



Republic of Mauritius

**Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms**

**PROTOCOL**  
**ON**  
**HEAVY/TORRENTIAL RAIN AND TROPICAL STORMS / CYCLONES**  
**FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR**



**January 2025**

## **DISCLAIMER**

This Protocol serves as guidelines for providing practical advice to Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Organisations in times of heavy rain/localised heavy rain/torrential rain/cyclone warnings in force in the Republic of Mauritius. No civil or criminal liability shall be attached to any person and/or organisation in the execution of their roles, responsibilities and actions associated with this Protocol.

The Protocol may be subject to amendments in light of changing circumstances.

## ABBREVIATIONS

CHRC	-	Cyclone and Heavy Rainfall Committee
HR	-	Human Resources
MMS	-	Mauritius Meteorological Services
MPSAR	-	Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
NCC	-	National Crisis Committee
NDRRMC	-	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre
NEOC	-	National Emergency Operations Command
NLTA	-	National Land Transport Authority
O/C	-	Officer-in-Charge

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. OBJECTIVE .....	1
3. APPLICABILITY .....	1
4. REQUIREMENTS.....	2
4.1 IMPLEMENTATION .....	4
5. ENFORCEMENT OF PROTOCOL.....	6
6. HEAVY RAIN AND TORRENTIAL RAIN WARNING: WORK ARRANGEMENTS.....	7
7. LOCALISED HEAVY RAIN.....	9
8. CYCLONE WARNING SYSTEM: WORK ARRANGEMENTS .....	10
9. GENERAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS.....	11
10. SPECIAL PROVISIONS .....	11
11. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS BY MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS AND PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH HEAVY RAIN/LOCALISED HEAVY RAIN/TORRENTIAL RAIN .....	12
12. MAIN CONTACT POINTS.....	13
ANNEX I.....	14
ANNEX II.....	15

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Mauritius, by virtue of its topography, is usually affected by heavy rain/localised heavy rain/torrential rain and tropical storms/tropical cyclones during the summer months. Heavy rain/torrential rain may not always be generalised throughout the island. Localised heavy rain is also a common feature and has proved to be of serious concern.
- 1.2 Heavy rain/localised heavy rain/torrential rain may cause flash floods, water accumulations, overflow of watercourses (rivulets, streams and rivers) and landslides, thus resulting in major obstructions, severe traffic and socio-economic disruptions, as well as, even threats to life and infrastructure. Such situations, very often, prevent people to have access to their sites of work.
- 1.3 The Protocol on Heavy Rainfall in the Public Sector was first developed in 2017. Being given that warnings, such as torrential rain warnings and cyclone warnings, were not covered under the Protocol, and to be in line with the Mauritius Meteorological Services (Warnings) Regulations 2023, the existing Protocol has been reviewed.

## 2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 This Protocol provides practical guidance on work arrangements in times of heavy rain/localised heavy rain/torrential rain/and tropical storms/cyclones and aims at ensuring the safety of employees and service continuity, as far as practicable. It has a three-pronged objective, which is to:
  - (i) provide as much information as possible to public sector organisations during these bad weather conditions;
  - (ii) ensure that each public sector employee is aware of the basic precautions and safety measures to be taken during these weather conditions to protect oneself and his/her co-workers and family; and
  - (iii) ensure that Supervising Officers take full responsibility of these provisions and ensure that their employees are safe and secure at their workplaces at all times.

## 3. APPLICABILITY

The Protocol is applicable to employees of Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Organisations, **except** for those:

- (i) in the essential and emergency services;
- (ii) operating on roster, shift and staggered hours;
- (iii) whose services are required in connection with extreme weather conditions; and
- (iv) where a Protocol already exists.

As regards organisations operating on roster, shift and staggered hours, **other than those of the essential and emergency services**, Supervising Officers may consider drawing up a Protocol and work arrangements (including evacuation procedures), along the same lines to meet their specific needs.

