# Storms – preparing your home

*For emergency help in a storm call the ACT SES on 132 500 or visit the website (www.ses.act.gov.au).*

## Are you at risk from storms?

Storms can happen anywhere, at any time of the year. They are more common in the ACT during the main storm period (from September to the end of February), but it's important to stay prepared all year round.

Severe storms may cause major damage. They may be accompanied by torrential rain, strong winds, large hailstones and lightning and can cause flash flooding, unroof buildings and damage trees and power lines. Australia's greatest costs, in terms of insured losses, are caused by storms.

You can also be indirectly affected by storms even if your property is not damaged. If access roads are cut or you have no power or telephone, you need to know what to do for yourself – and where to turn to for help.

## Prepare yourself

- Check and maintain your roof
- Clear gutters and drains
- Remove overhanging trees and branches
- Assemble an emergency kit

### Emergency Kit

Your family emergency kit should include items you and your family members will need in an emergency:

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

### If evacuation is likely or required, place in your emergency kit:

- A good supply of required medications
- Any special requirements for babies and people with a disability or who are elderly
- Strong shoes
- Fresh food and drinks

## When a storm warning is broadcast

- Listen to your local radio for information and advice
- Bring children and pets indoors
- Stay well clear of windows
- Park your car under cover or away from trees
- Put your family emergency kit where you can find it easily
- If you need help from the SES, phone 132 500. For life-threatening emergencies, phone 000 immediately

While the storm is passing through, stay indoors if possible. If you are driving, put on your hazard lights and pull over to the side of the road, clear of streams, trees and power lines. If you are caught outdoors, seek emergency shelter – but not under a tree.

## After the storm

- Keep listening to your local radio for information and advice
- Check your house for damage. If you need help from the SES, phone 132 500
- Stay well clear of creeks and drains, fallen trees and power lines and damaged structures
- If you don't need help yourself, check your neighbours
- Don't go sightseeing

## How the SES can help you

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

The ACT SES is responsible for undertaking temporary repairs to affected properties which includes sandbagging properties affected by flash flooding, placing tarpaulins on damaged roofs, cutting up fallen trees and branches and giving storm safety advice.

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www.homesafety.act.gov.au

# ActewAGL Natural Gas safety tips

*Natural gas appliances, such as hot water systems or heaters, should be checked and maintained annually by qualified gas appliance service personnel.*

Annual service checks in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines are necessary as a safety precaution and to ensure appliances are working in peak condition.

Natural gas has no odour. To help you detect the presence of gas, a strong odourant that smells like rotten eggs is added.

If an underground natural gas pipe is damaged during an excavation or if you smell a natural gas leak outside call ActewAGL Emergencies and Faults on 13 19 09 or 000 immediately.

If you smell this odour inside:

- turn off the natural gas at the meter and ventilate the area
- do not use a source of ignition such as matches or cigarette lighters
- evacuate the area if necessary
- seek expert advice.

In the event of an emergency, such as a gas leak or bushfire, turn off your natural gas supply by turning the yellow valve lever on your meter so it runs perpendicular to the pipe.

For more information on natural gas safety visit www.actewagl.com.au/safety.

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# Safer homes for older people

*There are a number of steps you can take to make yourself and your home safer.*

## Did you know?

- Falls are the most common cause of injury in older people.
- At least one in three older people above 65 years will experience a major fall each year.

## Home safety hints for older people

- Make sure pathways in and around your home are regularly maintained and are well lit, non-slip and free from clutter.
- Remove loose mats and make sure furniture in your home doesn't create obstacles.
- Install hand rails on stairs and grab rails and non-slip strips on the floors of baths and showers.
- Regularly participate in some form of physical activity to help increase strength, balance and flexibility.
- Check your medication with your doctor or pharmacist at least once a year.
- Have your eyes tested every two years.
- If you are feeling dizzy or unsteady on your feet, stay seated or sit down immediately.
- Make sure footwear fits properly and has a non skid flexible sole with a broad low heel.

## Emergency medical information

Having rapid access emergency medical information can save valuable time in an emergency. This information should include:

- patient information
- patient medications
- medical conditions
- patient history.

The ACT Ambulance service can provide you with an Emergency Medical Information (EMI) book, or there are other proprietary books available to help you record this information.

You should:

- Complete all relevant types of information, printing clearly
- Remember to keep a separate record for each person
- Keep the EMI book or records attached to the fridge so ambulance paramedics can quickly and easily locate it (EMI books come in a magnetised plastic wallet)
- Update your book or records whenever your details change (for example, when medications change or on the advice of your local doctor). You should update your records annually (for example, when you change your clock to daylight saving time).

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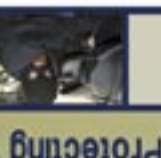
# AFP Protecting your vehicle



*Seventy-five per cent of vehicles are stolen by opportunistic thieves who target vehicles that are often used in joy riding or to commit another crime. There are measures that you can take to improve car security and reduce the risk of theft.*

## Older cars

If you own a car manufactured before July 2001, and it doesn't have an immobiliser, it is much more likely to be stolen. Three out of every four cars stolen do not have an immobiliser fitted. Stolen cars are used for mainly joyriding and to commit further offences, placing the community at great risk.

The ACT Government has introduced a scheme for a limited time to assist ACT residents fit immobilisers to older cars. The scheme will provide approximately 5000 immobilisers and will run until 30 June 2009. The scheme is offering:

- a free immobiliser for pensioners, students and the unemployed on a Centrelink Benefit who own an older vehicle (this includes installation);
- a $100 subsidy to all other residents, representing approximately 50% of the cost.

To obtain a voucher for the scheme, please call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81. Canberra Connect will verify your details. A voucher will be posted to you, which you then take to an accredited auto-electrician from the list provided on the voucher.

## New cars

Most car manufacturers are increasingly fitting security devices. These vary between vehicles. Newer cars may be fitted with:

- Engine immobilisers
- Better door and ignition locks
- Security patterned keys
- Security coded radio/CD players or radio/CD players with removable face plates
- Car alarms.

## Other types of car safety

- Be sure to lock your car, shut your windows tight and never leave your keys in the car. Even the smallest gap can allow the windows to be forced.
- Do not leave valuables in your car. However, if you do need to, place your handbag, parcels, luggage or briefcase out of sight in the glove box, boot or under the seat. Ensure that no-one sees you placing these valuables in the boot.
- Keep your garage locked. Many cars are stolen from garages and driveways, both during the day and at night.
- Choose secure carparks. There is no such thing as a 'theft proof carpark' of course, but, whenever possible, choose a carpark that is well lit, with boom gates.
- Remember, don't leave your ticket in the car.
- Park well away from isolated or dark areas – especially at night.
- Be alert to any strangers showing an interest in your vehicle.
- Don't hide spare keys anywhere, inside or outside the car.
- A lockable fuel cap will prevent your petrol being stolen and force joy-riders to abandon your car when the petrol runs out.
- Keep a record of the serial number of your car keys and accessories.

Remember, if a car door cannot be opened and the contents removed in a few seconds, a thief usually won't bother.

ACT POLICING 131 444 EMERGENCY 000

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