



Typhoon- What is a typhoon?



A **Pacific typhoon** or **tropical storm** is a tropical cyclone that forms in the northwestern Pacific Ocean. The basin is demarcated within the Pacific Ocean from Asia, north of the equator, and west of the International Date Line. Storms from the Eastern and Central Pacific crossing the date line are re-designated as typhoons; prior to entering the basin they are respectively called "typhoons" and "severe tropical cyclones". This basin features the strongest cyclones on record.

Typhoon winds blow in a large spiral around a relative calm centre known as the "eye." **The "eye" is generally 30 to 50 km wide, and the storm may extend outward 650 km.**

A single typhoon can last for more than 2 weeks over open waters and can run a path across the entire length of the eastern seaboard. Typhoon seasons include the entirety of the calendar year. Most storms tend to form between May and November, although they can occur at other times of the year as well.

As a typhoon approaches, the skies will begin to darken and winds will grow in strength. As a typhoon nears land, it can bring torrential rains, high winds, and storm surges. Prolonged and excessive rain can cause flooding within the shortest time and clog the drainage system.

Advice for the period before, during, and after a typhoon

Preparation BEFORE the typhoon:

- Find out where the most secure place in your house/apartment is or the closest shelter outside of the house.
- Check your house/apartment and surroundings, in order to prevent important damage (e.g. whether all the windows are water proof, where water might occur, etc.).
- Check your tools and materials used to secure buildings against wind gusts and flooding.
- Should your house/apartment be located in a flood risk zone, the purchase of sandbags should be considered.
- Check your drains for any blockages.
- Make sure the gas and water tanks are securely fastened, as well as the TV or parasol antennas, the solar boiler, air-conditioning compressors and/or all other objects found on the roof or around the house/apartment.
- Park your automobile far away from trees or electricity posts. Should your car be parked in an underground parking area, relocate it on time.
- Listen regularly to the official bulletins (radio, TV, Internet) and follow their instructions.
- Prepare your automobile by filling up its fuel tank, and by checking batteries, lights, and brakes, etc.
- Keep all important documents such as passport, ID-cards, insurance policies, property titles, etc., as well as a currency reserve on hand.
- Look through the house pharmacy and replenish whatever medicines might be missing.
- Please make sure to inform the Embassy of all changes in address or place of residence.

DURING the typhoon:

- Stay inside the house/apartment or shelter.
- Keep windows and doors closed and stay away from windows and doors, especially if these are made of glass.
- Close curtains, shutters, blinds etc. in order to protect yourself from shattering windows.
- Pull all the plugs of electrical appliances, even if the electricity still happens to be working. Interrupt the house's/ apartment's electricity supply by turning it off in the external fuse box, as water might penetrate and cause a short circuit.
- Disconnect gas and water supply as well.
- Do not leave the safety of your house or shelter unless necessary, even if you hear windows breaking or other powerful noises.
- Do leave your house if you feel insecure, if large masses of water enter the house and/or if there is no safe place in the house.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls so as not to overcharge the phone system.

AFTER the typhoon:

- Wait until the danger has passed.
- Do not ingest food which might have come into contact with contaminated water.
- Do not cross any flooded street if the water is higher than 1/3 of your leg; there could be underwater streams. Beware of open manholes and pits, etc.
- Do not touch any electrical cables and do not try to right electricity posts or trees; this could put you in danger of death.
- Inform the Embassy should you have knowledge of injured or deceased Swiss nationals.

Objects, food, precautionary measures (list is not final)

First-Aid articles

- Alcohol, bandages and band-aid, iodine, cotton swabs, fever thermometer, gauze, scissors
- Medication prescribed by a doctor
- Nose, ear, and eye-drops, medication against fever, diarrhoea, and stomach acidity

Tools, personal hygiene material, clothes

- Pocket lamp with extra batteries, candles and matches
- A pick, shovel, bush knife, pickaxe, hammer, knife, pincers, screwdriver, manual can-opener
- Scrubber, water bucket, broom
- Battery-powered radio, cellular telephone with charged batteries
- Soap, WC-paper, wash-cloth, kitchen towels, baby toiletries if necessary, toothpaste and toothbrush
- Bed-sheets, wool blankets, cushions, towels
- Raincoats, shoes, boots and clothes, as well as underwear for at least 3 days.

Food

- Bottled drinking water (approx. 5 litres per person daily)
- Powdered milk, chocolate, biscuits, crackers, sugar, coffee
- Canned vegetables, oil sardines, canned meat, etc. (beware that cooking possibility might be limited)
- Baby and toddler food
- Food not requiring refrigeration
- Disposable plates and cups, a pan with special layering for boiling water in it

Precautions to be observed concerning the use of water

When using water after a typhoon, one should distinguish clearly between water to be used, and drinking water. Only water kept in closed plastic containers before the typhoon may be used as drinking water. After the typhoon, no water from the water pipes may be drunk, unless it has previously been prepared (purified). To clean the water to get potable quality, the following method may be used if no chemical purifying methods are at disposal: Boil water in the especially layered pan for 10 minutes. After this, the water should be allowed to stand another 30 minutes before drinking it.

Follow the weather forecast! Do not go unnecessarily into risk areas. Whenever possible, stay home or in the office during a typhoon. Do not unnecessarily expose your life at risk: Think - act - and survive!

In following links you will find more information about typhoons and the weather situation in the pacific:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical_cyclone

<http://www.tropicalstormrisk.com/>

<http://www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph>