



travelling safely



IN MAREEBA SHIRE



Mareeba
SHIRE COUNCIL

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

In an emergency...

Emergency - Police, Fire, Ambulance	Triple Zero (000)
Flood and Storm Emergency Assistance (SES)	132 500
Ergon Energy - Report Dangerous Electrical Emergencies	131 670
Mareeba Shire Council	1300 308 461
Translation and Interpreter Service	131 450
Poisons Information	131 126
13HEALTH - Health and Hospital Information	134 325

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DASHBOARD

Mareeba Shire Council's online Emergency Management Dashboard provides real time emergency information. The Dashboard provides live emergency news, information about road closures, power outages and river heights, weather warnings and fire feeds, emergency contact phone numbers and social media links. Notifications can also be viewed via an interactive map. Mareeba Shire residents can register for the Early Warning Network to receive email and SMS alerts for potential emergencies and severe natural disasters and weather events.

The Dashboard is accessible on Council's website www.emergency.msc.qld.gov.au

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It is a pleasure to welcome you, our valued visitors, to the vast and diverse Mareeba Shire. In your travels you will discover an incredible array of natural landscapes and locations, and friendly people who are delighted to share their shire.

The environmental profile of the Mareeba Shire is diverse, featuring savannah grasslands and woody scrub through to dense tropical rainforests and spectacular water courses. We encourage visitors to immerse themselves in this unique and ecologically diverse location as part of their stay in the shire.

We want you to enjoy a safe and memorable visit and the purpose of this booklet is to support you in preparing for your travels in Far North Queensland; as you would prepare for any holiday, anywhere in the world. We have included tips on being ready for different types of weather events, road conditions and other occurrences you may come across when travelling.


This resource will provide you with information on a wide variety of events to allow you to be prepared. While it is unlikely that you will encounter the events we have covered in this booklet, we hope that the tips we provide will be useful. We hope that this booklet will be a valued tool no matter where your Australian adventure takes you next.

We proudly welcome you to Mareeba Shire and wish you a safe and enjoyable stay.

Councillor Tom Gilmore
Mayor
Mareeba Shire Council

PLANNING YOUR JOURNEY

Drive on the left in Australia

-  Each year, Mareeba Shire plays host to thousands of local and international visitors and workers. We remind all travelers to drive on the left hand side of the road throughout Australia. It is important to be aware of other road users and to drive to conditions. Road safety is everyone's responsibility!



Communication



Tune in

For updates on events, tune into local radio:

- » **ABC Far North** - 106.7FM 95.7FM 91.7FM 801AM 720AM
- » **4AM** - 558AM
- » **HIT FM** - 97.9FM



Keep in touch

Certain locations in the Mareeba Shire have no mobile phone coverage, and while these are becoming less and less we encourage you to check the coverage map of your phone service provider to ensure that you are prepared, and have communications back-up in the case you are outside of service range. If you are travelling to an area without mobile reception you may choose to advise a friend or relative of the expected time of return, or consider the use of a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB).



Back-up

Download the **Emergency+** app before you travel. This app uses smart phone GPS functionality to help Triple Zero (000) callers provide critical location details during an emergency.

Drive to Conditions

As in any part of the world, it is important to maintain an awareness of current and predicted weather and road conditions. During certain weather events, road conditions can change quickly and you may have to adjust your travel plans. There are many sources of reliable and up to date information about weather warnings and advice, road conditions and how to prepare for severe weather events.



Current road conditions

- » The RACQ Road Conditions Map is available at www.racq.com.au/cars-and-driving/safety-on-the-road/road-conditions
- » QLD*Traffic* provides current traffic and road condition information via
 - » 13 19 40 telephone service
 - » QLD*Traffic* smartphone app
 - » website www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au
 - » Twitter account www.twitter.com/QLDTrafficFNNQ



Current weather conditions

- » ABC Far North Queensland's website provides weather warnings, summaries and radar information www.abc.net.au/farnorth/emergencies and www.abc.net.au/farnorth/weather/?ref=nav
- » Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) provides information about weather warnings, rainfall and river heights on their website www.bom.gov.au/qld/warnings and Telephone Weather Services Directory 1300 659 219 (Queensland Land Weather and Flood Warnings)
- » Queensland Government provides information about disasters and alerts on their website www.qldalert.com



