



Media Statement

Building and Energy

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Energy safety regulator shares post-cyclone advice

- **Building and Energy officers providing on-ground support in the Mid West.**
- **Residents urged to be cautious when using generators, gas equipment and other portable appliances.**
- **Avoid DIY repairs to electrical, gas and plumbing infrastructure.**

WA's energy safety regulator is sharing key electrical and gas safety advice for people in cyclone-affected areas who may be using portable equipment or returning to damaged properties.

Building and Energy electrical and gas safety inspectors are also on site in the Mid West to provide support and advice in the wake of Cyclone Seroja's destruction.

WA's Director of Energy Safety, Saj Abdoolakhan, said Building and Energy staff are working closely with electrical network operators – including Western Power and Horizon Power – as well as gas suppliers and local professionals.

Technical building officers from Building and Energy also joined experts from James Cook University's Cyclone Testing Station this week to inspect buildings in the Northampton and Kalbarri areas and examine why and how damage occurred.

The team's findings will be published in coming weeks with a focus on building performance, particularly in locations where tropical cyclones are less common, and if construction standards can be improved to better protect communities.

"It is imperative we all do what we can to help safely restore services in the affected areas and share our expertise to reduce damage and dangers in the future," Mr Abdoolakhan said.

"We also want to ensure that people who have sadly been displaced by this disaster are not exposed to any dangers when using emergency equipment such as generators and LP gas appliances, which can have electrical safety and carbon monoxide risks.

"When returning to their properties, residents should be aware of potential hazards and avoid turning on the power or electrical and gas appliances until they can be checked by a professional.

"Don't do any DIY electrical, gas and plumbing work – always use a licensed electrician, gas fitter or plumber."



Electrical and gas advice from Building and Energy for cyclone-affected residents:

ELECTRICAL

- Don't turn on the power, switch on appliances or go near electrical infrastructure until a licensed electrician or network operator has checked them.
- Don't do any DIY electrical work – it is dangerous and illegal.
- Be aware that water damage may have occurred.
- When using a generator:
 - A changeover switch must be installed by a licensed electrical contractor so the power is not fed back into the electricity grid where it can be hazardous.
 - Do not plug a generator into household power points or connect it to wiring or any part of the electricity network.
 - Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and don't overload the generator or power boards.
 - Look for an Australian Standard mark showing that the generator complies with AS2970.
 - Ensure cords, power boards and equipment are in good condition and in a dry location.
 - Petrol or diesel-powered generators must be used outdoors in a well-ventilated area, away from open windows, to avoid carbon monoxide exposure.

GAS

- Don't turn on the gas supply or activate gas appliances until a licensed gas fitter has checked them.
- Don't do any DIY work on gas installations.
- When returning to a damaged property, do not use matches, lighters or naked flames as there may be a gas leak.
- When using any gas appliance, read the safety warnings, follow the manufacturer's instructions and look for an approval badge to certify that it is authorised for sale in Australia.
- Portable gas-fuelled equipment such as barbecues, cookers, heaters and fridges must always be used outdoors in the open air to avoid potentially lethal exposure to carbon monoxide. They should never be used inside tents, caravans, campervans or other enclosed areas, including indoors at home, even if the doors or windows are open.



- Be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea and confusion. Immediately move to a well-ventilated area and seek medical attention.
- LP gas cylinders must always be kept upright. If a cylinder has to be transported, secure it firmly and outside the vehicle's passenger area and keep the journey as short as possible.
- The test date stamped on the LP cylinder should not have exceeded 10 years.
- Check for a gas leak by applying soapy water to the LP cylinder, hose and appliance connections. Bubbles or a gas smell are signs of a leak.

For more information on electrical and gas safety, contact your network operator (most commonly Western Power or Horizon Power), gas supplier or Building and Energy on 1300 489 099.

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