WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?
At the welfare centre you will be offered emergency accommodation, food and drink, registration of your whereabouts and support services. The centre will try to accommodate your cultural needs but this may not always be possible.

ARE YOU MENTALLY PREPARED?
Experiencing a severe cyclone can be frightening and traumatic. Think carefully about how you and your family will deal with the stress of a cyclone.

Picture yourself in a cyclone situation. Ask yourself: “Will I be able to cope? Would my family cope through this situation? What if friends or relatives are visiting at the time, how would they deal with this?”

DURING A CYCLONE:
- You could be inside for many hours.
- There will be lots of noise. A cyclone can sound like a roaring train or jet aircraft engine.
- You may not be able to talk to each other because of the noise.
- It will become very dark.
- Walls and windows of your shelter can move.
- Wall cladding and roofing can be torn off.
- Loose material will crash into your shelter, and may pierce the roof and external walls.
- Windows can blow in.
- Horizontal rain can enter through building joints and gaps (i.e. under windows and doors).
- Sand will be blown at great force causing injury or damage.
- Assistance may be hours away at the height of the cyclone.

ACT RESPONSIBLY
You need to be able to think clearly to keep safe during a cyclone. Drinking alcohol can impair your ability at a time when your family or others need you. Staying sober will help ensure their safety and yours. Alcohol is banned at welfare centres and if you are drunk you may be refused entry. Police can and do conduct random breath testing of drivers both before and after cyclones.
WHAT IS A CYCLONE?
A tropical cyclone is a low pressure system that forms over warm tropical waters and has wind gusts of more than 90 km/h around its centre. When the wind gusts reach 165 km/h, it is called a severe cyclone.

CYCLONE SEASON
Cyclones of varying intensity generally occur between November and April each year. The chance of a very dangerous category 4 or 5 cyclone is highest in March and April.

CYCLONE AREAS
The coastal stretch from Exmouth to Broome has the highest incidence of tropical cyclones anywhere in Australia. The Pilbara and Kimberley communities are most likely to be affected by cyclones. Later in the season, the area at risk extends further south along the coast.

KNOW THIS

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CYCLONE DANGERS
- **WIND** can exceed 280km/h causing damage and turning loose items into potentially deadly missiles. Winds also cause extreme sea and swell conditions that are dangerous both for boats out at sea and those moored in harbours.

MOST CYCLONE RELATED DEATHS ARE FROM DROWNING IN A STORM SURGE OR FLOOD
- **STORM SURGE** is a large, quick moving mound of water that piles up against the shore when a cyclone strikes the coast. It can damage or destroy homes and buildings, wash away roads and run ships aground. It is an extremely dangerous and unpredictable force.

- **FLOODING** may occur as cyclones bring heavy rainfall that causes extensive damage and creates a drowning risk. Heavy rain can continue as the cyclone moves inland so flooding is possible over widespread areas. It does not have to be raining in your area for flooding to occur and you may become stranded for many days until the water subsides. Some remote areas can be isolated for months by floods.

CYCLONE DAMAGE
Cyclones can cause injury and loss of life, major structural damage and disruption to electricity, water and gas supplies for long periods. There is likely to be extensive road closures, loss of communications, airport and port closures, food shortages, vegetation damage and soil erosion.

CYCLONE CATEGORY SYSTEM
The severity of a tropical cyclone is described in terms of Categories ranging from 1 (weakest) to 5 (strongest) related to the maximum wind gusts as shown in this table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>STRONGEST WIND GUST (KM/H)</th>
<th>TYPICAL WIND EFFECTS (indicative only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than 125 (Damaging winds)</td>
<td>Negligible damage to homes. Limited damage to some caravans, crops and trees. Boats may drag moorings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>125 - 164 (Destructive winds)</td>
<td>Minor damage to homes. Significant damage to caravans, signs and trees. Heavy damage to some crops. Risk of power failure. Small boats may break moorings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>165 - 224 (Very destructive winds)</td>
<td>Some roof and structural damage. Some caravans destroyed. Power failure likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>225 - 279 (Very destructive winds)</td>
<td>Significant roof and structural damage to homes. Many caravans destroyed and blown away. Dangerous airborne loose items. Widespread power failures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>More than 280 (Very destructive winds)</td>
<td>Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction. A lot of damage to homes and structures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data provided by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM).
## CYCLONE FREQUENCY
On average, five cyclones occur off WA’s north west coast each year and two of these affect the coast, but do not always affect communities. Not all communities are hit by a cyclone every year or even every 10 years, but that does not mean you are at any less risk. A cyclone could strike your community this year.

## CYCLONE PREDICTABILITY
Cyclones can be unpredictable and can intensify rapidly. A Category 1 cyclone can become a severe Category 3 cyclone within a day, so you need to prepare for cyclone impact even if it does not look like its coming your way. All cyclones should be treated with respect.

## CYCLONE ADVICE
The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) issues cyclone advice to the public. DFES then issues community alerts to help keep you safe.

