

# After the Cyclone



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**After a cyclone or other severe weather event, there will be some activities to take care of immediately and some longer-term issues that should be addressed over time. This page can be used as a reminder of the issues to consider and the tasks that may need to be completed. Always remember that safety is paramount and no clean-up activities should be started until all people are accounted for and there is official confirmation that the threat has passed.**

## Initial Assessment and Clean-Up

- Safety is the first and most important aspect of recovering from a severe weather event. Don't go outside until officially advised it is safe. Listen to local radio for official warnings and advice. If you have to evacuate, or did so earlier, don't return until advised. Use a recommended route and don't rush. Beware of damaged power lines, bridges, buildings, trees, and under no circumstances should you enter floodwaters in your vehicle or in person. Heed all warnings and avoid sightseeing.
- Ensure that protective clothing and safety equipment is worn during the clean-up process, including heavy covered shoes, gloves, long sleeves and safety glasses.
- Check for gas leaks. Don't use electric appliances if wet.
- Check that no chemical leakage has occurred and that all dangerous substances are safe, secure and accounted for.
- Don't make unnecessary telephone calls.
- Make sure all buildings and production facilities checked for safety before entering. Obtain an official assessment before reconnecting or using electricity, water and gas supplies.
- Check on your neighbours.
- Confirm the availability of labour to assist in the recovery process. Establish a roster and particularly ensure that labour is available for priority activities, including initial tidying and recovering surviving plants.
- You should have documented a clear plan on how plants should be moved, managed and protected after the event and the specific staff members who will perform these tasks. Constant monitoring will be required to ensure that components are completely clean and remain sound over time.
- Instigate plans to protect and stabilise surviving plants, ensuring that they are not subject to excessive water or sunlight. Install back-up irrigation to maintain the plants. As part of the continuity plan, there should be a step-by-step plan on how to protect plants after an event has occurred. If structures are lost and plants are exposed to continual high levels of moisture and humidity, they may be more susceptible to fungal disease. If they are unprotected they may also be exposed to damaging levels of sunlight. Make basic repairs to shade structures using stored supplies if possible. Also, weeds may become a problem within the crop and around the property when shade structures are lost, crop foliage is reduced and there is a higher level of light reaching the soil or growing medium.
- Check with local and state government about assistance with the initial clean up and removal of rubbish and debris.

## Business Recovery

- Contact insurance companies as soon as possible and inform them of the disaster ensuring to ask about their requirements for claims.
- Assess the property and photograph all damage. Use prepared inventories to document all information. Ensure accurate record-keeping of all expenses and losses including the resources (people, equipment and consumables like fuel) used to assist with the clean up.
- Once the scale of the damage has been assessed and documented, refer to your business continuity plan and instigate a process for recovery. This should include a list of specific tasks required for both clean-up and longer-term recovery, with people allocated responsibility for particular areas.
- Re-establish contacts with suppliers for plants and equipment. Determine the likely time to replace damaged stock and equipment. Establish links with suppliers of fertilisers, containers, chemicals, growing media and other components so that you are sure of access to all the production requirements for your surviving plants.
- Contact customers explaining your situation and its impact upon them and their orders. Confirm the markets for your products and keep your customers up-to-date on your activities and expected date of business resumption.
- Check the roads, transport companies and all other components of the supply chain to ensure the continued movement of your products.
- Contact the relevant local, state and federal Government to investigate options for cyclone and flood assistance and/or financial assistance if available. Industry Recovery Officers are often put in place and can help primary producers and business owners in the recovery process.



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