Preparing for weather events

- » Mareeba Shire Council website: www.msc.qld.gov.au/emergencies-disasters
- » Queensland Government & RACQ: www.getready.qld.gov.au/be-prepared
- » Queensland Fire and Emergency Services: www.qfes.qld.gov.au
- » Queensland Department of Transport: www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Community-and-environment/Get-ready/Natural-disasters
- » Queensland Government disaster and alerts: www.qldalert.com
- » RACQ and Mareeba Shire Council “Get Ready Guide” booklet available from local businesses, Visitor Information Centres and Council Offices.



SEVERE STORMS, WET WEATHER AND FLOODS

Severe storms are most likely during the wet season (November to May). However storms can occur at any time of the year and may result in dangerous driving conditions. It is recommended that you check weather forecasts and road condition updates before setting out on the road and throughout your trip.

If you find yourself driving during heavy rain

- » Drive slowly
- » Drive with lights on low-beam
- » Do not use cruise control
- » Double the distance between you and the vehicle in front
- » Avoid braking suddenly, accelerating or turning quickly to avoid losing control of your vehicle
- » Do not drive on roads covered with water
- » Do not drive on unsealed roads.

If weather conditions are severe

- » Pull off the road safely and park well off the road to avoid creating a hazard for passing vehicles
- » Stop clear of trees, power lines and streams
- » Remain in the car and put on your hazard lights
- » Tune into local radio for warnings, information and advice
- » After the storm has passed, beware of fallen powerlines and trees, damaged buildings and flooded watercourses
- » For emergency assistance, contact Triple Zero (000).



Flooding

Regardless of the type of car you drive, do not enter floodwaters. Floods can rise over days or within minutes in a 'flash flood.' Conditions that appear safe can quickly escalate into dangerous conditions. The depth and current of flood waters is often hard to judge. Even gently moving floodwater can wash away the road surface underneath and the speed and power of flood waters can sweep a person or vehicle away. Water deeper than the bottom of a

vehicle door is enough to float a vehicle away or splash the engine, causing it to stall. Speeding through water can cause loss of traction and aquaplaning.

Never drive, ride or walk through floodwaters. Find an alternative route or wait until the water level drops. A resource to help you plan an alternative route is available at www.floodwatersafety.initiatives.qld.gov.au/flooded-roads-map/

If you are in a flood danger zone move your vehicle to a higher location, stay informed about current conditions and follow the advice of emergency services.

Flood warning services

The flooding of rivers following heavy rainfall is the most common form of flooding in Australia. The Bureau of Meteorology provides flood forecasting and warning services for most major rivers in Australia. A tiered flood categorisation system is used to describe the predicted impact of expected flooding. River height predictions refer to the height (in metres) to which a river is predicted to rise at the river gauge located along the river. The actual depth of floodwaters may be greater than the predicted river height. The flood warnings will be issued as:

Flood Warning	Type of flooding
Flood Watch	Flood-producing rain expected in the near future.
Generalised Flood Warning	Flooding occurring or expected to occur in a general location.
Minor Flooding	Low-lying areas next to watercourses flooded. Minor roads may be closed, low-level bridges and causeways submerged.
Moderate Flooding	Large areas inundated. Main traffic routes may be covered, evacuation from houses may be required.
Major Flooding	Extensive rural and/or urban areas inundated. Properties and towns may be isolated; major traffic routes may be closed; evacuation from flooded areas may be required.

To stay safe while driving in flooded areas

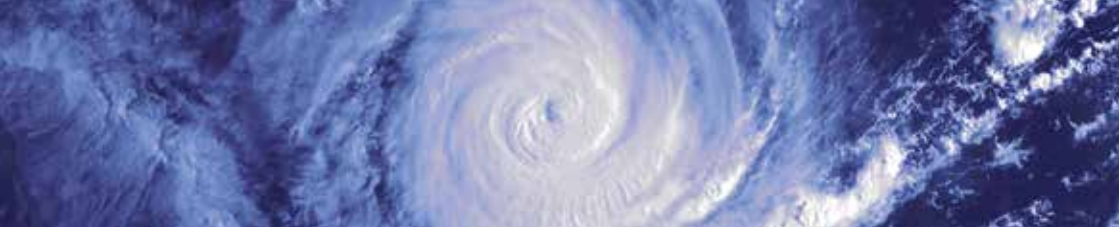
- » Obey road closure signs. Signage detail is available at: www.qld.gov.au/transport/conditions/disasters

