



National  
Operational  
Guidance

## Hazard

**Restricted access and egress: Water  
rescue and flooding**



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

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## Hazard - Restricted access and egress: Water rescue and flooding

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### Hazard Knowledge

Transport routes may become impassable as flood waters rise or bridges and transport infrastructure is damaged. Waters affecting access routes that had been used previously may become deeper and prevent their continued use.

Undercutting of river banks or erosion of softer surfaces caused by flood water may make surfaces prone to collapse. Saturation of natural surfaces may increase the likelihood of vehicles or personnel becoming stuck.

Responders should also be aware of the risk that they become isolated by changes in conditions. Access and egress to the site of operations should be monitored constantly.



## Control measure - Access and egress: Flooding

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### Control measure knowledge

Establishing and identifying safe access and egress routes that are unlikely to be affected by the development of the incident will reduce the risk of response times being affected or personnel becoming isolated or stranded.

Personnel should consider the effect of water on vehicles or vessels used to gain access and their appropriateness for the task. The position of air intakes or propulsion style of watercraft may preclude their use in certain water depths.

Personnel should be aware that depth can change rapidly or unexpectedly and pathfinders may be required to establish safe routes.

Marking out hazardous areas and establishing exclusion routes will reduce the risk of entrapment but will require regular reassessment as the water levels change. .

## Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Provide access to appropriate information, mapping and forecasting systems to allow the identification of hazardous areas and development during flood events
- Provide access to appropriate vehicles for the use in flooded areas

## Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Identify safe access and egress to the scene of operations and communicate avoidance routes