



NOTE: Gauge diagram is not to scale.

Key heights (in metres) at the Belmore Bridge gauge and consequences for rural areas

Prepare yourself

Some basic measures you can take right now include keeping a list of emergency numbers near the telephone and assembling an emergency kit.

Your emergency kit should contain at all times:

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

When flooding is likely, place in your emergency kit:

- A good supply of required medications
- Any special requirements for babies and the disabled, infirm or elderly
- Strong shoes
- Fresh food and drinks



Every family should make an emergency kit.

How the SES can help you

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

During floods, the SES is responsible for flood information, safety advice, evacuation, rescue and providing essentials to people cut off by flood waters.

FOR EMERGENCY HELP IN FLOODS AND STORMS CALL THE SES ON

132 500

Maitland City SES	02 4932 7444
SES website	www.ses.nsw.gov.au
Maitland City Council (business hours)	02 4934 9700
Bureau of Meteorology website	www.bom.gov.au



Better FloodSafe than Sorry

Protecting yourself from a flood

Rural areas near Maitland in the 1989 flood
Photo courtesy Hunter Catchment Management Trust



Rural Properties in the Maitland Area

Are you at risk from floods?

More than 200 floods have been recorded on the Hunter River since European settlement. Thirteen have been greater than the major flood level of 10.7 metres at the Belmore Bridge gauge. The most severe flood was in 1955 when serious stock, equipment and crop losses were experienced by rural property owners throughout the Maitland council area. Widespread damage to homes, outbuildings and infrastructure also occurred. Even small floods may close roads, isolate rural communities and individual properties and threaten livestock in low-lying paddocks. Whilst few large floods have occurred since, severe floods, some larger than that in 1955, will occur.

Extensive flood mitigation measures including levees, spillways and control banks have been established throughout the Maitland council area. These measures give some protection from smaller floods but cannot protect farms and other rural properties from severe flooding.

Pumps, equipment and livestock in low-lying paddocks may be affected during floods below the minor flood level (6.1 metres at the Belmore Bridge gauge). When rivers in the Lower Hunter begin to rise, the SES will issue livestock and equipment warnings.

During minor floods (6.1 metres at the Belmore Bridge gauge), low-lying areas on the floodplains of the Hunter and Paterson Rivers and Fishery and Wallis Creeks begin to be inundated and properties can be isolated due to local road closures.

Once the minor flood level is expected to be reached, flood warnings will be issued by the Bureau of Meteorology. Advice on what to do to protect yourself and your property will be broadcast in SES Flood Bulletins.

As the flood levels rise, further roads will close and the extent of rural land inundated will increase. Areas affected will include Phoenix Park, Louth Park, Duckenfield, Millers Forest and Rosebrook. Smaller communities in these areas could experience complete isolation. Extreme floods, more severe than the 1955 flood, may cause substantial inundation of areas not previously flooded.



Livestock should be moved early in a flood

Photo courtesy Hunter Catchment Management Trust

Access to high ground during floods may not be available for many people living in rural areas and there is a significant risk of loss of life due to the depth and speed of flood waters. Flooding may last for several days and evacuation may be necessary. Remaining in your home in a serious flood can be dangerous. Even if you are not actually inundated, your home may become a refuge for vermin, snakes and spiders. There may be no water, sewerage, power, telephone or other services for several days. You may be unable to call for help.

Stay informed

Maitland City Council has information on how flooding may affect your property.

The Maitland City SES Unit can give you information on what you can do to reduce the effects of flooding on your family and your property.

A copy of the Maitland City Local Flood Plan is available at Maitland City Council libraries.

How you will be advised of a coming flood

Flood information including generalised flood forecasts, SES livestock and equipment warnings, road closures and advice on evacuations and property protection will be broadcast over local radio stations 2HD AM 1143, KOFM 102.9, 2NUR FM 103.7, NEW-FM 105.3, NX FM 106.9, ABC FM 106.1, ABC AM 1233, Rhema FM 99.7.

When flooding is likely

- Have sufficient non-perishable food, essential medications, fuel and other necessities to last two weeks. Do not forget pet food and stockfeed
- Move livestock and farm equipment and relocate pumps to high ground
- Stack personal possessions and farm equipment on benches and tables, electrical goods on top
- Secure objects that are likely to float and cause damage
- Check sheds and outbuildings and relocate waste containers, chemicals and poisons well above floor level
- Locate important papers, valuables and mementoes and put them in your emergency kit

During a flood

- Avoid driving or walking through flood water – it is the main cause of death during floods as water may be deeper and faster flowing than you think. Crossing flooded bridges and causeways is dangerous and should not be attempted
- Keep listening to a local radio station for further information and advice
- Keep in contact with your neighbours
- Be prepared to evacuate if advised



Flood waters threaten a farm near Maitland in the 1989 flood

Photo courtesy Hunter Catchment Management Trust

If you need to evacuate

- Take your emergency kit with you
- Turn off the electricity, gas and water as you leave
- You will be told which evacuation centre to go to
- Don't leave your pets behind – they may die. Put them on leads or in approved pet containers. Dogs should be muzzled.

When you evacuate

You must leave well before roads to high ground are closed by flood water.

Proceed to the evacuation centre you are asked to go to. Help will be available at the evacuation centre which will be established by the Department of Community Services (DoCS).

Help available from the evacuation centre includes:

- Temporary accommodation
- Financial assistance
- Personal support
- Refreshments and meals
- Clothing and personal needs
- Contacting family and friends

If you are isolated

The SES will coordinate the supply of essential items by high clearance vehicle, boat or helicopter to communities and properties isolated by flood water.

Assistance for animals

NSW Agriculture provides assistance for livestock, companion animals and wildlife during floods. This may include emergency supply or delivery of fodder to stranded livestock and evacuation of pets and livestock.

Recovering from a severe flood

A local recovery centre will be established by DoCS. This centre will be staffed by representatives from a range of government departments and community agencies to help you return to normal living. At the centre you will be able to get advice on everything from insurance to counselling.

In the event of a flood, information will also be available from the DoCS State Disaster Recovery Centre on 1800 018 444.