If you become trapped by floodwaters

- » Stay calm and phone Triple Zero (000) or ask or signal others to do so
- » Don't enter the water if it can be avoided
- » If you are caught in a vehicle, stay there until help arrives, the water level goes down or a safe escape is possible.

After the flood

- » Always obey road closure signs even if there is no water on the road
- » It is not always easy to see damage and dangers. For example, a road may look safe to drive on but the soil or clay underneath it might be unstable.



CYCLONES

For most of the year Mareeba Shire has beautiful sunny weather, however between November and April Far North Queensland will occasionally experience cyclones. Tropical cyclones are intense low pressure systems that form over tropical waters generating strong winds and heavy rainfall that can extend over hundreds of kilometres. Cyclones usually take several days to develop and are rated by the Bureau of Meteorology as Category 1 (weak) to Category 5 (strong) based on the intensity of the cyclone, and the predicted impact of the storm. Regardless of the rating, all cyclones must be treated seriously.

Severe tropical cyclones can be very destructive with winds in excess of 200km/hr. Trees may fall over roads and live power lines may come down. Buildings may be structurally damaged and debris can become airborne, potentially causing injury and further destruction. Heavy rain can cause extensive flooding and landslides. Power, water, sewage and gas services may be interrupted. There could also be road and airport closures, and loss of communications.

Stay informed

During the cyclone season the Bureau of Meteorology issues a daily Tropical Cyclone Outlook providing a probability forecast for potential tropical cyclone development during the coming three days. If a cyclone is starting to develop the Bureau of Meteorology will begin a series of information bulletins and warnings:

Type of Advice	Level of Cyclone activity	Frequency
Tropical Cyclone Outlook	Three day forecast of potential cyclone development	Daily throughout cyclone season Nov-April
Tropical Cyclone Information Bulletin	Cyclone active over Australian waters, no impact on land expected in next 48hrs	Every six hours as long as cyclone exists and gales are not expected to exceed 62km/h over land in next 48hrs
Tropical Cyclone Watch	Gales in excess of 62km/h expected over land in next 48hrs but not within 24hrs	Every six hours as long as the threat exists, increasing in frequency as necessary
Tropical Cyclone Warning	Gales in excess of 62km/h expected over land within 24hrs or is already occurring	Every six hours as long as the threat exists, increasing in frequency as necessary

Useful resources

- » Bureau of Meteorology, Queensland telephone weather services: General Warnings **1900 969 922** (call costs apply)
- » Queensland Land Weather and Flood Warnings **1300 659 219** (low call costs apply)
- » Queensland Tropical Cyclone Warnings **1300 659 212** (low call costs apply)
- » Bureau of Meteorology, Tropical Cyclone Warnings and Tropical Cyclone Forecast Track Map are available at: www.bom.gov.au/cyclone
- » Queensland Government & RACQ Get Ready Queensland website provides information on how to prepare for a cyclone: www.getready.qld.gov.au/natural-disasters/cyclones/
- » Mareeba Shire Council provide Cyclone Information, available at www.msc.qld.gov.au/cyclones

If a Cyclone Watch is issued

- » If you are camping, driving or caravanning – do not stay in your vehicle, tent or caravan - seek shelter in a motel or safe building and secure your car and caravan
- » Check with your accommodation provider for advice and prepare to remain within the building until you are told it is safe to leave and the cyclone has passed
- » Notify family or friends where you will be during the cyclone
- » Ensure your mobile phone is charged as power and phone lines may be down for several days
- » Prepare an emergency survival kit noting that shops may close
- » Fill your vehicle with fuel as petrol stations may not have power after the cyclone
- » Keep tuned in to cyclone advice and warnings.