#### **4. REQUIREMENTS**

##### **(a) For the proper implementation of the Protocol:**

- (i) a Cyclone and Heavy Rainfall Committee (CHRC) should be set up at the level of each Ministry/Department/Public Sector Organisation, to be chaired by the Supervising Officer or a designated officer;
- (ii) a CHRC Desk Officer should be designated by the Supervising Officer;
- (iii) a list of employees be drawn up and kept updated:
  - a) region wise;
  - b) pregnant women and those with mobility/disability issues; and
  - c) by residential address, starting with those who live farthest from the place of work to those living nearby and those living in flood-prone areas,
- (iv) an updated list of flood-prone areas be kept readily available;
- (v) release arrangements for employees be prepared and kept ready; and
- (vi) a list of contact persons and organisations be drawn up and updated.

##### **(b) The composition and responsibilities of the CHRC are as follows:**

- I. The CHRC will be chaired by the Supervising Officer or a senior officer designated by the latter and comprise, *inter-alia*, an officer of the Ministry/Department/Public Sector Organisation responsible for Safety and Health and the Officer-in-Charge (O/C) of the Human Resource (HR) section.
- II. The CHRC will be responsible for such actions as deemed appropriate for the smooth release, evacuation and safety of employees.
- III. When a Heavy Rain /Torrential Rain /Cyclone Warning is issued by the Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS), the CHRC should:
  - (i) convene an urgent meeting to take stock of the prevailing situation;
  - (ii) keep watch on the evolution of the situation and associated risks;
  - (iii) take stock of the number of employees having attended duty in their respective organisations; and

- (iv) decide on such arrangements/course of action, as appropriate, to facilitate implementation of the Protocol throughout the Ministry/Department/Public Sector Organisation, including outstations and divisions.

**(c) The Desk Officer shall have the following main responsibilities:**

- (i) to be the contact point for employees and Heads of units/sections/divisions/outstations;
- (ii) to disseminate information from the CHRC to Heads of units/sections/divisions/outstations;
- (iii) to provide relevant information to the CHRC, as and when required.
- (iv) to act as Liaison Officer with the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms (MPSAR), whenever necessary;
- (v) to ensure that the required lists are updated; and
- (vi) to forward situation reports to the National Emergency Operations Command (NEOC), if required.

**(d) The O/C, HR Section of Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Organisations shall have the following main responsibilities:**

- (i) to draw up the required lists mentioned at paragraph 4(a) above and keep same updated;
- (ii) to compile information on the number of employees who attended duty/number of absences, for submission to the Desk Officer;
- (iii) to provide such other information to the Desk Officer, as may be required; and
- (iv) to work in close collaboration with the CHRC and the Desk Officer on matters relating to arrangements for release of staff.

**(e) The officer responsible for safety and health in the Ministry/Department and Public Sector Organisations shall have the following main responsibilities:**

- (i) to report on any safety and health issue identified after an assessment of the prevailing situation. The assistance of the Safety and Health Officer may be solicited for the assessment, whenever required;
- (ii) to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the safety of all employees;
- (iii) to ensure that all necessary safety rules, instructions and procedures are strictly adhered to; and
- (iv) to work in close collaboration with the CHRC on matters relating to safety and health of officers in connection with heavy rain/torrential rain and tropical storms/cyclones.



## 4.1 IMPLEMENTATION

### (a) Heavy Rain Watch

As a general rule, when a “Heavy Rain Watch” is issued by the MMS, a normal working day for employees is maintained, except where there is an official communication stating otherwise.

### (b) Heavy Rain Warning

Upon issue of a “Heavy Rain Warning” by the MMS, employees should report for duty, by taking necessary precautions for their own safety and security. However, employees, except those in essential and emergency services, should not report for duty in the event a communiqué is issued by the relevant authority, **before working hours**, to that effect.

In case there is an official communication emanating from a relevant authority during working hours for the release of employees:

- (i) the MPSAR will communicate with Ministries/Departments/Public Sector Organisations, either through a Circular Letter/email/phone/SMS-based platform;
- (ii) Supervising Officers should, in line with the established arrangements, take immediate necessary actions to inform their employees for removal of their vehicles from restricted areas/location as determined in the communiqué of the Police/National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre/National Emergency Operations Command;
- (iii) employees should imperatively await instructions from their respective Supervising Officers before leaving their workplace; and
- (iv) Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Organisations should consider the staggered release of employees, by giving due consideration to the needs of individual employees and their release in stages, according to established arrangements.

### (c) Torrential Rain Warning

According to the MMS, a torrential rain warning for Mauritius and Rodrigues is issued following observations indicating that accumulated rain has reached 100 millimetres in a given region or is likely to reach 100 millimetres in a given region in the ensuing hour, and the rain is expected to continue.

Torrential rain may cause flash floods in any locality, while the most likely effect is water accumulation in flood-prone areas. Heavy rain may also be responsible for the overflow of rivulets and streams or even rivers, leading to riverine flooding. Such floods usually occur downstream where it may not be



necessarily raining heavily. Another hazard in the aftermath of heavy rain is landslide, which can occur on hill or mountain slopes and which are usually considered as high-risk areas.

In the event the MMS issues a “Torrential Rain Warning”, it is the direct responsibility of Supervising Officers of Ministries/ Departments and Public Sector Organisations to immediately activate the CHRC and closely monitor the situation. Work arrangements should be made in accordance with instructions issued by the relevant authority in the best interest of the service and employees.

**4.1.1** In case a communiqué is issued **during working hours** for the release of employees:

- (i) the MPSAR will inform Ministries/Departments/Public Sector Organisations through Circular Letter/email/phone/SMS-based platform;
- (ii) Supervising Officers should immediately take necessary actions, on the basis of established arrangements, for the staggered release of their employees; and
- (iii) employees should await instructions from the Supervising Officer of their respective Ministry/Department/Public Sector Organisation before leaving their workplace.

**4.1.2** To ensure the safety of employees:

- (i) pregnant women and employees with mobility issues should be allowed to leave on a priority basis;
- (ii) employees who have to pick up their underage children from kindergartens or nurseries should be released first; and
- (iii) employees who reside or work in affected areas should be allowed to leave earlier;
- (iv) being given that certain transport services might cease to operate in adverse weather conditions, employees who rely on such transport facilities should also be given priority to leave;
- (v) for all other employees, arrangements should be made for their release in stages, according to their travelling distances.

**Ministries/Departments/Public Sector Organisations should liaise with the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA) to ensure availability of public transport.**

- 4.1.3** To ensure that the staggered release of employees is effected in an orderly manner, the CHRC should work out the release arrangements for the attention of all employees and have them reviewed on a regular basis. Release of employees in a phased manner will help to ensure their safety and ease traffic congestion.

## **5. ENFORCEMENT OF PROTOCOL**

**This Protocol should be scrupulously observed after the issue of a Heavy Rain/Torrential Rain/Cyclone Warning by the MMS and after the decision/instructions from the National Crisis Committee (NCC), upon recommendation from the NEOC before, during and after working hours.**

## 6. HEAVY RAIN AND TORRENTIAL RAIN WARNING: WORK ARRANGEMENTS

The following arrangements should apply in case of a heavy rain/torrential rain warning is in force.

S/N	Scenario/ Circumstances	Duty of Employer/ Employee	Remarks
(a)	Warning issued before working hours and no communiqué issued regarding reporting for duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All employees should report for duty.</li> <li>Employees should inform their employers as soon as practicable, in case they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> <li>Supervisors of employees working outdoors should ensure that these employees do not proceed on site and remain in a safe place. They should start work only when weather conditions so permit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees are advised to be suitably and adequately equipped with their own protective items such as umbrella, raincoat etc.</li> <li>Employees who do not report for duty should cover their absence by one day leave.</li> <li>Employees should ensure their own safety.</li> </ul>
(b) (i)	A warning is in force before working hours and a communiqué is issued <b>not</b> to report for duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees should <b>not</b> report for duty.</li> <li>Employees who are already on their way to work should return home or to a safe place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees should ensure their own safety.</li> <li>Special leave to be granted on that day.</li> <li>Work from home to be operational, as far as possible and practicable.</li> </ul>
(ii)	Warning is waived <b>before 11 00hrs.</b>	All employees should report for work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees should apply for half day leave in case they do not report for duty.</li> <li>Management should give due consideration for practical difficulties encountered by employees while reporting for duty. Cases reported to the employer should be dealt with on a case-to-case basis.</li> </ul>
(iii)	Warning is waived <b>after 11 00hrs.</b>	Employees should not report for duty, unless exigencies of the service so require.	Full day special leave to be granted to employees.

