

If you are advised to evacuate

During heavy rainfall events, the NSW SES may issue an Evacuation Warning. This means that flash flooding is imminent in your area and you need to prepare for possible evacuation. The SES may doorknock to advise residents and businesses of the warning but there may be other ways that people will be notified. Keep listening to the radio and follow any instructions given by the emergency services.

An Evacuation Order may be issued advising people of what to do and where to go. You must evacuate immediately. Seek shelter with family or friends well away from areas impacted by flash flooding. In major floods, an evacuation centre may be established by Family and Community Services.

When you evacuate:

- Take your Emergency Kit with you
- Turn off the electricity and gas at the mains before you leave
- Turn off and secure any gas bottles
- Take your pets with you



Baker Street entrance to Emergency Flood Evacuation Route
Photos courtesy of Lake Macquarie City Council

Baker Street Emergency Flood Evacuation Route

An emergency Flood Evacuation Route is available for Baker Street residents. The entry to the road is located at the eastern end of Baker Street adjacent to the railway embankment. The route runs along the western side of the railway line and joins Moira Park Road. The road is located on private land and is not part of the public road system. During times of flooding, the road will be opened to allow resident access to Macquarie Street.

Evacuation Centres

An evacuation centre may be established by Family and Community Services. Information on and locations of these centres will be broadcast and included in the Evacuation Order.

The evacuation centre may provide temporary shelter, food and clothing as well as information on further welfare assistance.

After a flood

Severe weather and flash flooding can result in major damage to property, potentially causing a range of health and safety issues.

When returning to your property:

- Ensure the structural stability of your property before entering. Check for damage to windows, walls and the roof and be especially cautious of potential contaminants including asbestos
- Make sure the electricity and gas are turned off before going inside. Use a torch to carry out inspections inside buildings
- If power points, electrical equipment, appliances or electrical hot water systems have been exposed to floodwater or are water damaged in any way, they must be inspected by a qualified electrician before use
- Gas appliances and gas bottles that have been exposed to floodwater should be inspected for safety before use
- Wear suitable protective clothing, including boots and gloves, when cleaning up
- Never eat food which has been in contact with floodwater
- Only use clean eating utensils, toothbrushes, towels or handkerchiefs

For more information on personal and household safety after a flood, visit the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services (formerly Emergency Management NSW) website at www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/flood.

Disaster Recovery Centres may be established following some disasters. Recovery centres can provide a range of welfare services including financial assistance, personal support, temporary accommodation and providing information and referrals.

If you have been affected by floods and require assistance, contact Disaster Welfare Services on **1800 018 444**.



Stay informed

The Cooranbong and Lake Macquarie City State Emergency Service (SES) Units can give you information on what you can do to reduce the effects of flooding on your family and your property.

Lake Macquarie City Council may be able to provide information on the height at which your property may be flooded.

This brochure and general information on preparing for floods can be found on the SES website at www.ses.nsw.gov.au and Lake Macquarie City Council website at www.lakemac.com.au.

How the SES can help you

The State Emergency Service is responsible for responding to floods in NSW. This includes planning for floods and educating people about how to protect themselves and their property.

During flash floods, the SES will provide flood information, safety advice and may provide assistance with property protection and water removal. Where appropriate, the SES will conduct evacuations and undertake flood rescue.

www.ses.nsw.gov.au

FOR EMERGENCY HELP IN FLOODS AND STORMS CALL THE SES ON

132 500

FOR LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES CALL 000 (TRIPLE ZERO)

SES Website	www.ses.nsw.gov.au
Cooranbong SES Unit	02 4977 3233
Lake Macquarie City SES Unit	02 4914 6161
Lake Macquarie City Council	02 4921 0333
Lake Macquarie City Council Website	www.lakemac.com.au
Bureau of Meteorology Website	www.bom.gov.au



Better FloodSafe than Sorry



Protecting yourself from a flood

Top: Wamsley Street, Dora Creek, 9 June 2007 flood.
Bottom: Newport Road, Dora Creek, 9 June 2007 flood.

Photos courtesy of John Mason



Are you at risk from floods?

Low-lying parts of Dora Creek Township are built on a floodplain where there is a history of flooding from the Dora Creek waterway. Because of the small catchment and the rapid response to rainfall, Dora Creek catchment is considered to be a "flash flood" catchment.

Historical flood records indicate that significant flooding has occurred in this area on a number of occasions between 1927 and 2007.

Floods are described in terms of their probability of occurring within a given year. An Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) of 1% means that there is a 1 in 100 chance of a flood of this level occurring each year. Approximately 180 houses and 11 businesses may be inundated above floor level in a 1% AEP flood event according to the *Dora Creek Floodplain Management Plan, 1998*.

Flash floods result from very heavy rainfall during short intense storms and occur with little or no warning. Even shallow water is very powerful and can carry large amounts of debris. People are often swept away after entering floodwater on foot or in vehicles. This is the leading cause of death during floods. Preparing for floods can reduce the loss associated with and the impact on your family, property or business.