Emergency Kit

- » At least three days supply of water (10 litres per person)
- » Non-perishable food that can be eaten without cooking, including canned food
- » First aid kit, essential medication, sanitation supplies
- » Baby formula and nappies if required
- » Torch and portable radio with spare batteries
- » Charged up mobile phone
- » Important personal documents (e.g. passport, birth certificates) in a waterproof bag
- » Warm clothes, blanket and towels, sturdy shoes.

Other information sheets are also available at www.getready.qld.gov.au/be-prepared

If a Cyclone Warning is issued

- » Seek shelter in a safe building – it is not safe to be outside at any time during a cyclone
- » Ensure you have your own emergency survival kit and listen to advice and warnings
- » During the cyclone, position yourself in the strongest part of the building (bathroom, internal hallway or cellar) and away from doors, windows and skylights
- » Be aware that the centre or "eye" of a cyclone is characterised by light winds and often clear sky.

Once the cyclone has passed

- » Continue to listen to local radio for official warnings and advice
- » Do not venture outside until advised by authorities that it is safe
- » Beware of fallen live power lines, unsafe structures and trees, polluted water from broken sewage pipes and other hazards
- » Roads may be flooded and access may be cut off, sometimes for days
- » Power and phone lines as well as water supply may not be reinstated for a number of days.

Caravans, trailers and boats

- » Do not stay in your caravan or vehicle during a cyclone – seek shelter in a safe building
- » Ensure you have tie-down materials – short length chain, steel cable or strong rope (800kg breaking strain or minimum 9.5mm diameter) and turnbuckles
- » Ground anchor points may be available in caravan parks or use improvised anchors – large rocks, buried logs or steel star pickets
- » Position your vehicle, van or boat with the narrow end facing prevailing wind, away from trees
- » Tie down your boat and half-fill with water to prevent it becoming airborne
- » If your vehicle is not required for evacuation, leave it coupled to the caravan for extra stability
- » Remove and stow the annex inside the caravan
- » Lower van jacks, apply caravan handbrake and chock the wheels
- » Comprehensive caravan tie down instructions can be found in Emergency Management Australia's "Protecting Caravans and Light Structures from High Winds" brochure that is available online www.pfes.nt.gov.au/Emergency-Service/Publications-and-forms.aspx



BUSHFIRE

The large open savannah grazing lands, scrub and dry woodland areas of the shire may present a risk of bushfire during the dry season (June to December). Bushfires are uncontrolled and can spread rapidly. To reduce the risk of bushfire, landowners, Council and the Rural Fire Service carry out “fuel-reduction burns” during the cooler months of June to August. These are controlled fires to burn off excess vegetation to reduce the fuel available to bushfires later in the dry season. Sugar cane farmers may also be burning their fields under strict guidelines and a Permit to Burn.

The Bureau of Meteorology and the Rural Fire Service both issue daily Fire Danger Ratings for all Queensland districts. Fire Weather Warnings are issued when the Fire Danger Index (FDI) is expected to reach or exceed a certain value. Warnings are broadcast on radio, television and online. The Rural Fire Service provides information about current bushfire incidents and bushfire safety.

- » www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au/Pages/FDR.aspx
- » www.bom.gov.au/qld/forecasts/bushfire.shtml
- » www.bom.gov.au/weather-services/bushfire/about-bushfire-weather.shtml
- » www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au

Fire Danger Rating signs are also located along Queensland roadsides and provide an indication of how severe a bushfire incident may be in current weather conditions. Fires burning in “Low-Moderate” and “High” Fire Danger Rating conditions would be easily controlled and pose little risk. Fires burning in “Very High”, “Severe”, “Extreme” and “Catastrophic” Fire Danger Rating conditions would be difficult to control or uncontrollable, fast moving and pose a threat to people and buildings.

