

After the Storm: Who to Call First in Trinidad & Tobago

The order that saves you money on repairs.

LocalAxys Editorial Team

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The short version

- Emergencies first: 999 for police, 990 for fire, 811 for ambulance.
- Power out? Report it to T&TEC — don't assume they already know.
- No water or a burst main? That's WASA.
- Fallen trees blocking your street go to your regional corporation.
- Call your insurance company before you start repairs, not after.

□ Emergency numbers — save these now

- 999 — Police (TTPS)
- 990 — Fire services
- 811 — Ambulance
- 800-ODPM (6376) — Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management

The wind has died down. You're standing in your yard looking at the damage — a tree across the driveway, water where it shouldn't be, no lights. Your first instinct is to start fixing things. Don't. Your first job is to make the right calls in the right order, because calling the wrong number first wastes the hours that matter most.

Here's the order that saves you money and headaches.

Step one

Make sure everyone is safe

Before you call anyone about property, check on people. Elderly neighbours, anyone who lives alone, anyone with medical equipment that needs power. If someone is hurt or in danger, call 999 or 990 immediately. Everything else can wait.

Stay away from downed power lines. Always assume they're live. Keep children and pets well clear, and don't try to move lines yourself — not with a stick, not with anything.

Step two

Report the power outage to T&TEC

No lights? Call the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission. Their outage reporting line is 800-TTEC (8832). Report it even if you assume the whole neighbourhood is out — T&TEC prioritises repairs partly based on how many reports come in from an area. Your call helps your street get attention faster.

While you wait: unplug major appliances and electronics. When power comes back it can surge, and that surge kills fridges, TVs, and routers. Leave one lamp on so you know when it's restored.

If you see a sparking wire or a pole that's cracked or leaning, that's a 990 (fire) call, not just a T&TEC report.

Step three

Report water problems to WASA

Burst pipe, no water pressure, flooding from a main — that's the Water and Sewerage Authority. Their customer care line is 800-4420. If your taps are running brown after the storm, don't drink it until WASA confirms it's safe. Boil water as a precaution.

Call your insurance company before you start repairs, not after. Photos first, cleanup second.

Step four

Clear the roads — call your regional corporation

Fallen tree blocking your street? Debris piled up at the corner? That's your regional corporation's job — the Diego Martin, San Juan-Laventille, Tunapuna-Piarco, or whichever corporation covers your area. They handle road clearing and bulky debris removal after storms. Call their main line and report the exact location.

Don't drag large branches into the road yourself if a crew is coming — you might just create a bigger hazard. Clear what you safely can from your own property and leave the road to the

crews.

Step five

Call your insurance company

This is the call people make too late. Before you start repairs, before you throw away damaged items, before you clean up — call your insurer and open a claim. Then:

- Photograph everything. Every room, every damaged item, the roof from the ground. More photos than you think you need.
- Don't throw anything away until the adjuster has seen it (or told you it's fine to dispose of).
- Keep every receipt for emergency repairs — tarps, hotel stays, meals if your kitchen is unusable. Most policies reimburse these.
- Write down the claim number and the name of everyone you speak to.

Starting repairs before the adjuster visits can reduce your payout. Emergency temporary fixes (tarping a roof, boarding a window) are expected and encouraged — just document them.

Step six

Get your own repairs lined up

Once the insurance claim is open and documented, line up your contractors — roofers, electricians, plumbers. After a big storm, the good ones book up fast. Get two or three quotes for anything major, and never pay the full amount upfront.

Check the GoLocal directory for verified local contractors with reviews from your area. A contractor who's already working in Port of Spain or San Fernando will get to you faster than someone driving in from across the island.

A note on scams

After every major storm, the fly-by-night operators come out. Red flags: no business address, demands full payment upfront, no written quote, pressure to "sign today." A legitimate contractor gives you a written estimate, a timeline, and doesn't mind you checking their references.

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