

Sandbags play a crucial role in flood control. When placed correctly, sandbags can reduce the impact of flooding on your home or business. But once they've served their purpose, how do you dispose of them so you prevent environmental damage and keep the community safe?

NOTE: Don't get rid of sandbags too soon! Always check local conditions first. Riverine flooding might follow flash flooding or storm surge flooding. Also, flooding may return due to saturated ground and catchments.

Sandbags after a cyclone or flood

After a flood or a cyclone, sandbags will be *contaminated, clean, or unused*.

- **Contaminated** means the sandbags were in contact with floodwater. Floodwater often contains sewage or chemicals, and that contamination stays in the sand.
- **Clean** means the sandbags only came into contact with clean rain or saltwater.
- **Unused** means the sandbags never came into contact with water of any kind and are still dry.

Disposal of contaminated sandbags

Contaminated sandbags pose a significant threat to health. Once you're ready to get rid of contaminated sandbags, follow this advice:

- **Check with your local council.** Some local councils have detailed locations for the disposal of contaminated sandbags and further advice on safely disposing of them. Here's a list of links to get started.
Brisbane: [Sandbags | Brisbane City Council](#)
Logan: [Sandbags – Logan City Council](#)
Ipswich: [FAQ for Sandbags : Ipswich City Council](#)
Gold Coast: [Contact us | City of Gold Coast](#)
Sunshine Coast: [Sandbagging | Sunshine Coast Council](#)
Moreton Bay: [Sandbag instructions - City of Moreton Bay](#)
- **Wear sturdy gloves when handling wet sandbags** as they can contain chemicals, waste, and disease.
- **Never reuse contaminated sandbags.** Seal in plastic and take them to a designated waste facility advised by local council.

Disposal of sandbags exposed to clean rain or salt water

If your sandbags only came into contact with clean rain or saltwater, you'll still want to empty the sandbags as soon as you can to prevent mould and other issues from damp.

- **Empty the sandbags** into your garden or scatter the sand over grass, where it won't wash away into stormwater drains.
- **Put wet empty sandbags** in your bin (unless you plan on saving them – see below).
- **Do not dump into drains** or waterways.
- **Do not dump sand on beaches.** This can harm the environment.

Storage of sandbags

After a cyclone or flood, consider storing clean, empty, dry sandbags so they can be used again.

- **Let sandbags dry fully** before storing.
- **Store the bags in a dry place** out of the sun.
- **Avoid storing sandbags when wet.** Wet or damp sandbags can rot.
- A sandbag made of polypropylene will last longer in storage longer than a hessian sandbag.

Sandbags are useful tools for keeping homes and businesses safe from storm surges and floods, but they're not something easy to keep around. Dispose of your sand and sandbags carefully to protect you, your community, and the environment.