Each of the Fire Danger Ratings has a recommended action that should be followed:

CATASTROPHIC Leaving early is the only option for your survival	EXTREME Leaving early is the only option for your survival
SEVERE Leaving early is the safest option for your survival	VERY HIGH Stay only if your accommodation is well prepared and has a Bushfire Survival Plan
HIGH Know where to get more information and monitor the situation for any changes	LOW-MODERATE Know where to get more information and monitor the situation for any changes

Preparing for travel during the bushfire season

- » Check for current bushfire incidents, warnings and advice
- » Prepare your Bushfire Survival Plan - www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au/BushFire_Safety/Pages/Create-your-bushfire-survival-plan.aspx
- » Avoid travelling in areas where bushfires are burning
- » Be prepared to reassess your travel plans in areas where the Fire Danger Rating is Very High or more severe
- » Be aware that there may be no mobile phone coverage in some remote areas of the Shire
- » Inform a family member or friend where you are going, and keep them informed if your plans change
- » Always carry maps of the area you are entering and know the exit routes
- » Take an emergency kit with you including ten litres water per person and woollen blankets.

When bushfires are known to be burning in the area

- » Tune in to local radio
- » Access social media
 - » www.youtube.com/user/FireRescueQld
 - » www.twitter.com/QldFES
 - » www.facebook.com/QldFireandRescueService
- » If you see a bushfire in the distance, pull over to the side of the road and assess the situation. If it is safe to do so turn around and drive away from the smoke
- » Always follow the directions of police and firefighters if they are present.

If you are caught in the path of a fire

- » Turn headlights and hazard lights on to make the vehicle more visible
- » If visibility is poor, slow down and be aware that there could be people, vehicles or livestock on the road
- » Close windows and outside vents
- » Find a suitable place to park, away from vegetation and with the vehicle orientated towards the oncoming fire front
- » Turn the engine off, unless there is a chance of the battery going flat
- » Call Triple Zero (000) or use the Emergency+ app to tell emergency services where you are
- » Drink water to minimise the risk of dehydration
- » Lie on the floor of the car and cover your body with any available woollen or cotton blankets or towels
- » Once the fire front has passed and the temperature has dropped, exit the car with extreme care.

If you encounter a bushfire while on foot

- » Move to clear or already burnt ground but don't run uphill
- » Stay low and seek shelter behind a log, rocky outcrop or embankment to protect yourself
- » If your clothes catch fire: stop, drop and roll to extinguish the flames.

Camping and caravanning in bushfire-prone areas

- » The Rural Fire Service provides information about current fire bans and restrictions for all local government areas of Queensland as well as the location of "Neighbourhood Safer Places"
www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au/Using_Fire_Outdoors/Pages/Fire-Bans-and-Restrictions.aspx
- » Fire Ban information for National Parks in Queensland can be obtained from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service at www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/experiences/camping/camp-fires.html
- » Be aware of what type of cooking is allowed during a fire ban period.

Can I have a barbecue during a fire ban?

The use of wood-fired barbecues is prohibited. However, depending on the severity of conditions, gas or electric barbecues may be allowed as long as precautions are taken and they are not left unattended.

Can I light a fire for cooking or warmth during a fire ban?

All fires in open areas are prohibited during a fire ban. In National Parks, you will need to check with the Ranger in Charge. It is recommended that all travellers follow the Five Campfire Rules:

Rule 1: Positioning

Campfires should be positioned in cleared areas, where there are no overhanging branches, minimal grass and scrub. Ensure the campfire is a safe distance from tents, and that any other camping equipment is stored well away from it, especially flammable items such as gas cylinders and fuel cans.

Rule 2: Building

Where possible, contain the campfire using a metal fire pit or build a fire pit using large rocks. Ensure the fire stays a controllable size. Be aware that some river rocks may shatter when cooled quickly.

Rule 3: Starting

Start your campfire using an appropriate ignition source and firelighter, paper and small kindling. Never use any kind of flammable liquids (such as petrol) to start a fire.

Rule 4: Extinguishing

Put your campfire out with water when you have finished with it. The water from your washing up could be used to extinguish the campfire.

Rule 5: Monitoring

Never leave fire unattended. If the campfire will be unattended for any period of time, particularly overnight, it should be extinguished.



SHARING THE ROAD

The Mareeba Shire Council takes good care of the vast road network in the Shire, but not all roads are sealed and it is the responsibility of each road user to be careful and considerate. The proportion of road accidents in the Mareeba Shire is relatively low, and we are keen to keep it that way! Please take notice of the following information and tips and enjoy your road trips in the shire.

Drive on the left hand side of the road

Remember to drive on the left hand side of the road throughout Australia. Be especially careful when turning onto roads at T-intersections, roundabouts and other crossings.

