



Far North Queensland - Cyclone Survival Advice to Travellers

During the summer months of November to April, cyclones pose a threat to the Far Nth Qld region. Tropical cyclones, known as hurricanes in the northern hemisphere, are the greatest storms on earth. In 1974 Cyclone Tracey hit Darwin, Australia, killing 65 people and seriously injuring 145. Cyclone Larry March 2006 directly hit the Cassowary Coast Regional area, damage to infrastructure and crops was extensive with the total estimated loss upwards of half a billion dollars; fortunately, there were no deaths. Every cyclone is dangerous and must be regarded as a real threat until the danger has clearly

passed.

Far Nth Qld visitors may find the onset of a cyclone a scary prospect, but in this day and age with the correct preparations the danger to humans is minimal. Cyclones are ranked from 1 to 5, with category 5 cyclones being the most destructive. Most cyclones fit somewhere into categories 1-3, and pose a low risk to human safety - **as long as care is taken.**

A Tropical Cyclone Watch is an advice issued by the Bureau of Meteorology every six hours when there are indications gales or stronger winds are expected to affect coastal or island communities within 48 hours but not within 24 hours. It details the communities that may be affected and gives a brief estimate of the cyclone's location, intensity, severity category and movement.

A Tropical Cyclone Warning is an advice issued by the Bureau of Meteorology every three hours when there are indications gales or stronger winds are expected to affect coastal or island communities within 24 hours. As well as information provided in a watch advice, warning advices also inform of expected maximum wind gusts. Forecasts of heavy rainfall, flooding and abnormally high tide are included where necessary. Communities under threat are also advised to take precautions necessary to safeguard their lives and property. When a cyclone is under radar surveillance close to the coast, hourly advices may be issued.



Below is some information for tourist that have arrived or plan on visiting Far Nth Queensland during the summer months.

- Your accommodation provider should have an Evacuation / Cyclone Preparedness Plan and be well aware of the emergency evacuation procedures for the area.
- If you do not plan on always staying at accommodation providers check with the Local Government on their cyclone preparedness / evacuation arrangements for their area. Ensure you have prior transportation arrangements should you need to evacuate. Public transport is taken out of service once winds reach 75 km/per hour.
- If you find you are in an area that has been issued a cyclone watch / warning consider, if possible, relocating to a safer area until the danger has passed. If you planned going to an area that has a cyclone watch / warning issued delay your visit until the danger has passed.

- During a cyclone watch or warning continually listen to the local radio for further information and advice on what to do before, during and after the cyclone (Remember the power may be out so you will need a portable battery operated radio). **Don't ignore official warnings or advice.**
- If you do have to evacuate gather all your personal items such as clothing, medication, personal documents and valuables and place in a waterproof bag, such as a garbage bag, and secure in a suitcase to take with you to the evacuation centre.
- There are **NO** cyclone shelters in Queensland only evacuation centres; these centres are mostly schools, halls, community centres etc. Opening of evacuation centres will be decided and broadcasted via TV and radio after careful consideration has been given to safe evacuation routes, ability to man centres, strength of building etc. **Note:** Not all evacuation centres will be opened.
- If the building starts to break up, shelter in the strongest part (hallway or built-in robe) under a mattress, doona or strong table/bench.
- If staying in a caravan, be prepared to move to a more solid structure.
- **DO NOT** go outside during a cyclone; stay inside. Shelter clear of windows and skylights and remember to follow the advice of your accommodation provider, emergency services or the Local Government Disaster Management Unit.
- Don't use electrical appliances if wet
- Beware the eye of the cyclone; the circular eye or centre of a tropical cyclone is an area characterised by light winds and often clear skies. Eye diameters can range from 10km to 100km wide. The strongest winds and heaviest rainfall surrounds the eye and will return in the opposite direction. Do not assume the cyclone is over wait for the official all-clear.
- **DO NOT** go sightseeing after a cyclone; this hinders emergency services and may put you in danger of floodwaters, fallen trees, damaged buildings and live downed

NEVER BECOME COMPLACENT

Research has shown that cyclones in the Australian region exhibit more erratic paths than cyclones in other regions. A tropical cyclone can last hours or days. Only by taking heed of the advice given by emergency services and by educating yourself with information on cyclones will you stand a good chance of surviving one.

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