

SLSQ Procedure

Subject: Cyclone Procedure	Department: Lifesaving Operations
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Purpose

Surf Life Saving Queensland's volunteers and professional lifeguards work in an environment which is prone to the occurrence of tropical cyclones, particularly in the Northern parts of Queensland from Mackay region up. The content of this Cyclone Emergency Procedures details the requirements for SLSQ patrol operations in the event that a cyclone occurs.

Scope

Applies to all Surf Lifesaving Queensland Clubs, members, Lifeguards and Staff.

Definitions

TROPICAL CYCLONE: Tropical cyclones are low pressure systems that form over warm tropical waters. They are a warm-cored, non-frontal low-pressure system of synoptic scale developing over warm waters, that has a wind speed of at least 63 km/h and persists for at least 6 hours, typically forming when either the atmospheric conditions are favourable or/and the sea surface temperature is above 26.5°C.

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Procedure

BACKGROUND

Tropical cyclones occur in Queensland, particularly in Tropical North Queensland region between October and May. Cyclones are low pressure systems in the tropics that have well defined clockwise wind circulations within a region surrounding the center, with gale force winds (sustained wind of 63km/h or greater with gusts in excess of 90 km/h).

CYCLONE SEVERITY CATEGORIES

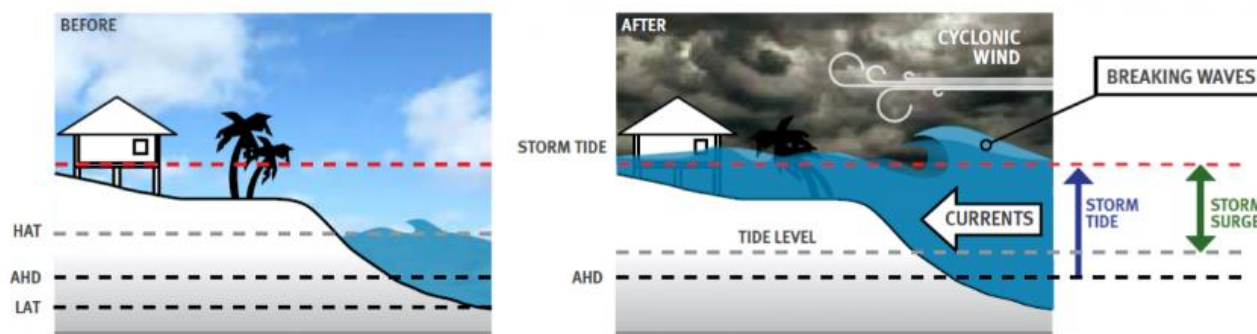
The severity of a tropical cyclone is described in terms of categories ranging from 1 to 5 related to the zone of maximum winds. An estimate of the cyclone severity is included in all tropical warning advice and notifications. Remember that the Warning Service is not designed to give an exact statement of conditions. Using the severity scale, communities will be able to assess the degree of cyclone threat and take appropriate action.

The category does not refer to the amount of flooding or storm tides; if a storm tide is expected it will be mentioned separately in the cyclone warning.

Category	Strongest Gust	Typical effects
1 - Tropical Cyclone	Less than 125 km/h Gales	Minimal house damage. Damage to some crops, trees and caravans. Boats may drag moorings.
2 - Tropical Cyclone	126-164 km/h Destructive winds	Minor house damage. Significant damage to signs, trees and caravans. Heavy damage to some crops. Risk of power failure. Small boats may break moorings.
3 - Severe Tropical Cyclone	165-224 km/h Very destructive winds	Some roof and structural damage. Some caravans destroyed. Power failure likely.
4 - Severe Tropical Cyclone	225-279 km/h Very destructive winds	Significant roofing and structural damage. Many caravans destroyed and blown away. Dangerous airborne debris. Widespread power failures.
5 - Severe Tropical Cyclone	More than 280 km/h Extremely destructive winds	Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction.

