance company as soon as possible.

Your insurance company will let you know what you need to do next, how to claim and how EQC works.

If you need to make your home safe, sanitary, secure and weather tight, please record the work done, take photos and keep a copy of the bills paid.

You can make an EQC claim online at [www.eqc.govt.nz/claims](http://www.eqc.govt.nz/claims) or call 0800 326 243 (0800 DAMAGE).

- For storms and floods, EQC covers damage to residential land only, within certain limits (private insurers cover home and contents damage, according to individual policy terms)
- For natural landslips, EQC covers damage to home, contents and land within certain limits
- The homeowner must already have home and contents insurance to qualify. Claims can be made up to three months from the date of damage – the sooner a claim is made the sooner it can be settled.

## Returning to your property after flooding

Check with the Council that it is safe to re-enter your home. You will only be allowed to return to your home when the council has given you clearance.

- You should only return back to your house AFTER :
  - Council building, plumbing and environmental health officers have inspected the premises to ensure the building is safe
  - Your power company/electricity supplier has checked that the power supply is safe
  - The gas supply authority has checked that the gas supply is safe
  - Floodwaters have receded from the property.
- Take care to be safe when first re-entering your home. Not all damage can be seen. Watch out for loose materials that could fall, flooded or damaged electrical wiring, broken or leaking gas lines, etc.
- Wear sturdy footwear to avoid injury. Wear protective clothing, goggles, gloves and rubber footwear when cleaning up to avoid injury and contamination.
- Consult an engineer if there are signs that your home has moved on its foundations, e.g. new cracks in walls, out of shape door frames, etc.
- Use torches or other battery-powered lights. Do not smoke or use matches, candles or other open flames in case gas has collected inside.

## Dealing with food and water after flooding

Water supply - be aware your drinking water may have become contaminated.

- Do not drink any water unless you know it is safe (bottled, boiled or disinfected) - including water for preparing food and brushing teeth
- Do not drink water from bores or wells close to flooded septic tank systems until the water has been tested and found to be free from contamination

Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with floodwater.

- Any open food items that have been in contaminated water must be thrown out
- If you are in any doubt – discard items
- If the power was off for less than 24 hours and your fridge remained closed, items in your fridge may still be safe to eat. If the fridge door was opened and the temperature dropped, discard all items.
- Any items in the freezer which thawed must not be re-frozen. If the power was off for more than two days or the freezer was opened during the power cut, or there is any evidence that frozen food thawed and refroze, do not use the food – throw it out.
- Tins of food that have been exposed to flood water must be disinfected before opening
- Do not gather or eat kai moana (shellfish) after a flood event until you have been told by Public Health officials that it is safe to do so.

## Cleaning the kitchen area

If affected by flooding, everything you use for food preparation and eating will need to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before you can use it again.

- Soak glass, china, porcelain, pottery, enamel and plastic dishes and containers for 10 minutes in a disinfecting solution of 2 tablespoons chlorine bleach per 4.5 litres hot water. Air-dry afterwards, don't use a tea-towel.
- Disinfect cutlery, metal utensils, pots and pans by boiling them for 10 minutes. Don't use chlorine bleach as it reacts with many metals and causes them to become darker
- Clean your cupboards and benches with a chlorine bleach solution before you put items back.

## Cleaning your property after flooding

Wash your hands during and after cleaning up – this is very important to prevent the spread of disease. All items that have been in contact with floodwater should be treated with caution.

- Keep children and pets away
- Ventilate the house. Open all windows and doors to assist drying. Dehumidifiers and fans can also help.
- Drain away any water lying under buildings. It may be necessary to dig a hole/ pit and pump out water that collects. Increase the airflow under the house - remove ventilation grills, foundation linings, leave access doors open and cut back plants that are obstructing vents.
- Take everything out of the house that can be moved – floor coverings, furniture, moveable appliances, storage items, clothing, etc.

- Throw out contaminated carpets, rugs, curtains and upholstered furniture unless they can be cleaned thoroughly and disinfected. Appliances such as fridges and freezers and electrical goods that have been in contact with floodwaters should be thrown out. Place discarded items in a secure area, a shed or garage, until checked by your insurance assessor and a claim lodged.
- Drain, clean and dry behind walls and hidden spaces, (e.g. under baths) that have been subject to water inundation. Interior wall finishing materials and insulation may need to be removed.
- Replacement of interior linings, insulation and flooring can only occur once the sub-structure has dried – Council staff will be able to advise you on this. Failure to thoroughly dry your home may lead to mould which may pose a health risk for you and your family.
- Laminated surfaces (e.g. benches and cabinetry) and manufactured timber products, e.g. particle boards, MDF, needs to be checked. Water can permeate the timber causing swelling, buckling and lifting of surfaces and making the material impossible to disinfect and keep clean.
- Wash or flush down walls, shelves and floors with clean water. Sweep to remove contaminated water and sediment. Then use a solution of 1 litre of household bleach in 10 litres of water to rinse down walls, floors and other equipment. Leave on for 30 minutes before rinsing with clean water.
- Keep windows open during this treatment and wear protective clothing. Follow this with a wash of hot water and soap or dishwashing detergent for the final clean-up of walls, floors, cupboards.
- Ventilate the area by opening all windows or use fans, if power is available. Use a commercial deodoriser, if necessary, to remove any remaining smells.
- Flood damaged clothing and textiles should be cleaned as soon as possible to prevent mould growth. Machine wash items using detergent and a disinfectant at levels recommended for heavily soiled clothing. If safe for fibres and dyes of fabric, use chlorine bleach (1 cup in top-loading washer and ½ cup in front-loaders). Use highest water level possible, don't overload the washer and use the hottest water temperature suitable for the garments. Dry in a dryer (at hottest temperature suitable for the fabric) or dry outside in the sun.
- If mould has developed on surfaces, furnishings, etc. extra care must be taken during clean-up to reduce exposure to mould spores. Use protective clothing and a particulate respirator suitable for filtering out spores. Use soap and water to clean the surface then apply a commercial mould product or household bleach solution (refer to manufacturer's instructions on container).

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