



Preparing for and staying connected during natural disasters

Description

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Australia is a land of extremes—droughts, floods, and bushfires are part of life. While we can't control natural disasters, we can control how we prepare for them. Staying connected can be a lifeline—helping you receive emergency updates, contact loved ones, and access critical services. Power outages and network disruptions are common in emergencies, especially in regional, rural, and remote Australia. That's why it's essential to prepare in advance and have backup communication options in place where practical and possible.

What you need to consider:

1. Prepare for power outages

It's important to remember that power outages will impact the wider network infrastructure. Mobile and internet networks are unable to supply voice and internet connections when this happens.

If you have a fixed broadband connection (satellite, fixed wireless, or fixed line) and an alternative power source (e.g., generator, UPS, power station or solar batteries), you can make calls and access the internet via Wi-Fi calling during an in-home power outage. However, extended power outages may disrupt your broadband if the telecommunications infrastructure also loses power.

NB: Satellite broadband, that does not rely on towers or exchanges, generally works in an in-home power outage, if you have power redundancy, unless power is lost at a ground or earth station.

- If possible have an alternative power source such as an [Uninterruptible Power Supply \(UPS\)](#). This may give you time to access and save critical digital files or keep a business running. A generator, charged powerbanks, or solar batteries will also give you this opportunity. It will allow you to charge devices, and as mentioned above keep you connected via a satellite service. Don't forget your vehicle can also charge your devices.

2. Stay aware and in communication



- Keep devices charged and conserve battery by turning off mobile data when not in use.
- UHF radios – Useful for local communication when phone networks are unavailable.
- Emergency SOS via satellite – Newer phones (e.g., iPhone 14+) can [send emergency messages via satellite](#).
- Download emergency apps and maps. State-specific emergency apps can be found on our [staying connected in emergencies](#)
- Stay updated by listening to a battery-powered or hand-cranked radio tuned to your local ABC frequency. Visit the ABC website to [find your local radio frequency](#). Write it down – e.g. ABC Pilbara 603 AM – and stick it to the battery-powered radio in your emergency survival kit. You can also tune the frequency to one of your car radio preset stations.
- Back up important information to a USB, cloud storage or both, including insurance policies and financial documents. There are many scanning apps for your phone that allow you to do this easily.
- Write down key contacts such as family, emergency services, and utility providers in case digital devices fail.
- Test your emergency plans and evacuation routes to ensure they work when needed.

3. Follow emergency services’ advice

Always listen to the latest advice from emergency services and take action accordingly. If a disaster is imminent and communications may be or have been cut off, don’t wait – evacuate early.

4. Understand the best ways to contact emergency services

- **Calling 000 from a mobile telephone.** Triple Zero (000) is Australia’s primary telephone number to call for assistance in life threatening or time critical emergency situations.
- **112 is a secondary emergency number** that can be dialled from mobile phones in Australia. Special capabilities, including roaming, once only existed when dialling 112, **however** mobile phones manufactured since January 2002 also provide these capabilities when dialling Triple Zero (000) to access the Emergency Call Service.

There is a misconception that 112 calls will be carried by satellite if there is no mobile coverage. Satellite phones use a different technology.

Important – if there is no mobile coverage on any network, you will not be able to reach the Emergency Call Service via a mobile phone, regardless of which number you dialled.

You cannot contact 000 or 112 by text message.



- **DO NOT BLOCK +61 444 444 444.** This number is related to the Emergency Alert service. If the caller ID number or message header on your phone displays the number +61 444 444 444 it is genuine. Add it to your contacts as Emergency Alert Service.
- **Emergency+ app.** Uses the GPS on your smartphone to pinpoint your location.
 - Available for free from the [Google Play store](#) or [Apple App store](#).

Start planning today

For further information regarding how to stay connected in an emergency, visit our [staying connected in emergencies](#) page.

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