

Floods Fact Sheet

**Be careful when you enter properties after floods. Floods leave behind many hazards.
Check with local emergency services whether you can safely return home.**

Risks from contaminated floodwaters and flood debris

Avoid contact with floodwaters.

Floodwater and debris may contain waste, sewage and other hazards.

Dirty water, mud and silt from floods can contain germs that can cause illnesses, including gastro and skin infections.

Wash any part of your body exposed to floodwater, mud or silt.

Wear protective clothing, footwear and equipment if you are cleaning up in flood-affected areas.

Damaged building materials may contain asbestos. If you suspect this, get advice from your council before proceeding.

Stay out of recreational water sites for at least three days after heavy rain – or for longer after floods.

Food Safety

If you've been in contact with floodwaters, wash your hands and change dirty clothing before preparing or eating food.

Throw out any food that's been in floodwater unless it was secure in a waterproof tin or bottle.

Throw out perishable refrigerated food if the power has been off for more than a day.

If frozen food thaws, either cook it immediately and eat it or store it safely, or throw it out.

If you're not sure if food is safe, throw it out.

Boil Water Alerts

If your drinking water is subject to a 'Boil Water Alert' and you can't boil water because of a power failure, then don't drink the water. Use a different source like bottled water.

If you can boil your water, consider boiling and storing enough to last through a power outage.

If your drinking water is *not* subject to a 'Boil Water Alert' but you notice it is unusually discoloured, boil it before drinking.

TasWater provides information on all current boil water alerts, including maps, at www.taswater.com.au

Treating infections

If you get a cut or scratch while in a flood-affected area, clean it, cover it, and protect it from further contamination.

Get medical attention if an injury is severe or painful or red and swollen, or if you develop a fever.

Keep your tetanus immunisation up-to-date.

General Safety Messages

- Keep clear of floodwaters, drains and culverts.
- Don't drive, walk, swim or cycle through floodwaters.
- Mud makes roads, paths and floors slippery – take extra care to avoid falls.
- Be prepared for power cuts.
- Don't use fuel-powered equipment like generators or pumps in enclosed spaces.
- Don't use flooded gas or electrical appliances until they've been checked for safety.
- Stay away from beaches during large swells and high winds.
- Beware of damaged trees.
- Keep clear of fallen power lines and nearby water.
- Check on family and neighbours, and supervise children closely.
- Ensure your drains and gutters are free of debris and running freely before severe weather.
- Drive to the conditions. Don't drive in the wet unless you need to.
- Listen to ABC local radio or check www.ses.tas.gov.au for updates.
- For road closures check www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts

Tasmanian Government emergency information on floods is at TasALERT www.alert.tas.gov.au

The Public Health Hotline – Tasmania is 1800 671 738.

For flood and emergency help contact SES on 132 500