

Internal Emergency - Cyclone (Code Yellow)

Australian Standard 3745 -2010 Planning for Emergencies in Facilities outlines the requirements for the establishment, validation and implementation of an emergency plan for a facility to provide for the safety of occupants of that facility and its visitors leading up to, and during an evacuation.

What is an **Internal Emergency**? Any event that arises internally which may adversely affect persons, or the community generally which requires an immediate response. Examples: Cyclones, flooding, radiation, earthquakes, gas leak etc.

CYCLONE – Tropical Cyclones are intense low pressure systems that form over warm tropical waters and have gale force winds.

In an emergency situation, do not hesitate to contact the Emergency Services; call 000 from an external phone, (0) 000 from an internal phone or 112 from a mobile phone and request either Police, Fire or Ambulance.

Cyclone Season

Tropical cyclones in the Queensland region mostly form lows within the monsoon trough, between November and April. JCU Security monitors cyclone activity.

Cyclone Action Plans

At JCU each Division, College and/or Department is required to formulate individual Cyclone Action Plans to cater for the specific needs of their areas at Cyclone Watch and Cyclone Warning stages. Assistance is available in preparing these plans from the Security Manager or WHS Unit and must include consideration of the following:

- The relaying of messages and information to their staff;
- Special requirements including protection of specialised equipment, experiments in progress;
- Staff location - field trips in progress;
- Guidelines for staff going on leave during the cyclone season;
- Protection of documents, files, computer equipment;
- Provision of the names of staff to be included on the Recall List;
- Individual staff needs including children at school or in childcare, visiting relatives;
- Student needs including posting of notices, evacuation procedures;
- Identification of Division, College, Directorate and business units specific needs;
- Risk identification, assessment and control.

These plans should be reviewed annually prior to cyclone season.

Cyclone danger and impacts

Tropical Cyclones can be dangerous because they produce destructive winds, heavy rainfall with possible flooding and damaging storm surges that can cause inundation of low-lying coastal areas.

The severity of a tropical cyclone is described in terms of categories ranging from 1 to 5 relating to the zone of maximum winds.

Category	Strongest Gust (km/h)	Typical effects
1	Less than 125km/h Gales	Minimal building damage. Damage to some crops, trees. Boats may drag moorings.
2	125-164 km/h Destructive winds	Minor building damage. Significant damage to signs, trees. Heavy damage to some crops. Risk of power failure. Small boats may break moorings.
3	165-224 km/h Very destructive winds	Some roof and structural damage. Power failure likely.
4	225-279 km/h Very destructive winds	Significant roofing and structural damage. Dangerous airborne debris. Widespread power failures.
5	More than 280 km/h Extremely destructive winds	Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction.

Cyclone stages

Tropical Cyclones have different warning stages. The Australian Government - Bureau of Meteorology issue these warning. As cyclones develop JCU Emergency Controller (Security) keep staff/students updated.

Tropical Cyclone Advice

The Emergency Controller will:

Advise via general email that a Cyclone Advice has been initiated and the current status of the cyclone. Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans/Directors and Managers should ensure a review of the status of the areas under their control is carried out.

Tropical Cyclone Watch - *Issued if a cyclone is expected to affect coastal communities within 48 hours, but not expected within 24 hours.*

Stage 1 - The Emergency Controller will:

Advise via general email that a Cyclone Watch has been initiated and the current status of the cyclone. At this point Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans/Directors and Managers should activate the first stage of their individual Cyclone Action Plans. The Emergency Controller is available to provide advice to Divisions, Colleges and Directorates should this be required.

Tropical Cyclone Warning - *Issued if a cyclone is affecting or is expected to affect coastal communities within 24 hours.*

Stage 2 - The Emergency Controller will:

Notify via email that a Cyclone Warning has been issued. If and when this advice is issued the University community should implement the second stage of their Cyclone Action Plans. Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans/Directors and Managers should ensure all pre-cyclone preparations are underway/have been completed in accordance with their individual plans.

If the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts the likelihood of cyclonic winds affecting the area in which the facility is located during or soon after University teaching hours, a decision to close the University at that location will be made by the Vice-Chancellor at the appropriate time.

The decision to close the University will be based on the following considerations: - obligations of staff and student needs in relation to closures of schools and childcare centres, children at home, elderly relatives and visitors. Environmental factors like local flooding, issues such as public transport and the requirement to take shelter, including the need to evacuate students in residence, will be taken into consideration at this point.

Authority to advise staff to proceed home and to order any building, facility or the entire University closed rests with the Vice-Chancellor. Deputy-Vice-Chancellors, Directors, Deans, Heads of Halls and Managers wishing to release staff from duty or close down all or part of any building they occupy are required to consult with the Vice-Chancellor or the Emergency Controller prior to taking such action.

Where a decision is made to close the University the Emergency Controller, will communicate this decision via broadcast email. Civil Authorities will be notified of the decision and the notice of closure will be broadcast by local radio stations.

All Clear

The Emergency Controller will:

- Assess the impact of the cyclone and take all necessary action to resume operations at the University;
- Provide an Assessment and Recommendation to the Vice Chancellor and if directed to the Vice Chancellors Advisory Committee.

The Vice-Chancellor based on the assessment will make an announcement regarding the continued operation of the University.

Resources

WHS-PRO-019 Emergency Management Procedure
Australian Government - Bureau of Meteorology website