STORM SURGE

Potentially, the most destructive phenomenon associated with tropical cyclones that make landfall is the storm surge. It is a rise above the normal water level along a shore resulting from strong onshore winds and/or reduced atmospheric pressure. If the surge occurs at the same time as a high tide the area inundated can be extensive, particularly along low-lying coastlines, and has the potential to reach areas that were deemed safe.



CYCLONE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Club Captains, Patrol Captains and SLSQ Lifeguards must be aware of the existence of this procedure and are required to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy to ensure the correct procedures are followed before, during and after the event of a cyclone hitting the area.

STAGES OF ACTIVATION

These stages are designed to ensure a graduated response to a developing cyclone threat, thereby reducing the possibility of under or over reaction by Surf Life Saving Queensland members / employees.

The declaration of the stages shall be initiated by the relevant parties as per the Incident Reporting Flow Chart, taking into consideration the information received from the Bureau of Meteorology, the local weather conditions as observed, and the representations of the SLSQ Regional Manager / Director of Lifesaving / Lifeguard Supervisor / Lifesaving Services Coordinator.

The timing of the event will also be taken into consideration, to ensure that appropriate predictive actions are taken at the end of the working week, or on the eve of public or other holidays.

It is important to note that the stages of activation referred to in this document are as Issued by Surf Life Saving Queensland and do not necessarily relate to the Stages of activation invoked by a Regional Disaster Management Group.

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Stage 1 - Alert

Initiation: "Stage 1 - Alert " will be declared on receipt of the first "tropical cyclone watch" issued by the Bureau of Meteorology.

Inference: A cyclone watch is issued when a cyclone or potential cyclone could threaten coastal areas within 48 hours but not within 24 hours.

Action: Normal duties should continue, with attention given to initiating "clean-up" and preparation of designated equipment machinery (required to support Disaster Management or other emergency relief work). This is the stage during which administrative and clerical matters are initiated (preparation of stand-by rosters, review of home contacts etc.).

Stage 2 – Lean Forward

Initiation: "Stage 2 – Lean Forward" will be declared on receipt of the first "tropical cyclone warning" issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, when the relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart, in consultation with the relevant Shire / Council, considers the likelihood of the event to be such that this measure is warranted.

Inference: A cyclone warning is issued when a cyclone or potential cyclone is expected to produce gales / winds in excess of 63 km/h in coastal areas within 24 hours. It is not conclusive that the center of the cyclone will pass within close proximity to the affected patrol site, but it can be expected that stronger winds will be experienced.

Action: On declaration of "Stage 2 – Lean Forward" the SLSQ Regional Manager / Director of Lifesaving / Lifeguard Supervisor / Lifesaving Services Coordinator will hold a briefing. All Clubs / Service Groups will commence their individual pre-planned procedures, keeping the Regional Manager / Director of Lifesaving / Lifeguard Supervisor / Lifesaving Services Coordinator advised of progress and final completion. All areas will be inspected to identify material, equipment or installations that could become windborne during a cyclone. Using available manpower and without interruption of normal operations the process of removing, securing or putting under cover the above identified items, will begin.

Stage 3 - Stand Up

Initiation: The timing of the issue of the "Stage 3 – Stand Up" will be dependent upon information received from the Bureau of Meteorology. "Stage 3 – Stand Up" would be indicated if destructive winds (i.e.: exceeding 90 km/h gusting to 120 km/h) are stated as likely to affect the patrolled area within the next 6 to 12 hours. This information is supplemented by evaluation of local conditions, and consultation with the relevant parties as per Incident reporting flow chart, Disaster Management Committee (if activated), and relevant Shire / Council.

Inference: "Stage 3 – Stand Up" indicates that it is anticipated that a cyclone will pass within an area where the patrolled site could be affected by winds of increasing strength and heavy rainfall.

Action: Individual groups will have respective procedures regarding their obligations at this point. This includes keeping the relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart advised of their preparation status. All non-essential, or non-cyclone response related personnel (Disaster Management Support) are to be progressively released from work on completion of their assigned tasks regarding cyclone emergency preparation permits.

