**MEDIA RELEASE**

**18 February 2018**

**Time to plan ahead as Gita gears towards NZ**

Now is a good time to think ahead about how Cyclone Gita might impact you and your household, and plan accordingly, the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management is advising the public.

Cyclone Gita is expected to bring heavy rain and high winds when it hits New Zealand. MetService is predicting its probable track is across central NZ or the top of the South Island on Tuesday and Wednesday.

“Cyclone Gita has the potential to pack a punch and cause a lot of disruption. Now is the perfect time to plan ahead,” says the Ministry’s Director, Sarah Stuart-Black.

“This means preparing for the possibility of power cuts, water outages and roadclosures that could leave you or your loved ones stranded. It’s also a good idea to have a grab bag ready in case you need to evacuate. If you don’t have a household emergency plan, now’s the time to sit down with your family or flatmates and get it done.”

“Stay safe by staying out of harm’s way. Try and run any important errands before the weather hits so you won’t need to do any non-essential travel in treacherous conditions, and make sure you secure outdoor furniture well in advance.”

Mrs Stuart-Black says the Ministry will be monitoring the situation and is ready to coordinate assistance if it is needed.

Storm tips:

* Secure, or move inside, anything that could cause damage in strong winds
* Close windows and doors, close curtains to prevent injury from breaking windows
* Stay inside and bring your pets inside. If you have to leave, take them with you
* Listen to the radio and follow the instructions of emergency services
* Avoid non-essential travel during severe weather, and never drive through floodwaters

For more information on what to do before, during and after a storm or flood – and to make a household emergency plan – visit [www.happens.nz](http://www.happens.nz/#_blank)

Local Civil Defence information will be issued by your local Civil Defence Emergency Management Group. To find yours, visit [www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group/](https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group/#_blank)

For the latest weather information, visit [www.metservice.com](http://www.metservice.com)

**In an emergency, always call 111.**

ENDS

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