

West Coast Severe Weather

What support is available and where can I get help?



Civil Defence Emergency Management

West Coast Civil Defence Emergency Management has practical advice for our residents in the aftermath of ex Tropical Cyclone Fehi.

If your home has suffered structural damage, please contact your local District Council to arrange an inspection. You should also contact your insurance company and EQC, online www.eqc.govt.nz/claims or call 0800 DAMAGE (0800 326 243).

If it's not possible to arrange an immediate visit from your insurance assessor, take photographs or video before you begin to move and discard damaged property.

If your home has been flooded, you should arrange for an electrician to check your wiring etc. before you turn the power back on.

Where to turn for help

The extreme weather and floods have affected many people and it's completely normal for you and your family to be emotionally and physically exhausted.

Remember, in an emergency, always call 111. If you are unwell but it is not urgent, contact your local GP or community health centre. You can also call Healthline 0800 611 116, this is a 24/7 service staffed by qualified nurses.

If you are feeling stressed and anxious or you need some advice, then there are places you can go for more support, listed below:

- Your GP or community health centre
- Youthline – 0800 376 633
- Rural Support Trust – 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)
- Your employer, through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Support for rural communities

Rural Support Trusts have local people trained to offer assistance and support and their help is free and confidential. Call 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP) or visit www.rural-support.org.nz.

If you need help on the farm, please contact Federated Farmers on 0800 327 646.

Tenancy Information

If you are the tenant or landlord of a rental property, you can find information on your rights and obligations at www.tenancy.govt.nz or by calling on 0800 TENANCY (0800 836 262).



Benefits and payments

There are lots of ways the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) can help and they can point you in the right direction based on your situation. You don't have to be on a benefit to be eligible, though you may have to pay the money back depending on your situation.

MSD can help if, because of the storm, you have:

- urgent or unexpected costs (e.g. petrol, food, furniture);
- urgent living expenses (e.g. medical costs, house repairs or maintenance, replacing appliances, bedding, food, rent, power bills);
- lost wages (e.g. you can't work because you're sick, you have to stay home and look after family members, your workplace is closed).

Everyone's circumstances are different so what you may be able to get depends on your situation.

Go to www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/emergencies/cyclone-fehi-storm for more information.

Insurance and lodging an EQC claim

If your home, contents or car has been damaged by the storm surge or flooding, take photos before you remove or repair anything and report it to your insurance company as soon as possible. Your insurance company will let you know what you need to do next, how to claim and how EQC works.

If you need to make your home safe, sanitary, secure and weather tight, please record the work done, take photos and keep a copy of the bills paid.

You can make an EQC claim online at www.eqc.govt.nz/claims or call 0800 326 243

Cleaning your property after flooding

- Drain, clean and dry out buildings
- Remove anything wet that can be moved outside. Dry carpets, bedding, clothing and furniture in the sun if possible.
- Check for water and mud trapped under fittings such as shower trays, baths, benches, bottom shelves, in-wall cavities and lower drawers.
- Remove carpet underlay
- Wash or flush down walls, shelves and boards with clean water and sweep to remove contaminated water and sediment.
- Use a solution of 1 litre bleach to 10 litres water to rinse walls, floor and surfaces. Leave the solution on for 30 minutes before rinsing with clean water. Keep the windows open.
- Use hot water and soap or detergent for a final clean.
- Open all windows or use fans if possible to ventilate the house.
- Use blowers to increase the air flow under the house.
- Remove hollow doors.
- Ignore mold growth until it's completely dry, then use bleach.
- Disinfect where necessary – particularly anything that may have been soaked by contaminated water.
- Dispose of contaminated clothing, carpet, upholstered furniture, bedding and toys unless they can be fully disinfected.

Cleaning the kitchen area

Everything you use for food preparation and eating will need to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before you can use it again.

- Soak glass, china, porcelain, pottery, enamel and plastic dishes and containers for 10 minutes in a disinfecting solution of 2 tablespoons of chlorine bleach per 4.5 litres of hot water. Air-dry afterwards, don't use a tea towel.
- Disinfect cutlery, metal utensils, pots and pans by boiling them for 10 minutes. Don't use chlorine bleach because it reacts with many metals and causes them to become darker.
- Clean your cupboards and benches with a chlorine bleach solution before you put items back.

Dealing with food after flooding

- Any open food items that have been in contaminated water must be thrown out.
- If you are in any doubt, discard items
- If the power was off for less than 24 hours and your fridge remained closed, items in your fridge may still be safe to eat. If the fridge door was opened and the temperature dropped, discard all items.
- Any items in the freezer which thawed must not be re-frozen. If the power was off for more than two days or the freezer was opened during the power cut, or there is any evidence that frozen food thawed and refroze, do not use the food – throw it out.
- Tins of food that have been exposed to flood water must be disinfected before opening.