Stage 4 – Stand Down

Initiation: As with all other stages “stand down” orders, will be a decision of the relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart, considering information from the Disaster Management Committee, and relevant Shire / Council.

Inference: Declared when the winds have passed, and it is considered safe for personnel and areas to return to work / return to full operational status.

Action: The relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart will send nominated personnel to conduct a survey of and present situation reports for their areas of responsibility. Any instances of danger to life, or hazard to critical equipment, should be reported to the SLSQ Director of Lifesaving, Regional Manager, Lifesaving Coordinator and Lifeguard Supervisor as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart immediately with continuation of the survey and reporting systematically.

On receipt of the situation reports the relevant parties as per Incident reporting flow chart will relay this information to relevant managers / media / council etc.

PERSONAL REQUIRMENTS

- Groups are to remain at their existing operational status until declaration of “Stage 3 – Stand Up”, at which time they revert to arrangements under the Disaster Management Plan regarding preparation and delivery of equipment, machinery, and personnel.
- Groups are to ensure that identified plant and equipment is prepared for the anticipated post incident workload, which may include Disaster Management activities.
- Groups do this by identifying plant, equipment and other resources that may have post event significance, ensuring this equipment is fully serviceable pre – season, and during “Stage 3 – Stand Up”, fully fueled, safely stowed, and ready for post event action.
- Personnel resources necessary to implement the "Stages of Stand Up" and to deal with any emergency will be met through the development and implementation of a “roster” identifying those personnel required to be available/perform tasks under these stages.
- It is desirable to assign preference for inclusion on this “roster” to those personnel with no family / other commitments.
- The roster will provide the names of personnel to remain / return to work on declaration of “Stage 3 – Stand Up”, to completing critical jobs and for cleanup work. The relevant group leader will then monitor cleanup operations, re-allocating resources where necessary, to ensure all activities, set down in the body of their local area procedure, are completed in an orderly fashion and in adequate time.
- All "Stages of Activation" status changes are to be communicated to all personnel via line management channels - i.e.: Managers/Supervisors/Lifeguards, Lifesavers. This avoids the potential for personnel to generate a “rumor mill” mentality in initiating actions arising from a cyclone threat.

Responsibility

Responsible for the safety of personnel, and the safeguarding of equipment and documents located within these areas’ rests with the relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart.

Operational Activities and Duties

Stage 1 Alert

- Normal duties should continue, with attention given to the on-going requirement of "cleaning up" all areas.

Task	Personnel	Comments	Completed
Report to relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart			

Stage 2 - Lean Forward

- Normal duties to continue.
- Limit access / remove members of the public from facilities.
- Continue ongoing cleanup of areas.

Task	Personnel	Comments	Completed
Report to relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart			

Stage 3 Stand Up

- Obtain materials required to protect/secure equipment and documents.
- Switch off all electrically operated machines, protect in waterproof covering (if appropriate) and store in secure location.
- Protect all documents and files with waterproof covering (away from windows)
- Ensure permanent locks placed in locked position on windows.
- Move furniture/equipment away from windows.
- Advise relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart when "Stage 2" preparations are complete.

Task	Personnel	Comments	Completed
Report to relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart			

STAGE FOUR: STAND DOWN

Task	Personnel	Comments	Completed
Report to relevant parties as per Incident Reporting Flow Chart			

EMERGENCY CYCLONE SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

ITEM	QTY	LOCATION	COMMENTS	CHECK

POST EVENT DAMAGE REPORT

ITEM	QTY	LOCATION	COMMENTS	CHECK

STAFF MEMBER	LOCATION	Stand Down PRIORITY	Stand Down CHECK

Related procedure instruments

Below are useful links for cyclone information:

www.bom.gov.au/cyclone

<https://getready.qld.gov.au>

<https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/emergency-kit.html>