Driving on unsealed roads

Outside the main towns of Mareeba Shire there are some unsealed but maintained gravel roads. Unsealed roads have loose and uneven surfaces that make control of the vehicle and braking more difficult. When driving on unsealed roads, decrease your speed and increase the distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front.

Unsealed roads are vulnerable to weather extremes and high traffic use and can create challenging driving conditions. Dry weather can create dusty conditions and limit visibility. In dusty conditions, turn on your lights so other vehicles can see you and increase the distance between yourself and the vehicle in front. If you do not have clear visibility, pull over, stop and wait for the dust to settle. Wet weather can make unsealed roads muddy and slippery so it is important to drive slowly and with due care.

Note that the edges of sealed and unsealed roads may drop off sharply and have a loose or uneven surface. Slow down if you need to move over for oncoming traffic. Accidents have been caused by vehicles exiting to the shoulder of the road too quickly. Be aware that passing traffic may flick up loose gravel and stones, potentially damaging your windscreen. The Queensland Government has provided recommendations for driving in different conditions www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/road-safety/driving-safely/driving-conditions

Road trains and heavy vehicles

Mareeba Shire's economy depends on agriculture and mining and with this comes a high usage of heavy vehicles. These vehicles can be very long and wide and particular care must be taken when sharing the road with heavy vehicles, especially on unsealed roads. Heavy vehicles take longer to brake and accelerate than cars and require more room to turn. It is dangerous for heavy vehicles to move off the sealed road onto a gravel shoulder and it could shower you with stones if it did so. On narrow and single lane roads, be prepared to slow down and move further to the left to allow oncoming heavy vehicles to pass you. Do not brake suddenly if there is a heavy vehicle following you close behind.

Safely overtaking a heavy vehicle

- » Allow enough time and distance to overtake
- » Follow at the recommended distance when preparing to overtake
- » When safe to overtake, indicate, accelerate and overtake without exceeding the speed limit
- » Look out for soft road shoulders, guide posts and wildlife as you overtake
- » Do not cut in front of the truck too closely
- » Do not overtake turning vehicles.

Cyclists

Cycling is a popular form of transport and recreation throughout Mareeba Shire. With established mountain bike tracks and a growing cycle network, we encourage visitors to take the chance to experience the Shire on two wheels. Bicycle riders and motorists have the same rights and responsibilities when using the road. In Queensland, drivers are required to share the road safely by staying wide of the rider;

- » a minimum of 1 metre when passing cyclists in a 60km/hr or less speed zone
- » a minimum of 1.5 metres where the speed limit is over 60km/hr.

Motorists may cross the centre lines of a two way road, if safe, in order to pass a bicycle rider. If it is not safe to pass a cyclist, motorists must slow down and wait until it is safe to pass. A cyclist must be treated like any other vehicle on the road and it is important to be patient and considerate. Queensland Transport has more information about sharing the road with cyclists www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/rules/other/cyclists/index.html

Animals on the road

The Shire is home to an abundance of wildlife both in built up and remote areas. Take special care when driving in areas with wildlife warning signage. If animals are on the road do not brake or swerve suddenly, maintain your lane position, apply brakes in a controlled manner and sound your horn.

Wildlife is most active at dawn, dusk and night time. Wallabies and kangaroos may feed at the side of roads and highways and may jump out in front of your vehicle in an unpredictable way. Scan the sides of the road for animals and if you see any, slow right down.

The remote areas of the Mareeba Shire are cattle country. Cattle stations may be unfenced which means cattle can wander onto the road at any time of the day or night. Drive more slowly in high risk areas and always be alert for cattle. Be prepared to come to a complete stop and wait for large animals to leave the road.

If you are concerned about an animal that has been injured on the road, contact:

- » FNQ Wildlife Rescue on telephone 07 4053 4467 or at www.fnqwildliferescue.org.au/emergencycare.html
- » RSPCA on telephone **1300 ANIMAL** (1800 264 625)

We hope you have a
**safe &
enjoyable**
STAY IN
MAREEBA SHIRE



www.msc.qld.gov.au



Mareeba
SHIRE COUNCIL