## HEAVY RAIN AND TORRENTIAL RAIN WARNING: WORK ARRANGEMENTS

The following arrangements should apply in case of a heavy rain /torrential rain warning is in force.

(c)	A warning is announced during working hours and communiqué to release employees <b>not</b> yet issued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees working indoors should continue their work.</li> <li>• Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should promptly arrange for the employees to stop work and take shelter in a safe place.</li> </ul>	Employees should observe the necessary safety precautions and await for instructions, if any.
(d)	A warning is announced during working hours and a communiqué is issued to release employees <b>before 11 00hrs.</b>	Supervising Officers should arrange for the staggered release of employees in an orderly manner, as stated at paragraph 4.1.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special leave to employees. Employees should observe the necessary safety precautions and await for instructions, if any.</li> </ul>
(e)	A warning is announced during working hours and a communiqué is issued to release employees after 11 00hrs.	Supervising Officers should arrange for the staggered release of employees in an orderly manner, as stated at paragraph 4.1.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release employees who are already on site of work.</li> <li>• Half day leave to be reckoned for those who did not turn up for duty/did not register their attendance in the event a communiqué is issued by noon.</li> <li>• One day leave to be reckoned for those who did not turn up for duty/did not register their attendance in the event a communiqué is issued after noon.</li> <li>• Employees should observe the necessary safety precautions and await for instructions, if any.</li> </ul>
(f)	Warning still in force up to end of normal working hours and no communiqué issued for release of employees.	Normal working hours maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees to take necessary precautions for their own safety.</li> </ul>

6.1 Employees, who have difficulties in reporting for duty on time, should inform their organisation immediately /as soon as possible. Due consideration should be given to genuine difficulties encountered by employees who are unable to report for duty **after heavy rain/torrential rain warning is waived.**

## 7. LOCALISED HEAVY RAIN

7.1 In case of localised heavy rain, CHRCs of Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Organisations should:

- (i) convene an urgent meeting to take stock of the situation;
- (ii) follow up closely with the NEOC/NCC on developments;
- (iii) keep updated of weather situations, especially in flood-prone areas;
- (iv) give special consideration to employees working in flood-prone areas regarding accessibility to and from the workplace, especially where there are high concentration of offices, e.g., Port Louis and Ebene;
- (v) take such decision, in consultation with the NEOC/NCC and the Supervising Officer concerned, for the release of employees living in **affected areas**;
- (vi) liaise with the NLTA regarding availability of public transport; and
- (vii) give appropriate instructions for the safety and release of employees.

### 7.2 Work Arrangements

In case of localised heavy rain, management should be flexible and take into account the prevailing situation such as traffic conditions and difficulties encountered by employees residing in affected regions. In such cases, the following should apply:

(i) **Attending duty in the morning:**

**A. Employees may be allowed to attend duty up to 10 00 hours**

**B. Where employees could not attend duty by 10 00 hours**

The Supervising Officer may, subject to him/her being fully satisfied that reaching office after 10 00 hours was beyond the employee's control and was due to the prevailing weather condition, decide that genuine/valid cases of late arrivals should not be considered as lateness; and

(ii) **Leaving Office**

Supervising Officers should exercise their discretion, on the basis of findings of the CHRC, and in consultation with the NEOC/NCC and the NLTA, to release employees living in affected areas to facilitate them in reaching home under safe conditions, based on their personal circumstances, the weather and road traffic conditions.

