

Cyclone Gabrielle

Keeping safe whilst walking along beaches and rivers after a flood event

The effects of large-scale flooding can linger well after the event itself is over. As floodwaters, silt and debris enter the environment and onto our beaches and riverbanks, people are still vulnerable to infectious diseases, chemical hazards, and injuries. This is applicable for people walking along beaches or rivers.

Whilst the water itself poses a risk, so do contaminated objects that have washed ashore. Touching these objects should be avoided and any suspicious containers that could be hazardous needs to be reported to the local council and not touched. Similarly, common keepsakes found on beaches and riverbanks like stones, shells, or wood can be contaminated and need to be left alone for the time being. Areas of newly deposited sand or silt may also be contaminated and should be avoided.

Stay out of the water as there could be

- Human and livestock waste.
- Household and industrial hazardous waste (chemical, biological, and radiological).
- Other contaminants that lead to illness
- Submerged objects, such as logs, ropes, and other debris

How to prevent further injury

- Don't collect rubbish and waste from the shoreline (If you are doing this as part of an official clean up then ensure you have the correct protection gear).
- Report all suspicious containers that maybe hazardous to your regional council. And don't attempt to move or touch any thing suspicious.
- Avoid touching potentially contaminated sticks, rocks, and sand/silt.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap after your walk.
- Ensure any open wounds are covered and kept clean by washing with soap and clean water.
- Clean shoes after going to the beach or river and avoid wearing the same shoes inside your home.
- Beware of logs that may move unexpectedly.
- Remove and wash clothes that may have become contaminated.
- If it is windy and dry, protect yourself from dust by wearing a mask.