Due to the life-threatening nature of flash floods, the safest action is to evacuate homes and businesses well before flash flooding occurs. In highly susceptible areas this may mean evacuating well before heavy rainfall begins. Failure to evacuate may result in you becoming trapped inside a building. If you become trapped, it may be safer to stay inside and seek refuge at the highest point of the building rather than to enter floodwater. Taking refuge in a building is **no guarantee of safety**. It is very dangerous and may isolate you from rescue or medical treatment. Your safety depends on the structural stability of the individual property and many other factors.

Evacuating early is the only safe action if you live or work in a flash flood prone area. Make early preparations to plan your evacuation to protect people and your property. Be alert, keep an eye on the weather and be prepared to act should flooding occur.

Consider the location of your home or business and plan when you need to evacuate so that you do not enter floodwater to get to a safe place.

Future management and development of flood prone land within the Dora Creek floodplain is directed by the *Dora Creek Floodplain Management Plan, 1998* – www.lakemac.com.au.

Prepare yourself

It is important to prepare your family and property now for the possibility of flooding as flash floods can occur at any time of the year. Find out about your flood risk and check your insurance policy. Develop a FloodSafe Plan and identify your evacuation route.

Some other basic measures you can take right now include keeping a list of emergency numbers near the telephone and assembling an Emergency Kit.

Your Emergency Kit contents:

- A portable radio with spare batteries
- A torch with spare batteries
- A first aid kit (with supplies appropriate for your household or business)
- Candles and waterproof matches
- A waterproof bag for valuables
- Emergency contact numbers

When flooding is likely, place in your Emergency Kit:

- Important papers and photos
- A good supply of required medications
- Any special requirements for babies and the disabled, infirm or elderly
- Strong shoes
- Suitable food and drinks

The SES also has a 'Home FloodSafe Toolkit' to help householders in flash flood prone areas prepare for floods. This toolkit is available from the SES and will help you to develop a list of actions to be done before, during and after a flood.

BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

If you own or manage a business in a flash flood prone area, you can create a Business FloodSafe Plan. The SES has an interactive 'Business FloodSafe Toolkit' available on the SES website. You can use this toolkit to develop your Business FloodSafe Plan. Make sure that your Business FloodSafe Plan is complete, up to date and kept somewhere handy.



Every family and business should put together an Emergency Kit.

How you will be advised of flooding

The Bureau of Meteorology (Bureau) provides Flood Warnings for the Macquarie/Tuggerah Lakes Basin and specifically for Lake Macquarie. The Bureau also issues Severe Weather Warnings and Severe Thunderstorm Warnings which can include warnings for Flash Flooding.

The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) provides local flood advice for Dora Creek which contains information about expected consequences of flooding based on local knowledge and information. Flood advice is disseminated locally and may also be included in SES Flood Bulletins.

Flood Bulletins provide information on what may happen at the predicted flood height and what actions are required to protect yourself and your property.

Dora Creek FloodWatch local flood alarm system

A local flood alarm system is in place for residents of Dora Creek. The system automatically notifies volunteer residents and the SES when specific water levels are reached. Information from this system informs the SES Local Flood Advises.

Information is available via the Dora Creek FloodWatch website at www.mhl.nsw.gov.au/www/lwdora.html.

When flooding is likely

The Bureau of Meteorology issues Severe Thunderstorm or Severe Weather Warnings when heavy rainfall or storms are predicted. This is a heads up for weather that can cause flash flooding. The Bureau will also issue Flood Warnings for the Macquarie/Tuggerah Lakes Basin and Lake Macquarie Waterway.

Very heavy rainfall lasting even a few minutes can produce significant flash flooding. The depth or arrival time of floodwater is difficult to predict with certainty.

Evacuating early is the only safe action if you live or work in a flash flood prone area. Make early preparations to plan your evacuation to protect life and property.

Be alert and keep an eye on the weather. Be prepared to act should flooding occur:

- Listen to your local radio station for information, updates and advice
- Activate your Business or Home FloodSafe Plan (see the NSW SES website for more information)

- Locate and check your Emergency Kit (see the 'Prepare yourself' section of this guide)
- Locate important papers, valuables and mementoes and place them in your Emergency Kit
- Check if neighbours, friends and family in the area are aware of possible flooding
- Ensure employees are able to get home before evacuation routes close
- Stack possessions, records, stock or equipment on benches and tables. Place electrical items on top
- Relocate waste containers, chemicals and poisons well above floor level

If you live or work outside a flash flood prone area, you should avoid entering floodwater or seek alternative routes when going about routine travel as well as avoid sight-seeing in flash flood affected areas.

During a flash flood

- Leave well before there is the potential for your property or business to be impacted by flash flooding and before evacuation routes close
- NEVER enter or attempt to travel through floodwater - this is the main cause of death during floods. Floodwater may be deeper or faster flowing than you think and may contain hidden snags and debris
- Keep listening to your local radio station for further information, updates and advice
- In life-threatening emergencies, phone 000 (triple zero)
- If driving in heavy rain, seek secure shelter; put your hazard lights on and pull over to the side of the road. Keep clear of drains, causeways, gutters, streams, creeks and low points on the road
- If outdoors, seek secure shelter; stay away from drains, causeways, gutters, streams, creeks, trees and powerlines
- Follow all instructions given to you by the emergency services

Remember: Evacuating early is the only safe action if you live or work in a flash flood prone area.