## 8. CYCLONE WARNING SYSTEM: WORK ARRANGEMENTS

- 8.1 In the event a tropical depression, a moderate tropical storm, a severe tropical storm, a tropical cyclone, an intense tropical cyclone or a very intense tropical cyclone is likely to affect the Island of Mauritius or Rodrigues, the MMS will issue: -

### Cyclone Warning Class I and Class II

- **Normal Working Day** - Employees should take all necessary precautions and be on the constant lookout regarding evolution of the weather conditions.

### Cyclone Warning Class III

- **Workplaces should be closed, except for essential and emergency services.**
- **Work from home to be operational, as far as possible and practicable.**

### Cyclone Warning Class IV

- **Workplaces should remain closed, except for essential and emergency services.**
- **Work from home to be operational, as far as possible and practicable.**

## 8.2 Safety Bulletin<sup>1</sup>

A Safety Bulletin is issued following the issue of a cyclone warning Class III or a cyclone warning Class IV and subsequent observations indicate that risks of gusts of 120 kilometres per hour have abated and cyclone is moving away. The purpose of this bulletin is to lift the cyclone warning Class III or the cyclone warning Class IV and to inform the public that severe weather conditions associated with the cyclone exist, as well as other environmental risks, depending on the nature and extent of the damage occurred during the passage of the cyclone:

- **Workplaces to remain closed, except for essential and emergency services.**
- **Work from home to be operational, as far as possible and practicable.**

## 8.3 Termination Bulletin<sup>2</sup>

Following the issue of a cyclone warning Class I, a cyclone warning Class II or a safety bulletin, as the case may be, a Termination Bulletin is issued after consultation with and following the advice from the National Crisis Committee to the effect that outdoor risks have considerably decreased:

- **Work should resume normally in all sectors in a phased manner, depending on the nature and extent of damages caused. Employees are required to attend duty provided that the Bulletin is issued before 10 00 hours during a working day and public transport is available.**

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<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> Regulations made under Section 5 and 11 of the Mauritius Meteorological Services Act 2019 vide Government Notice No 8 of 2023.

## 9. GENERAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

**In case of heavy rain/localised heavy rain/ torrential rain and tropical storms/Cyclones, employees should:**

**(i) stay informed**

- as far as possible through official sources including radio, television, internet, social media and open-source camera system such as Traffic Watch for information and updates on the weather conditions.

**(ii) avoid flooded areas**

- refrain from walking or driving through flooded areas or areas prone to flooding.

**(iii) evacuate vertically**

- Move out of areas prone to flooding and move up to higher levels for their own safety.

**(iv) avoid basements and underground parkings**

- keep away from basements which are prone to flooding/water accumulation during heavy rain/localised heavy rain. Alternative parking/arrangements may be identified.

**(v) adhere to instructions and guidance**

- follow the instructions and guidelines;
- act and behave in such manner as not to put at stake their own safety and that of their colleagues.

## 10. SPECIAL PROVISIONS

- (i) where the outdoor condition is life-threatening, Supervising Officers may, for the safety of employees, request them to remain indoors and not to leave office even after office hours. In such cases, adequate transport arrangements may be made;
- (ii) in the event an employee decides to leave office, in spite of the Supervising Officer's request/ warning not to do so, he/she should, before leaving office, sign an undertaking, as per Annex I, in the presence of the immediate supervisor, to the effect that he/she assumes full responsibility of his/her decision;
- (iii) Supervising Officers should ensure that all premises have been secured and that all electrical equipment and appliances are safely kept;
- (iv) employees should co-operate with their employers or other persons and follow the safety rules, instructions and work procedures, as provided for in the prevailing Occupational Safety and Health legislation; and
- (v) employees working outdoors are strongly advised to keep abreast of weather conditions and use their own judgment and common sense, bearing in mind the overarching principle of safety of their person, before deciding on any course of action.



