

Cyclones and your water and wastewater services



A tropical cyclone has the potential to cause damage to drinking water and wastewater facilities due to heavy rainfall, flooding, coastal storm surge and high winds. Typical impacts that may lead to service interruptions include, but are not limited to:

- Pipe breaks due to washouts, up-rooted trees etc, which could result in wastewater overflows or low or no water pressure throughout the service area
- Loss of power and communication infrastructure due to high winds
- Restricted access to water and wastewater treatment facilities and water and wastewater networks due to debris and flood waters
- Loss of water quality testing capability during the cyclone as laboratories may be closed/damaged and in regional areas samples may not be able to be transported due to road or airport closures

While the Water Corporation takes every precaution to prepare its facilities and people for a cyclone, it cannot guarantee that your water and wastewater services will continue to work throughout and in the aftermath of a cyclone.

How should I prepare for a Cyclone?

When warnings are issued for cyclones it's time to complete final home preparations and this includes some important considerations for water and wastewater.

Water

You should start to fill your emergency containers with water. Containers for treated water should, if possible:

- be clean
- have covers
- be stored above ground
- be in a cool place
- be cleaned periodically
- be mosquito proof

On average each person requires at least 20 litres of water per day for drinking, washing and cooking. At least 2.5 of the 20 litres is required for drinking.

We also encourage you to turn off your reticulation / sprinkler systems, which will help to ensure water storages for your area are kept for drinking and hygiene purposes and not for watering gardens.



If you are asked to evacuate your home, it is important to turn off your water supply using the stopcock located on your water meter. This will ensure your property is isolated from the water supply.

Wastewater

If a warning is issued for flood it's important to sandbag internal drains and toilets to prevent wastewater backflow. Sandbags are usually available from your local government authority.

What happens if disaster strikes?

If disaster strikes, it is possible that the normal supply of water will be affected.

When the safety of the normal water supply cannot be guaranteed, the Department of Health and Water Corporation may issue advice to boil or treat it with chemicals prior to use.

This information is normally given out:

- on the radio
- on television
- on emergency management websites
- via printed material.

Short-term actions

Where clean drinking water is not immediately available it is possible to obtain limited amounts of safe drinking water by:

- draining your hot water tank
- melting ice cubes you have in the freezer

For more information about treating water visit the [Healthy WA website](#)

Boil Water Alerts

Sometimes following a cyclone, a boil water alert is issued for areas connected to mains scheme water because the mains water may be unsafe to drink or cook with.

If a boil water alert has been issued, it is essential you follow this warning to prevent illness.

To prepare water for drinking and food preparation, you should heat the water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute using a stove or kettle and then allow it to cool. This will help to kill any bacteria.



Be sure to keep children clear from any boiling water until the water has cooled down to room temperature.

Once it has cooled it should be placed in the fridge in a clean container with a lid.

Under no circumstances should you drink or cook with water that has not been boiled until the alert is lifted.

Alternatively you can use bottled water.

Cooled boiled or bottled water should be used for:

- drinking
- cooking
- washing raw foods (such as seafood or salads)
- making ice
- cleaning teeth
- your pet's drinking water.

If a boil water alert has been issued:

- dishes should be washed in hot soapy water or in a dishwasher
- children should take bottled or cooled boiled water to school.

The Department of Health and Water Corporation will provide updates. Check our website for information.

When the boil water alert is lifted, you will need to follow the Department of Health and Water Corporation's instructions for flushing the household water pipes.

For more information visit the [Healthy WA website](#)