



PREVENTATIVE STORM MAINTENANCE

INFO SHEET

Building gutters/downpipes/diverters/tank gauze filters/roofs

Each year the diocese receives insurance claims for damage caused from water overflowing from blocked gutters. Often this damage would have been prevented if gutters were cleaned out before the storm season. In some instances insurance claims may be denied or only partly approved due to gutters not being regularly maintained and cleaned. It is therefore recommended to undertake annual or even bi-annual gutter cleaning, depending upon the surrounding areas or build up from nearby trees, is especially important to ensure the drains are ready for the pending onslaught of heavy rain.

Gutters should also be cleaned out for bushfire season as dry tree matter in gutters is a fire hazard.

Remember that accessing the gutters will require the use of ladders. You must assess the risk of falls and either eliminate the risk or minimise the risk to the lowest possible level to prevent injury.

If the areas are not able to be accessed by following the below guidelines, then the parish should use an appropriate approved diocesan contractor from Mesh Assets to undertake the works. If a ladder is used you must ensure:

- Three points of contact at all times (two feet and one hand on the ladder)
- Do not work near power lines and ensure tools do not come in contact with power lines
- Do not touch power lines
- If the distance from the ground to your feet exceeds two metres, you must have a licence to work at height and use appropriate fall restraints or barriers to prevent falls within the workplace.

Due care should be taken when working near power lines.

Reducing damage from falling trees or branches

Storms can cause considerable damage via falling trees or branches which have potential to cause personal injury. Sometimes this damage can be avoided by inspecting trees before the storm season and pruning or removing when necessary.



While some damage caused can be covered by insurance, the policy does not cover the insurance excess, stress, frustration and inconvenience. You often can have trouble contacting the relevant trades people to attend to damage because they are busy clearing and repairing other properties.

Please inspect all trees that could damage property or injure people and take steps now to minimise the risk early and maintain foliage safely.

Wet or waterlogged carpets

The storm season also brings the danger of buildings and contents becoming water damaged.

Taking the action recommended above plus doing any outstanding **roof maintenance** as soon as possible will prevent unnecessary water damage. Please also undertake relevant **grounds work** to protect your property from water run-off damage from heavy rains where this has happened in the past and has not been remedied or you suspect it could happen.

If after taking these precautions you do suffer water damage to carpets, please ensure that commercial carpet cleaners are contacted **immediately** to suck excess water from carpets and take the necessary action to dry carpets and underlays to prevent further damage. Under the terms of the insurance policy it is your responsibility to ensure that after a claimable event happens, every action is taken to minimise the damage caused. These cleaning expenses form part of an insurance claim where the total repair bill is greater than your policy excess.

What to do?

Contact the Asset Manager to arrange for all works to be undertaken and for help with any questions the parish may have about these works.

Remember that the diocese has a quick response team available for parishes to access 24/7 in the event of a building emergency.

In an emergency please contact the **quick response team (Ricki on 0408 043 753 or Jon on 0417 690 336)** who will ensure the building/area is made safe at the earliest opportunity.