### CYCLONE WATCH
Issued when damaging winds or gales are expected to affect communities within 48 hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MESSAGES</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communities likely to be affected.</td>
<td>Every six (6) hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The cyclone’s location and direction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cyclone intensity and severity category.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CYCLONE WARNING
Issued when damaging winds or gales are likely to affect communities within 24 hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MESSAGES</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communities likely to be affected.</td>
<td>Every three (3) hours or every hour when it comes close to a community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The cyclone’s location and direction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cyclone intensity and severity category.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expected maximum wind gusts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forecasts for heavy rain, flooding and abnormally high tide / storm surge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## STANDARD EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNAL
(SEWS) is a distinct warning sound used on radio and television, and sometimes through car-mounted speakers by the SES, during a cyclone. It means official information is about to be broadcast. It is usually used in an area where a Category 2 cyclone (or stronger) is expected to affect a community within 12 hours.

## CYCLONE TRACKING
BoM uses cyclone forecast tracking maps to depict watch and warning zones, and areas of very destructive winds. You can find this map at:

To follow the progress of the cyclone, you can download your own tracking map from:
www.dfes.wa.gov.au

Data provided by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM).
PLAN AHEAD

Cyclones are dangerous. Preparing your family and your home for a cyclone is your responsibility. If you live in a cyclone prone area, you should make it a priority between May and October to get your home ready inside and out.

Before the cyclone season, complete the checklist below to help keep you and your family safe.

YOUR FAMILY
- Does your family understand cyclones and the risks?
- Do you have a family cyclone plan? Refer to ‘Prepare a Family Cyclone Plan’ section of this guide.
- Do you know the community alert stages (blue, yellow, red and all clear) and the steps that must be taken for each? Refer to the ‘Take Action’ guide.
- Are your neighbours prepared, especially if they are new to the area or elderly?
- Is your emergency kit ready and do your family know where it is stored? Refer to the ‘Take Action’ guide for an emergency kit checklist.
- Do you have a list of emergency phone numbers on display? Refer to your fridge card available separately from DFES.
- Are branches and tree-tops trimmed around your home?
- Have you secured or removed loose items from around your home?
- Do you know how to switch off the electricity, gas and water?

YOUR HOME
- Does your home meet local council cyclone standards?
- Is it safe to stay in during a cyclone?
- Are the walls, roof and eaves secure?
- Does your property insurance cover you for cyclones?
- Are branches and tree-tops trimmed around your home?
- Have you fixed shutters or metal screens to all your glass windows and doors?
- Are your shutters and locks working?
- Have you got double locks on external doors?
- Do you know where your nearest welfare centre is located?
- Is your family fit or would they need special help to relocate during a cyclone?

YOUR PETS
- What will you do with your pets during an emergency? Be aware that you cannot take pets with you to a welfare centre.
- Will you relocate your pets with family or friends? Or will you secure pets in the strongest part of your home with food and water?
- At what point will you relocate your pets? You need to do this early to avoid unnecessary risk to you and your pets.
- Are your pets tags and registrations up to date for proper identification?
- Do you have extra food, water and bedding for them?

If you want to speak to someone about cyclones, contact your local DFES office, State Emergency Service or Volunteer Emergency Service unit.
A family cyclone plan helps you prepare for a cyclone. Try to include the whole family in the plan and assign specific tasks.

Your plan should be written before the start of the cyclone season and reviewed annually so you can avoid last minute decisions at a stressful time.

This guide will help you write a plan to suit your family and situation. Practice your plan so you know what to do if you need to use it.

FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS
This cyclone action plan is for the following people (list all household members):

Who will collect the children from school?

Who will get cash out (banking services may not be available)?

Who will you inform about your plan or contact in case you lose touch with each other?

If you cannot make it home or contact each other, where will you meet or leave a message?

Who will for be responsible for checking and stocking the emergency kit?

Where will it be stored?

Neighbours who may need your help or who can help you are:

PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY
List the potential risks around your home:

List any actions you need to take and when (i.e. fuel the car, secure outdoor furniture, tie down caravan and/or boat, fill water containers):

List any equipment you need and where you will store it (i.e. tie down material, anchor points, tape for windows and sandbags for flooding. You can create your own sandbags by using plastic bags, pillow cases or stockings filled with sand):

ON THE DAY OF A CYCLONE
List any actions you will take to keep your pets and livestock safe:

Our pets will shelter (i.e. strongest part of our home, with friends):

If you plan to relocate some family members, pets or livestock and then return home, when will this be done, by whom and how long will this take?

We will now:
• Secure our home.
• Collect our emergency kit.
• Place all important documents, valuables and photos into waterproof plastic bags or containers with our emergency kit.
• Listen to the radio for advice and information.
**IF SHELTERING**

In the event of a cyclone, we will remain in our home unless advised otherwise. We will need to prepare to look after ourselves for four (4) days.

**A PLAN OF OUR HOUSE SHOWING**
- Places to shelter.
- Assembly area.
- Where to turn off water, gas and electricity.

**IF RELOCATING**

We will need to relocate in the event of a cyclone because we live in a low lying coastal area OR because we have been advised by authorities to do so.

The safest route to our preferred shelter is usually:

We will relocate to (ie. family or friends who live in secure accommodation that is on higher ground or a welfare centre):

- Advise others of our relocation plan, including to where we are relocating.
- Follow the directions of emergency services personnel.

**If relocating to a welfare centre:**
- Take bedding if possible.
- Leave your pets at home (welfare centres will not allow pets) and secure them in the strongest part of your home with food and water.

If we have to relocate, we will:
- Take our emergency kit, important documents, valuables and photos with us.
- Turn off all electricity, gas and water, and unplug all appliances.
- Know where our keys are located.
- Lock doors and windows.
- Ensure all family members are wearing strong shoes and suitable clothing.