

A guide to **WHAT TO DO IN A FLOOD IN THE QUEENSTOWN CBD**



- **What can I expect from Council?**
- **Who do I call in a flood?**
- **What do I do before, during and after a flood?**
- **How do I monitor lake / river levels?**

Queenstown has a long history of flooding, the most recent in 1999 when Lake Wakatipu rose to a level of 312.78m. The damage was extensive, causing closure of numerous businesses for up to three weeks at an estimated total cost of \$56 million.

This document is the result of a Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) and Otago Regional Council (ORC) joint initiative to address the flood risk faced by the central business district (CBD) of Queenstown. It recognises that while flooding can't be stopped, such damage can be lessened through proper preparation and appropriate response.

Accordingly, it outlines simple steps to assist you in preparing for, and responding to, a flood event.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM COUNCIL?

QLDC's prime task is the preservation of essential infrastructure such as drinking water and wastewater services. Protection of your stock and premises during a flood is your, or your landlord's responsibility.

Sandbagging stations may be set up by QLDC in the CBD areas.

Although Council contractors and volunteers will assist with sandbagging on a priority basis, retailers are encouraged to purchase their own sandbags so that they can sandbag their own premises.

WHO DO I CALL?

During a flood event, QLDC will be coordinating all flood responses from the Council offices in Gorge Rd, Queenstown.

**You can contact QLDC through the
QLDC customer service department:
03 441 0499 (24 hours 7 days)**

Contact the relevant utility service providers directly for information on your electricity, telephone and gas services. Council customer services staff can also pass on requests and information to these organisations.

Do NOT call Council contractors directly.

For emergency services call 111.

BE PREPARED

- Have a business continuity plan (ie, hard drive backup)
- Your best defence against flood damage is to be prepared. Follow the ideas in the QLDC 'Guide to Flood Proofing your Building and Contents' to help your building and stock withstand water damage and be restored quickly after a flood.
- Before the flood arrives, move stock and equipment offsite to a safe location where it can be stored for the duration of the flood (remember this may last a period of a few weeks). Make arrangements well in advance of any flood event and maintain these arrangements even if flooding seems unlikely. Access to your building may become difficult as floodwaters rise, so start relocating early!
- Clean out any grease traps that have not been emptied recently to avoid contaminating floodwaters.
- Review insurance cover.

WHEN A FLOOD THREATENS

- Keep a battery powered radio tuned to a local station and await instructions from QLDC. Another option is to listen to your car radio.

Securing your building

Refer to flood proofing brochure and the QLDC website: www.qldc.govt.nz or www.getthru.govt.nz.

Sandbagging

- In the early stages of flooding sandbagging is useful to protect buildings against inundation, however once the water has risen over 10-20cm, sandbagging does not hold water but becomes useful protection against wave action and debris build-up. Do not place sandbags above a height of 0.75 metres as collapse of sandbags and release of stored water can cause more damage than slow rising floodwaters.
- QLDC may deliver sand and bags to the following locations (see map below) if required. Retailers are encouraged to purchase their own sandbags so that they can sandbag their own premises.



Getting around

- Do not walk or drive through flooded areas as floodwaters can be contaminated and pose a significant health risk. Floodwaters can also hide exposed grates and debris.
- Stay away from downed power lines and electrical wires as electrical currents pass easily through water.

Evacuating

If directed by an authority, evacuate your building as per the details of your **Flood Emergency Operation Plan**.

A Flood Emergency Operation Plan is a vital tool in equipping your staff to cope in a flood and ensuring the flood proofing design elements of your building operate as designed under all conditions. See the QLDC 'Guide to Floodproofing your Building and Contents' for advice on writing your Flood Emergency Operation Plan.

If you have to evacuate:

- Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve.
- Block off toilets, sinks and showers by putting plugs in, covering the shower outlet with a mat and placing a towel in the toilet bowl.
- Inform QLDC you have evacuated.
- Coordinate with QLDC over access to your building. If possible make a set of keys available to enable emergency access or a reliable contact phone number.

AFTER THE FLOOD

- If your business has suffered damage, call the insurance company or agent who handles your flood insurance policy right away to file a claim.
- Before re-entering your building, check with authorities for clearance.
- Be aware that the building could contain hazards. The authorities will check all buildings and advise if it is safe to enter.
- Keep electricity off until a licensed electrician has inspected your system for safety.
- Check the status of drinking water. It is likely to require treatment.
- Be careful walking around. After a flood, steps and floors are often slippery with mud and covered with debris, including nails and broken glass.
- Remember, mud and pooled water may be contaminated.

Please contact:



QUEENSTOWN
LAKES DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Phone: 03 441 0499 (24 hours)
Office Hours: 8.00am to 5.00pm
www.qldc.govt.nz



Otago
Regional
Council

0800474082
www.orc.govt.nz

LAKE AND RIVER LEVELS

Call the ORC FLOW PHONE 0800426463

<http://water.orc.govt.nz/WaterInfo/Default.aspx>