

# A guide to FLOOD RESPONSE IN GLENORCHY TOWNSHIP



- **How do I prepare my home and family for a flood?**
- **What can I expect from Council?**
- **What should I do when flooding occurs?**



# FLOODING IN GLENORCHY: DON'T THINK IF, THINK WHEN!

Glenorchy Township faces a number of risks during a severe weather event due to its locality on the edge of Lake Wakatipu at the end of the Rees and Dart braided river fans.

While the lake responds relatively slowly to increased rainfall, significant risk is posed by the Bible Stream and Buckler Burn to the east and south, which can flood and transport sediment quickly in a downpour. Thus Glenorchy faces the dual risk of not only flooding from lake level rise, but damage from debris, sediment and stream floods. The road to Glenorchy along the edge of the lake is susceptible to slippages and washouts, potentially resulting in a loss of access and consequently, isolation for not only Glenorchy, but the out-lying communities of Kinloch and Paradise.

Several major floods have impacted on Glenorchy in the last ten years, the most severe being in 1994 and 1999.

## BE PREPARED

**Flooding cannot be prevented and your best defence is to be prepared. This document outlines simple steps to assist in preparing your home and family to cope in a flood.**

### Prepare your home

When building or renovating your home, make use of the opportunity to improve your home and property's resistance to flooding. Below are some steps you can take to make your home more flood proof:

- Have a licensed electrician raise switches, sockets, circuit breakers and wiring as high as possible.
- Install backflow prevention valves or plugs on all drains, toilets, and sewer connections to lessen the risk of contamination.
- Place your furnace, water heater and washer and dryer on masonry blocks or concrete as high as possible.
- Debris carried by floodwaters such as logs, branches and gravels can cause significant damage. Protect your property with a fence or continuous plantings.

### Prepare your family

Prepare your family for a flood by doing the following:

- Plan and practice a flood evacuation route with your family and have an agreed safe meeting point if you should get separated.
- Ask a relative or friend (outside the flood risk area) to be the "family contact" in case your family is separated during a flood. Make sure everyone in your family knows the name, address, and phone number of this contact person.
- Store important documents and irreplaceable personal objects (such as photographs) where they won't get damaged.
- Store weed killers, insecticides and other chemicals as securely and as high as possible.
- Keep your insurance cover up-to-date.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by the phone.

Teach children when and how to dial 111.

- Prepare an Emergency Survival Kit.
- Have torches, candles and matches on hand as you may lose power during a flood event.

### Emergency survival kit

In a flood event, road access to Glenorchy could be compromised. An Emergency Survival Kit is your primary means of preparing against such isolation. Your kit should be able to be taken with you in case of evacuation. It must be stored in a safe, dry place in the meantime. Include the following (especially blankets and clothing) in leak proof plastic bags:

- First Aid Kit and essential medicines.
- Spare toilet paper and plastic rubbish bags for your emergency toilet.
- A waterproof torch and spare batteries.
- Radio and spare batteries (Check the batteries every three months).
- Food and water - three days supply.
- Supplies for babies and small children.
- Supplies for those with disabilities.
- Emergency clothing and blankets.
- Pet supplies.

Download a full household emergency checklist from [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz)

If you run an accommodation business be sure to consider your guests in any flood planning, particularly those with disabilities or non-english speakers. You may need to increase the supplies in your Emergency Survival Kit depending on the tourist numbers and time of year.

## WHO TO CALL

**Knowing what support is available during a flood will aid you in being prepared. Being informed is vital!**

### **Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC)**

Council will work hard to ensure the safety of the Glenorchy community. A large part of our role is maintaining access to and through the township. Throughout the wider Queenstown area QLDC will prioritise its contractors on the important task of restoring water and wastewater supply. As Glenorchy is self sufficient in these services, QLDC will focus on road clearance and reinstatement.

During a flood event QLDC will operate from headquarters based in the council offices in Queenstown. **Contact can be made 24 hours through the QLDC customer service department 03 441 0499**

### **Civil Defence (CD)**

In the event of a severe flood the mayor or regional Chairperson may declare a Civil Defence Emergency. Once a declaration has been made, the Civil Defence Emergency manager and the police have the legal authority to:

- Evacuate buildings and places.
- Restrict entry into buildings, including private homes.
- Close roads and public places.
- Remove vehicles that are blocking emergency services and civil defence work.
- Utilise items such as machinery that are needed to save lives.

Refer to the emergency advice section in your Yellow Pages or visit the CD website [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz) for more information on being prepared and the role of CD during a flood.

The CD Sector Post for Glenorchy is located at the Glenorchy School on Oban St.  
Refer to the QLDC website for CD contact details.

### **Otago Regional Council (ORC)**

Prior to, during, and after a flood event the ORC undertakes the role of information gathering and provision. By maintaining and operating rain and river flow gauging stations throughout the region the ORC provides up to date information to QLDC to assist in flood planning and response.

