

Flood extent in a 1% flood and evacuation routes

How the SES can help you

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

During floods, the SES is responsible for flood information, safety advice, evacuation, rescue and providing essentials to people cut off by flood waters.

FOR EMERGENCY HELP IN FLOODS AND STORMS CALL THE SES ON
132 500

Maitland City SES 02 4932 7444
SES website www.ses.nsw.gov.au
Maitland City Council (business hours) 02 4934 9700
Bureau of Meteorology website www.bom.gov.au

Prepare yourself

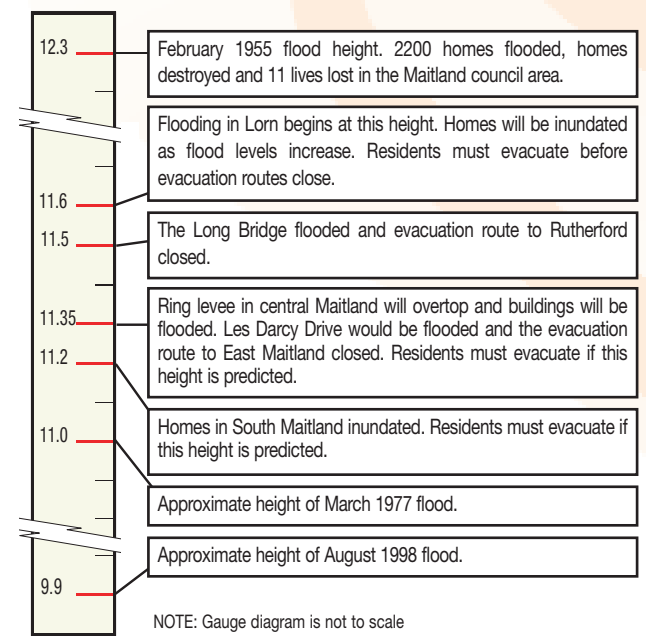
Some basic measures you can take right now include keeping a list of emergency numbers near the telephone and assembling an emergency kit.

Your emergency kit should contain at all times:

- A portable radio with spare batteries
- A torch with spare batteries
- A first aid kit
- Rubber gloves
- Candles and waterproof matches
- Copies of important papers including emergency contact numbers
- A copy of your emergency plan
- A waterproof bag for valuables

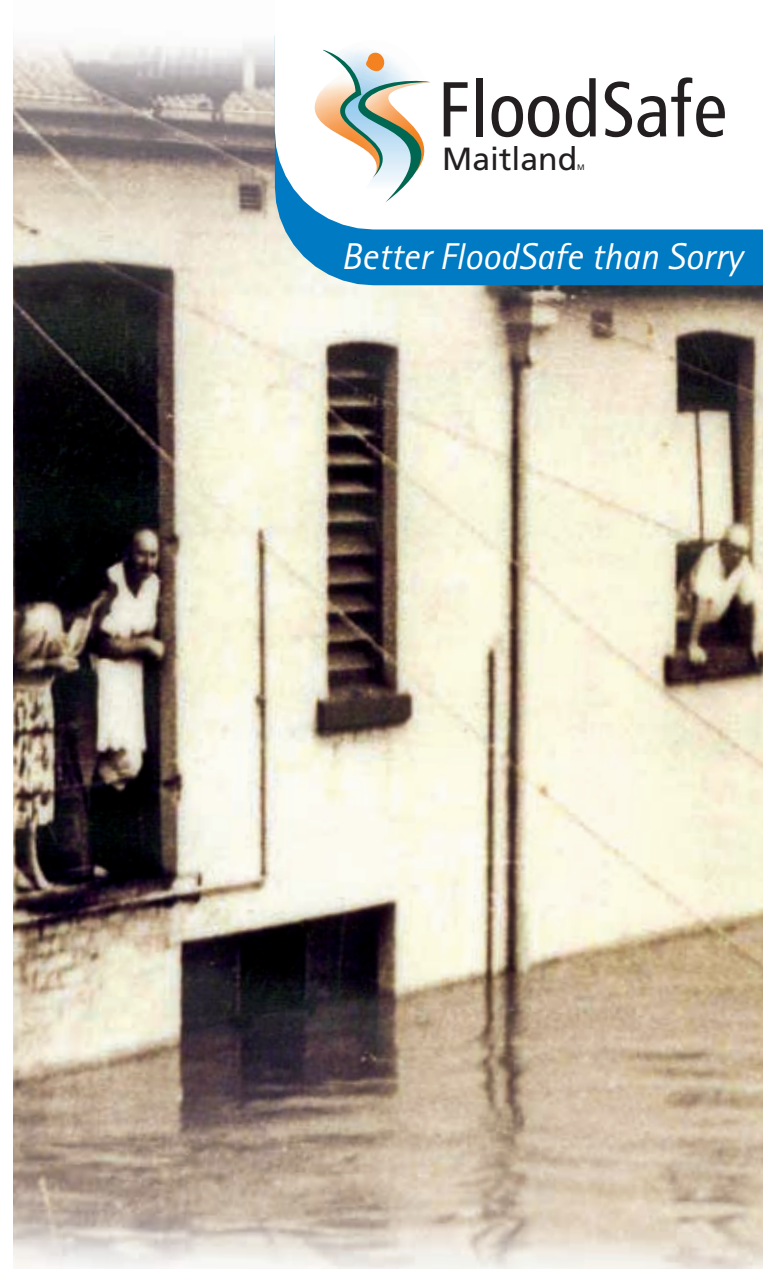
When flooding is likely, place in your emergency kit:

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



NOTE: Gauge diagram is not to scale

Key heights (in metres) at the Belmore Bridge gauge and their consequences.



