

TROPICAL CYCLONES / EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

The extreme weather events of 2011 Summer throughout Queensland, highlighted the need for awareness and vigilance to the risks, particularly relevant to maritime operations.

Generally, Cyclone Season in Australia extends from November to April – it is imperative all mariners prepare for the possibility of one of these cyclones crossing the coast in their region during this period. Regardless of experience, we encourage you to familiarise yourself with procedures and prepare for such events and respond accordingly.

RESPONSIBILITY AND SAFETY WITHIN THE MARINA

Masters and owners have an obligation under the *Transport Operations Marine Safety Act 1994* (S41) at all times to take appropriate precautions for the safety of their vessels, passengers and crew. No initiative taken by marina management or staff at any time will impact on or override the absolute legal responsibility of Masters and owners.

The Regional Harbour Master (Mackay) may give directions in relation to vessels in Abell Point Marina in cyclonic or other extreme weather conditions. Movement of vessels in and out of Abell Point Marina are self managed subject to any directions given by the Regional Harbour Master. Marina management and staff will not interfere with that status.

Vessels are accepted into the Marina, in accordance with Abell Point Marina Standard Terms and Conditions, and are permitted to remain only on the strict understanding that any decision to berth a vessel or take it out of the marina when a tropical cyclone or other extreme weather is forecast, (in the absence of instructions from Emergency Services or APM management or staff), is the sole responsibility of Masters or owners.

Abell Point Marina accepts absolutely no responsibility whatsoever for any consequence that results from such decision.

Once berthed in the marina, all masters, passengers and crew must immediately comply with any directions given by Emergency Services personnel, and/or APM management and staff.

When the design criteria for the marina was established, consideration was given to the likely range of weather conditions that might be experienced in the area and the design and construction of Abell Point was carried out so that the overall structures would withstand expected cyclonic loads while vessels are moored in the berths. Notwithstanding the care taken in establishing design, and construction criteria that were considered to be appropriate, **NO GUARANTEE** can be given that the structures are capable of maintaining their integrity in the complete range of cyclonic conditions, which may occur in the Whitsunday area.

Abell Point Marina is a place of shelter and cannot be guaranteed to be a place of safehaven.

Patrons and guests are required to immediately comply with any directions given by Marina Management or staff or Emergency Services Personnel. In the absence of such directions, the decision to remain on board or leave vessels is entirely the responsibility of the Masters and owners or the persons themselves and Emprja Pty Ltd trading as Abell Point Marina accepts absolutely no responsibility whatsoever for any consequence that results from such decision.

The marina may in the event of an emergency, and at its sole discretion, direct a vessel to locate or relocate. Should the Master or owner of the vessels not be able to move the vessel as directed then the marina retains the right to do so at the risk and expense of the Master or owner.

CYCLONE PREPARATIONS

There are 4 distinct phases allowing for the development of appropriate responses to the threats faced:

1. Extreme weather event **WATCH** – prevention

An extreme weather event watch will be issued when there is a developing event likely to affect the area **within 48 hours**, but not expected to impact the area within 24 hours. This phase is a timely reminder for masters and owners to plan and prepare for the possible development of the event.

2. Extreme weather event **WARNING** – preparedness

An extreme weather event warning will be issued when there is a developing event likely to affect the area **within 24 hours**. This phase is critical for masters and owners to complete all preparations for the possible development of the weather activity.

Vessels in ports, marinas and anchorages will operate under the direction of the Regional Harbour Master (RHM). These directions may include closing the ports, specific directions to larger vessels and seek alternative safe shelter for smaller vessels.

Once the port has been declared closed by RHM, **NO** movement of vessels is permitted.

3. **ACTUAL** Extreme weather event - response

All vessels should be secured and enacted their safety plans completely at this stage of the expected event. It is now too late to consider the safety of your vessel – actions should now be directed towards your own personal safety.

Continued vigilance during the 'eye' of the cyclone is recommended as there may be a period of calm, before damaging wind force resumes once the eye has passed.

4. **AFTER** Extreme weather event - recovery

All vessels are not to leave their cyclone mooring or move until the RHM has assessed the conditions and is satisfied that all danger has passed. Only on declaration by RHM that the port has opened, can any vessel move.

Owners and masters should be aware that nav aids may have been affected by the extreme weather event and exercise extra care and caution when moving vessels.

Regional Harbour Master (Mackay) Contact Information

☎ 49 44 3700 (Business hours); or
☎ 49 56 3489 (Hay Point VTS – 24 hours); or
VHF Channel 18 call sign "VTS Mackay"

Listening watches may also be maintained by Mackay Air Sea Rescue on VHF Channels 16, 21, 67, 6 and 11. HF Channels 2182 / 4125 and 2524 working channel.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECURING VESSELS

1. Mooring lines are to be doubled with secondary lines to alternative cleats. Do not run the secondary lines to the same cleats, as cleat failure will release the vessel from safe mooring. The secondary lines should be secured slightly slack to ensure that they are only required to work if the primary line fails. Ensure lines are of an adequate size to secure the vessel.
2. For Vessels **>24 metres** - mooring lines **should** be secured around marina piles where possible.
3. In extreme conditions vessels have a tendency to ride up onto the pontoons. Please ensure that the vessel is positioned in a manner that if the primary lines fail, that there is **not enough** slack on the secondary lines to allow the vessel to move on to the main or adjacent finger.
4. Ropes and other synthetic fibres such as polyethylene, polypropylene and polyester are all susceptible to UV damage. Ensure any synthetic fibres that have been exposed to UV are adequate and in good order.
5. **Do not use chain to secure the vessel.** Chain has no ability to stretch and will damage your vessel or the marina. Anchors may be lowered but ensure that there is enough slack out to compensate for the rise and fall of the swells, surge and tide. Do not anchor over or onto walkways or piles.
6. Check boat cleats for integrity, generally ropes are stronger than these. If there is any uncertainty, secure a line to one of the main structural members eg mast.
7. Reduce wind loading to a minimum. Remove clears and all deck equipment (lifebuoys, covers etc) Remove all furled sails. If this cannot be done, double wrap them to prevent wind from opening them up.
8. Stow away all loose gear (buckets, fishing gear etc). Deflate and stow inflatable dinghies. Other dinghies should preferably be launched, cleaned out and secured on the inside of A arm, North marina.
9. Ensure that all scuppers are clear and will stay clear.
10. Shore power chords, hoses are to be disconnected from the marina. Ensure gas is turned off.
11. Position adequate spare fenders and lines.
12. Confirm that all bilge pumps are working (first ensure that bilges contain no oil)
13. Radio Communication should be checked on VHF channels 16 then 9.

Post Cyclone

As soon as is practical following a cyclone or severe storm event, Abell Point Marina staff, under the supervision and instruction of either the Director and Infrastructure and Maintenance Manager, will inspect the Marina (waterside + landside) to ascertain if and what damage has occurred. Once the situation has been assessed, further actions or recommendations will be communicated to all vessel owners, tenants and relevant authorities.

**IT IS THE OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THEIR VESSEL IS ADEQUATELY SECURED.
MARINA STAFF WILL ASSIST WHEREVER POSSIBLE.**

**IMPORTANT
YOUR SAFETY IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE AT ALL TIMES.
IN THE EVENT OF A CYCLONE, FLYING DEBRIS CAN BE LETHAL. PERSONS LIVING
ABOARD THEIR VESSEL MUST COMPLY WITH DIRECTIONS FROM MARINA
MANAGEMENT, STAFF & EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONEL IF DIRECTED.**

BOATS CAN BE REPLACED, LIVES CANNOT!