

Question on Notice No 1773, Thursday, 25 November 2004

**Mr SHINE** asked the Minister for Emergency Services (Mr Cummins) - As we are heading back into summer and as many residents will be going on extended trips, what advice does he have for them when travelling?

**Mr CUMMINS:**

I thank the Member for his Question and congratulate him for his ongoing strong support for emergency services within his electorate. The Department of Emergency Services (DES) is committed to ensuring that people travelling in Queensland are as safe as possible. Under the Community Ambulance Cover, permanent Queensland residents travelling interstate are covered for the cost of authorised ambulance services no matter where they travel in Australia. There are a number of proactive measures the community can take to prepare for this summer. Undertaking a practical First Aid training course will equip members of the community with the necessary knowledge and skill to attend to minor holiday injuries. A well-stocked first aid kit for the home, car and boat will ensure the necessary equipment is close at hand. Furthermore, travellers are encouraged to carry an emergency kit with them or in their car. At a minimum, this should contain tinned food, a torch and a portable radio. It is important to switch off electricity supplies when people go on holidays and consider placing smoke alarms in caravans. Try to stay out of the sun, wear a hat, apply sunscreen, drink plenty of water and wear lightweight, light coloured clothing. Do not leave children or pets in a parked vehicle for extended periods. Regularly check on elderly family members, friends and neighbours. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) will be highlighting a range of safety messages during the Christmas-New Year holiday period. Much of this will be part of a multi-agency safety initiative which also includes representatives from the Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Transport and the RACQ. The joint working groups will focus on road safety issues, especially the extent of injuries caused by road accidents. During the Summer months, Queensland is particularly prone to natural events such as bush fires, floods, storms and cyclones. Therefore, it is very important that people are aware of the possible situations they may face while travelling, and stay informed of changing weather and road conditions.

To assist in this, travellers should tune in to local radio stations where possible. Information provided by these stations includes:

- Weather conditions, including imminent storms;
- Changed road conditions, including road closures and detours;
- Contact numbers for further advice; and
- The Standard Emergency Warning Signal – an alert signal to draw the attention of listeners to an emergency warning.

Drivers are also advised to contact the RACQ to obtain current maps and up-to-date information on road conditions.

If, when travelling or holidaying, people are caught in severe weather conditions, they should follow all instructions from emergency services personnel and local authorities, and be ready to evacuate if necessary. In particular, drivers should be aware of the dangers of driving through flood waters.

DES is currently undertaking a State-wide advertising campaign for the 2004/2005 disaster season. This year's campaign, which uses radio and press advertisements, provides information to residents on flood, storm, storm surge and cyclone preparedness and action. Placements will appear in Bundaberg, Cairns, Gladstone, Mackay, Mt Isa, Townsville, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Gympie, Ipswich, Rockhampton, Warwick; and will run through to 30 January 2005.

For further information on the above services, please contact the Department of Emergency Services Community Contact Centre on telephone number 1300 369 003.

It is also important to remember that in the event of an emergency to call Triple Zero (000).

Further information can also be sourced from the Department of Transport on 13 23 80, who also has a series of safety tips and ideas for travelling on extended trips.

It is important that Queenslanders don't assume they are immune from danger simply because they are on holidays. By taking precautions we can avoid tragedy and safely enjoy the Christmas season.