Protecting yourself from a flood

Victoria St. Maitland in the 1955 flood



Are you at risk from floods?

More than 200 floods have been recorded on the Hunter River since European settlement. Thirteen have peaked at levels above the major flood level of 10.7 metres at the Belmore Bridge gauge. The most severe flood in Maitland was in 1955 when 11 people lost their lives, 2200 homes were flooded (of which some were destroyed) and serious damage was done to infrastructure. In today's terms, the total damage bill for the Hunter Valley from the 1955 flood would be over \$2 billion. Few large floods have occurred since, but severe floods, some larger than that of 1955, can and will occur.

Extensive flood mitigation measures including levees, spillways and control banks have been established in Maitland. These measures give protection from smaller floods but cannot protect homes from severe flooding. Outside the levee system numerous roads will be closed by flood water and low-lying land will be flooded.

When a height of approximately 11.2 metres is predicted at the Belmore Bridge gauge, some homes in South Maitland outside the levee system will be flooded and residents will need to evacuate.

The Maitland ring levee is designed to be overtopped when the river reaches a height of approximately 11.35 metres at the Belmore Bridge gauge. When this gauge height is predicted, all residents inside the levee must evacuate. Once the water flows over the ring levee, Central Maitland, Horseshoe Bend and the remainder of South Maitland will be inundated with deep, fast-flowing water.

When a peak height of approximately 11.6 metres or higher is reached, water will begin to flow into the back of Lorn and properties behind the levee will begin to be inundated. Residents should evacuate when this height is predicted.



Maitland in the 1955 flood

Photo courtesy Hunter Catchment Management Trust

Flooding may last for several days. Remaining in your home in a serious flood can be dangerous. Even if you are not actually inundated, your home may become a refuge for vermin, snakes and spiders. There may be no water, sewerage, power, telephone or other services for several days. You may be unable to call for help. Because evacuation routes close early in severe floods, you will need to leave well before water reaches your property. It is dangerous to evacuate too late in a flood as roads may be covered by deep, fast flowing water.

Stay informed

Maitland City Council has information on how flooding may affect your property.

The Maitland City SES Unit can give you information on what you can do to reduce the effects of flooding on your family and your property.

A copy of the Maitland City Local Flood Plan is available at Maitland City Council libraries.

How you will be advised of a coming flood

Flood information including generalised flood forecasts, road closures and advice on evacuations and property protection will be broadcast over local radio stations 2HD AM 1143, KOFM 102.9, 2NUR FM 103.7, NEW-FM 105.3, NX FM 106.9, ABC FM 106.1, ABC AM 1233, Rhema FM 99.7.

When flooding is likely

- Stack your possessions on benches and tables, electrical goods on top
- Secure objects that are likely to float and cause damage
- Relocate waste containers, chemicals and poisons well above floor level
- Locate important papers, valuables and mementoes and put them in your emergency kit
- Move livestock, including horses, to high ground

During a flood

- Avoid driving or walking through flood water - it may be deeper and faster flowing than you realise
- Keep listening to a local radio station for further information and advice
- Keep in contact with your neighbours
- Be prepared to evacuate if advised



Maitland in the 1955 flood – flood debris

Photo courtesy Hunter Catchment Management Trust

If you need to evacuate

- Take your emergency kit with you
- Turn off the electricity, gas and water as you leave
- You will be told which evacuation centre to go to
- Don't leave your pets behind – they may die. Put them on leads or in approved pet containers. Dogs should be muzzled.

When you evacuate

You will need to leave well before roads to high ground are closed by flood water.

The last evacuation route to Rutherford is via High St. and the Long Bridge. The last route to East Maitland is via Les Darcy Dr.

Proceed to the evacuation centre you are asked to go to. Help will be available at the evacuation centre which will be established by the Department of Community Services (DoCS). This centre will also be staffed by representatives from community agencies such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Adracare, St Vincent de Paul and Anglicare. Information on the location of the evacuation centre will be provided at the time of the flood. Help available from the evacuation centre includes:

- Temporary accommodation
- Financial assistance
- Personal support
- Refreshments and meals
- Clothing and personal needs
- Contacting family and friends

Recovering from a severe flood

A local recovery centre will be established by DoCS. This centre will be staffed by representatives from a range of government departments and community agencies to help you return to normal living. At the centre you will be able to get advice on everything from insurance to counselling. In the event of a flood, information will also be available from the DoCS State Disaster Recovery Centre on 1800 018 444.