

MONSOON SAFETY TIPS DURING A PANDEMIC

BY FAIRFIRST INSURANCE

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HOW COMMON IS FLOODING IN SRI LANKA?

Flooding has become a frequent natural hazard in Sri Lanka. The last few years alone were very critical because the frequency of flooding became an annual occurrence.

As we have already approached the month of May, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it's crucial to take precaution now more than ever before!

HOW DO I SAFEGUARD MYSELF FROM A PANDEMIC DURING FLOODS?

Effective disaster response requires close contact — the opposite of social distancing. However, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 we need to adopt new strategies, so we don't put ourselves and rescue workers at risk.



Adhere to the following emergency measures to protect yourself from both floods and COVID-19.

Prepare an Emergency Kit -

Make sure this kit includes face masks, gloves, sanitizer, water, food, essential medicines and your identity card.

Move to a safe place -

When flood alerts are issued or heavy downpour continues, move to a safe place. It's advised to stay with friends or family rather than public shelters to limit community spread of Coronavirus.

Practice social distancing at all times -

If you are to maintain contact with rescue or healthcare workers, reach out only after wearing a face mask and gloves. If you feel unwell, alert the authorities immediately.

Be cooperative -

If you are directed to a public shelter, speak to the operators to find out what their precautionary measures are and extend your fullest support.

HOW DO I KEEP MY HOME SAFE UNTIL I MOVE TO A SECURE PLACE?

- Turn off the electrical supply.
- Anchor, secure or weigh down items that may float.
- Place glass items in plastic bags to prevent pieces from spreading if breakage occurs.
- Place furniture on beds in a secure manner. After that place personal items on top of it.
- Unplug all unmovable appliances.



EMERGENCY MEASURES AFTER A FLOOD

- Look before you step. During a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, broken bottles and mud.
- Get the service of the PHI or the local authorities to disinfect the property for protection against COVID-19 and other illnesses.
- Do not touch electrical appliances that may have been exposed to the flood.
- Clean everything that has got wet. Flood waters may pick up sewage, harmful chemicals, organisms etc.
- Check your electrical installation. Flood water trapped inside power sockets and switches may cause short-circuiting. Dry them before use.
- Check the insulation resistance of motors and switch gear. If found low, leave it to the electrician to dry, varnish and bake the windings if necessary.
- Consume boiled water for drinking.
- List out all damaged items and inform your Insurer.



HOW TO SAVE MY BUSINESS FROM FLOODS?



During the COVID-19 pandemic situation it may be difficult to act instantly. However, if you're in a flood-prone area, start preparing NOW.

- Put chemicals (insecticides, weed killers, those that give off heat, toxic or flammable gases when exposed to water) in waterproof containers and move to high areas of the building.
- Protect valuable machinery and equipment by enclosing them in waterproof containers and keeping them on pallets.
- Be prepared beforehand in organising curfew passes to a few who could rearrange the store whilst ensuring their health & safety.
- Set-up alternative locations to transfer stocks if the weather and flood situation worsens.
- If you have a rack system, stocks should be raised to upper layers of the racks.
- Build a barrier with sandbags to prevent the inflow of water from possible entry points.

LONG-TERM PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

- Try to purchase light and ready-to-assemble furniture which can be easily carried to upper floors.
- Non-return valves should be installed at all wastewater lines leading to soakage pits, sewage pipes of water closets. Build pits or sumps inside the building and install submersible pumps to drain off any water that's coming in.



IMPORTANT:

- If your vehicle was inundated by the flood while parked, never try to start it, call an authorized agent or a qualified automobile engineer.
- If your car stalls in flood waters, be careful. Water sucked into the intake manifold may be disastrous.
- If you are heading towards a flooded area, seek a safer alternative route to continue your journey.



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