To access the latest river, lake and weather information contact the:

**ORC flow phone: 0800 426 463**

**Or website: [water.orc.govt.nz/waterinfo/](http://water.orc.govt.nz/waterinfo/)**

## WHEN A FLOOD THREATENS

**If floodwaters are rising, stay calm and await instruction by staying tuned to Q92FM on battery powered radio. In the meantime follow the instructions below to make sure your family stays safe until the water levels drop again**

- Disconnect electrical appliances and move valuables, clothing, food, medicines and chemicals as high as possible
- Block your toilet with a towel to prevent floodwaters entering your septic tank system
- Fill sinks, and plastic bottles with clean water then turn off taps to prevent contamination
- Anchor fuel tanks and turn off gas bottles
- Bring outdoor possessions, such as lawn furniture, BBQs and trash cans inside, or tie them down securely. Secure any supplies of firewood
- Floodwaters may carry raw sewage, chemical waste and other disease-spreading substances. If you've come in contact with floodwaters, wash your hands with soap and disinfected water
- If your septic tank is underwater, flushing your toilet will discharge waste into surrounding floodwaters. Avoid contamination by using a bucket until floodwaters recede

### **If you have to leave your home**

- Take your Emergency Survival Kit and if you have time collect family documents including birth / marriage certificates, drivers' licences / passports, family photos and insurance policies and personal hygiene items including towels/soap and toothbrushes and a change of clothes.
- Turn off electricity at the mains and close the main gas valve. Turn off any gas bottles.
- Report to the CD sector post at the Glenorchy School.
- If you have evacuated, leave a note on your front door advising your whereabouts, your contact information (cellphone numbers) and the location of any dangerous goods on your property. A laminated card prepared as part of your emergency kit can be used.
- If you have time, deliver your personal effects to the War Memorial Hall where they can be stored.
- Don't go into floodwaters alone and avoid walking through floodwaters if at all possible.
- Stay away from downed power lines and electrical wires as electrical currents pass easily through water.
- If the waters start to rise inside your house before you have evacuated, retreat to the second floor, or if necessary, the roof. Take dry clothing, a flashlight and a portable radio with you. Don't try to swim to safety; wait for rescuers to come to you.
- If you require shelter, gather at the CD sector post at the Glenorchy School.

## Driving during a flood

During a flood event access to Glenorchy can be compromised due to high lake levels, slippages and washouts. QLDC will be active in restoring the road as fast as possible, however, until such a time as QLDC declares the road to be safe, staying put is your best means of defence.

*If you have to move around follow these tips for safe motoring:*

- Don't drive through a flooded area if at all possible. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. A car can be carried away by just 0.5 metres of floodwater and floodwaters can hide erosion of roadways and edges
- Show care when driving over bridges, fords or streams - erosion during a flood can cause bed levels to drop considerably and erode bridge abutments
- If you are travelling at the time of a flood and become trapped, move your car to higher ground as far away from watercourses as possible to stay out of the path of potential landslides and flash floods. If you have coverage, use your cellphone to call for help, otherwise stay with your car and wait to be rescued

## AFTER A FLOOD

### Health and safety

- Make sure your home is safe before re-entering.
- Upon re-entering your property, do not use matches, cigarette lighters or other open flames since gas may be trapped inside. Instead, use a flashlight to light your way.
- If you do smell gas or hear hissing, locate any gas bottles and turn them off or open a window and leave quickly.
- Keep power off until a licensed electrician has inspected your system for safety.
- Check for sewage and water line damage. If you suspect damage, avoid using the toilets and taps and call a plumber.
- Throw out food from refrigerators and freezers that have been off for more than a few hours.
- Avoid putting wet appliances back into service. If in doubt, consult an electrician.
- Throw out foods and medicines that may have come into contact with floodwaters.
- Until QLDC advises your water to be safe, boil water for drinking and food preparation vigorously for five minutes before using.
- Be careful walking around. After a flood, steps and floors are often slippery with mud and covered with debris, including nails and broken glass.

### Insurance

- If your home has suffered damage, call the agent who handles your flood insurance to file a claim. If you are unable to stay in your home, make sure to say where you can be reached

- To make filing your claim easier, take photos of any water in the house and save damaged personal property. If necessary, place these items outside your home. An insurance adjuster will need to see what's been damaged in order to process your claim.

### Clean up

- Wet walls and floors must be disinfected and dried thoroughly to prevent mildew and wood rot.
- If possible get professional cleaners to work on carpets and floors.
- Before any alterations or repairs are made, contact QLDC for advice on building and resource consent requirements. Make sure to follow local building codes and ordinances when rebuilding, and use water-resistant materials and techniques to protect yourself and your property from future flood damage.
- For matters relating to stream / channel management, maintenance or reinstatement after a flood contact the ORC.



QUEENSTOWN  
LAKES DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

Please contact the  
Queenstown Lakes District Council  
at Queenstown Monday to Friday.  
Ph: 03 441 0499 Queenstown.  
Office Hours: 8.00am and 5.00pm

[www.qldc.govt.nz](http://www.qldc.govt.nz)



Otago  
Regional  
Council

Otago Regional Council  
Ph: 03 442 5681 (Queenstown)