## **11. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS BY MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS AND PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH HEAVY RAIN/LOCALISED HEAVY RAIN/TORRENTIAL RAIN**

### **A. Prior to the heavy rain season**

Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Organisations should:

- (i) make appropriate arrangements for the sensitisation and training of employees on measures to be taken on safety precautions;
- (ii) ensure that proper communication mechanisms are in place for the dissemination of information to all units and sub-offices of the Ministry/ Department/Public Sector Organisation;
- (iii) ascertain that plans for release and evacuation of employees are readily available;
- (iv) ensure that the lists of relevant contact persons/organisations are updated; and
- (v) promote use of sand baggings/flood barriers.

### **B. After heavy rain/localised heavy rain/torrential rain**

Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Organisations should:

- (vi) carry out an assessment of the situation;
- (vii) take appropriate remedial measures on shortcomings identified, if any;
- (viii) forward Situation Reports to the NEOC, if required; and
- (ix) collect and submit Post Disaster Data to NDRRMC/NEOC as per Annex II.

## 12. MAIN CONTACT POINTS

### MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

**Address:** Sicom Building 2,  
Corner Chevreau and  
Reverend Jean Lebrun Streets,  
Port Louis

**Telephone:** 405 4100

**Fax:** 212 4160

**Email:** [civser@govmu.org](mailto:civser@govmu.org)

**Contact persons:**

*Permanent Secretary: 405 4117*

*Director Human Resource Management: 405 4142*

*Director Safety and Health Unit: 405 4104*

### NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT CENTRE/ NATIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS COMMAND

**Address:** 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Citadelle Mall,  
Corner Louis Pasteur and Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis

**Telephone:** 207 3900

**Fax:** 207 3927

**Email:** [disaster@govmu.org](mailto:disaster@govmu.org)

### MAURITIUS METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

**Address:** St Paul Road B.4, Vacoas

**Telephone:** 686 1031 / 686 1032

**Fax:** 686 1033

**Email:** [meteo@intnet.mu](mailto:meteo@intnet.mu)

### NATIONAL LAND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**Address:** M.S.I. Building, Royal Road, Les Cassis, Port Louis

**Telephone:** 202 2800

**Hotline:** 800 1555

**Fax:** 212 9386

**Email:** [nta@intnet.mu](mailto:nta@intnet.mu)

## Heavy Rain/Localised Heavy Rain/Torrential Rain Undertaking to leave Workplace

I, Mr, Mrs, Miss, \_\_\_\_\_, holding the post of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_, am out of my own free will and accord, without the authority of and against the advice of my Supervising Officer/Responsible Officer leaving the workplace at \_\_\_\_\_ in spite of being made aware of the potential risks/dangers that may be encountered outdoor during the bad weather conditions.

I hereby release the office, its administration and personnel from any responsibility for all consequences, which may result by my leaving workplace under such circumstances.

Officer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Officer-In-Charge, HR Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of departure: \_\_\_\_\_

## MINISTRIES/ DEPARTMENTS

### POST DISASTER DATA COLLECTION FORM

This form should be submitted to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre/National  
Emergency Operations Command

**Glide Number**

(to be inserted by NDRRMC)

**Date of heavy rainfall/cyclone**       **Time of heavy rainfall/cyclone**     hrs

**Name of Institution:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Building Type** (Please tick as appropriate):

Administrative Office  Educational Institution  Health Facility   
Others  (If 'Others' please specify .....

**Impact to building infrastructure** (Please tick as appropriate):

None  Damaged  Destroyed

**In case building was damaged or destroyed, what was the estimated cost of repair or replacement?**

Rs .....

**Number of days operations of institution were disrupted:** .....

**The table below to be filled captures information on how employees were adversely affected during the disaster event:**

*Out of the stated numbers, please fill in number of employees with disabilities (PWD) according to gender (Male/Female)*

Impact on lives	Male	Female	Total
Number of deaths	..... PWD.....	..... PWD.....	..... PWD.....
Number of ill/injured	..... PWD.....	..... PWD.....	..... PWD.....
Number of missing	..... PWD.....	..... PWD.....	..... PWD.....
Number of evacuees	..... PWD.....	..... PWD.....	..... PWD.....

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Website: <http://civilservice.govmu.org>