Construction

03.01.11

Cyclone preparedness on worksites>

This information bulletin provides a guide in regard to the cyclone preparedness on worksites in the Northern Territory.

At all times, employers have a responsibility to maintain worksites in such a manner as to ensure workers and others are not put at risk from building materials, building rubble and other potential flying missiles.

However, there are particular actions an employer should carry out in the lead up to, and during the cyclone season.

Cyclone Season

The cyclone season in the Top End commences in November each year and can run through to as late as May.

Legislation

In regard to workplace infrastructure, equipment and materials, employers have a duty under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act* to take all reasonably practicable measures to ensure that workplace infrastructure or equipment, and workplace materials, are safe.

The duty extends, to the extent that may be appropriate in the circumstances, to a person who owns, designs, constructs, manufactures, imports, installs or supplies workplace infrastructure or equipment or any component of workplace infrastructure or equipment or designs, manufactures, imports or supplies workplace materials.

NT WorkSafe also has powers under the *Disasters Act* to enforce clean ups at worksites.

Preparation

Work sites need to be “ready” during cyclone season and to assist with this, NT WorkSafe visits work sites in the greater Darwin area to provide advice on cyclone preparedness and to monitor compliance.

NT WorkSafe has a three stage cyclone preparation plan:

- Advice and information
- Checking work sites for plans and preparation activities
- Implementing cyclone preparation plans

In the first instance, at the commencement of the cyclone season NT WorkSafe Officers attend sites and provide information and advice on clean up requirements and planning for cyclones. Site managers will be asked for a site cyclone plan, including consideration of clean up and securing of materials, action to secure cranes and other equipment and arrangements for staff in the event of a cyclone.

NT WorkSafe is the administrative arm of the Work Health Authority and administers the *Workplace Health and Safety Act*, the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act*, the *Dangerous Goods (Road and Rail Transport) Act*, the *Dangerous Goods Act* and the *Radioactive Ores and Concentrates (Packaging and Transport) Act* and related Regulations on behalf of the Northern Territory Government.

NT WorkSafe Officers will follow up with site managers to check plans and preparations. When a cyclone threatens the area, NT WorkSafe Officers will attend sites and ensure preparations are made quickly and effectively.

Materials which commonly present a risk in high winds include those with a large surface area such as sheets of corrugated iron and ply wood.

Site Cyclone Plans

It is important that responsibility for cyclone preparedness is clearly identified and that those persons allocated responsibilities are appropriately trained. The responsible person should work through checklists which may contain such items as:

- Site inspection
- Securing of materials
- Removal of materials to a safe storage area
- Protection, dismantling of plant
- Electrical Safety - both fixed and construction wiring
- Security of services - eg water, gas mains
- Briefings for staff

Cranes

There are specific requirements when applying for design registration for tower cranes in regard to wind loading and securing/dismantling arrangements in the event of high winds. Further information on this can be found in information bulletins12.02.07 Installation of tower cranes, and 12.02.18 Registration of tower cranes. NT WorkSafe Officers will conduct site visits to ensure these requirements are being complied with.

NT WorkSafe is working with local government, particularly Darwin and Palmerston City Councils, through Northern Territory Emergency Services, to ensure all construction sites, including those in residential areas and light industrial areas are covered.

If failing to take action places others in danger, powers under the *Disasters Act* can be used to achieve compliance.

Further Information

NT Emergency services (NTES)

- Phone: 08 8922 3630
- Internet: www.nt.gov.au/pfes

Bureau of Meteorology

- Phone: 1300 659 211
- Internet: www.bom.gov.au

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