Any flooded road can be deadly. People have died trying to cross flooded waterways.

The size of your vehicle doesn’t matter, nor whether you’ve driven the road a hundred times before – If it’s flooded, forget it.

If you become trapped ...
DON’T enter the water if it can be avoided, and stop others from entering it. Even fully-equipped swiftwater technicians will only enter the water as a last resort.
Stay calm. Phone Triple Zero (000) or ask, or signal to, others to call for your rescue.
Be patient – if you are in an isolated area, rescuers may take some time to reach you. If you are caught in a vehicle, try to stay there until help arrives, or the water level goes down, or a safe escape is possible.
Listen to authorities who are trained professionals and follow their instructions.

If someone else is trapped ...
DON’T enter swiftwater or floodwaters yourself – the best way to help is to report to emergency services and continue to monitor the person.
DON’T tie a rope to yourself as you could be pulled in too; find a solid structure to use as an anchor.
Try to use a tree branch, rope or similar item to reach the person if possible, but use extreme caution as fast-flowing water can force the trapped person further under.

What’s the real cost of ignoring a ‘road closed’ sign?

Just a small amount of floodwater can wash your vehicle away.


Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
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Travelling in flood-prone areas

Summer months bring rain, cyclones and unstable weather to Queensland. Plan ahead so you’re not caught out by quickly-changing conditions.

Monitor local media and speak to the locals so you know what conditions are forecast and what the local effects might be.

Avoid driving in potentially bad weather.

Even after heavy rain has cleared, keep an eye on your surroundings – for instance, whitewater falls high up on inland escarpments could mean your dry coastal road becomes cut by rising creeks within hours.

If you’re on holiday, or even just making a day trip, take into account potential rises in water levels and plan your travel so you don’t become stranded.

Take note of warning signs that tell of local dangers.

Carry maps, and remember the names of local roads and landmarks, in case you need to tell rescuers where you are. Make sure you have fresh batteries in torches, portable radios and mobile phones, and carry an up-to-date first aid kit.

Don’t drive into floodwater

Many people who drown or need rescuing have either deliberately driven into floodwater or taken their vehicle into a potentially dangerous situation.

Drivers should be aware of causeways or stormwater run-off areas. You should avoid these areas in your neighbourhood or places you are visiting. Take care choosing somewhere to park, as well.

Never drive through floodwaters – find an alternative route or wait until the water level drops.

Water deeper than the bottom of your car door is enough to float your vehicle away, or splash the engine and cause it to stall.

Even gently-moving floodwater can wash away the road surface beneath. Speeding through water can cause loss of traction and aquaplaning, and can increase the risk of stalling the engine.

What you can do:

• Take heed of road closure signage.
• Do not remove a ‘road closed’ sign.
• Know that the water may be deeper than you think.
• Know that submerged objects can damage your vehicle.
• Plan your trips and routes: up-to-date information on the road network including incidents and closures is available by phoning 13 19 40 or visiting the RACQ or www.131940.qld.gov.au websites.
• Plan alternative routes.
• Pack food and drinks to sit it out.
• Check the weather forecast before leaving.
• Call Triple Zero (000) and ask for the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services if you are caught, or you see someone caught, in a flooded waterway.

Don’t walk or play in floodwater

Floodwater hides all sorts of dangers, including slippery surfaces, uneven ground, strong currents, fences, rocks, long grass and weeds, tree branches, vehicles, sharp objects, chemicals, sewage and electrical current.

In some situations, the force of fast-flowing water can be multiplied many times. Things like metal drains and grilles beneath the water can generate very strong suction and currents, and can quickly trap a person.

Even near the water’s edge, the currents, slope of the ground, or its slippery surface, can cause a person to lose their footing. Everyone should stay three metres back from the waterline.

Keep a close eye on children.

Water at ankle height can cause you to lose your footing and, once you have slipped and fallen, it may be very hard – even impossible – to get back out.

Storm drains

In urban areas, very large volumes of fast-flowing water can rise and fall in minutes, rapidly trapping, or sucking under, anyone who gets too close to drains, pipes or grilles.

These are not a place to play, nor even to stand and watch, as they are slippery, have very strong pulling power, and it can be very hard to get out of them.