

WHAT'S THE PLAN STAN? Stories



The *What's The Plan Stan? Stories* are part of a resource developed by the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management for teaching civil defence emergency management in primary schools. The resource involves students in an educational programme that focuses on understanding the hazards we face in New Zealand, and gives them skills to be better prepared and act in a safe manner when disasters occur. The stories feature Stan the dog and five children – Dan, Ana, Frankie, Matt and Beth – who model what to do in an emergency. There's also a website – www.whatstheplanstan.govt.nz – with helpful information, interactive activities and templates for teachers and students.

Hi, I'm Stan.

Welcome to *What's the Plan Stan?® Stories*, where my friends and I tell you about some of our experiences of emergencies and disasters.

I hang out with a neat bunch of kids and help them with what they need to do before, during and after a disaster.

They all know what to do, and can also help their families. They even know how to look after pets in a disaster!



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What to do in a storm



Hello, I'm Ana.

Most people say I'm friendly and helpful. I'm really into my sport – I love basketball and rugby. I'm a food fan too – my favourite food is jelly.

Ana's Earthquake Story

"What's that, Ana?" Stan asked, as he spotted Ana taking a glass bowl out of the fridge.

"It's strawberry jelly for dessert tonight," replied Ana.

"Yum! I just love jelly after my dog biscuits." Stan looked hungrily at the bowl in Ana's hands.

"Yes, jelly certainly tastes good," laughed Ana, "and it's really wobbly too. Look, I can make an earthquake!" She gave the bowl a gentle shake, jiggling the glistening red jelly backwards and forwards.

"Yes," laughed Stan, "but at least you don't have to prepare for a jelly."

"What do you mean?" Ana asked, looking puzzled.

"I mean that with earthquakes it's really important that you're prepared so you know what to do before one happens," said Stan.

"Oh, I get it," Ana answered. "Well, I know my earthquake drill. We practice it at home and at school. We learned three words to remember what to do."

"Yes, Drop, Cover and Hold," said Stan. "First, you should move no more than a few steps to a safe place, like a desk or table, and **drop** down under it, facing away from any windows."



"We have to **cover** ourselves under the desk," Ana chimed in. "We make ourselves as small as possible, and look down at the ground so we won't get hurt by flying objects."

"That's right," added Stan, "and you've got to **hold** onto your desk legs, just below the desktop, so it won't fall over or move away from you in the shaking."

"We've got to stay there until the teacher says it's all clear. They'll check to see if it's safe. And we need to keep quiet so we can hear the teacher or anyone who needs help."

"Do you know what to do if you're not in your classroom, or you're at home when an earthquake happens?" asked Stan.

"I would do pretty much the same," replied Ana. "I **drop** down, get under **cover**, and **hold** on. If there is nothing to shelter me, I kneel down beside some strong furniture or an inside wall, cover both sides of my head with my elbows, and clasp my hands behind my neck. What I mustn't do, though, is run outside because I could get hit by things falling down."

"But what if you're already outside?" queried Stan.

"I turn my back and move no more than a few steps away from any buildings, trees, power-lines and so on, then drop, cover and hold."

"Well, it sounds like you've certainly learned a lot about earthquake drills," commented Stan.





"Yes, and our family have also talked about what to do in an earthquake. We've made an emergency plan, and identified safe places close to us at home and school."

"Terrific!" Stan replied. "Have you reminded your parents to fix, fasten and forget?"

"What does that mean?" asked Ana.

"It means that they should secure anything that might fall down in an earthquake, like fixing bookcases to the wall. Then they can just forget about it, because they've made sure things won't fall in an earthquake," answered Stan.

"Oh yes, I saw Mum securing our ornaments to the shelves," Ana answered, putting the bowl of jelly down on the bench-top.

"That's an excellent idea," replied Stan. "That will stop them moving or getting broken in an earthquake."

"Hey!" exclaimed Ana suddenly. "Look, this jelly is starting to wobble by itself!"

Sure enough, the jelly was beginning to quiver as if by magic. Then they heard a low growling rumble. The cups and cutlery began to rattle, and the lamp-shade started to sway alarmingly.

"Earthquake!" Stan and Ana both shouted together.

"**Drop,**" said Ana, as they both dropped down onto their knees next to the kitchen table.



“Cover.” They both crawled under the kitchen table.

“Hold.” Ana and Stan both grabbed the top of a table leg to stop it from moving away.

Time seemed to stand still as the kitchen rumbled and shook. There was a splintering crash right beside them. Ana was tempted to glance round and see what had broken, but then remembered she was supposed to keep looking down so her face wouldn't get hurt.

As fast as it had started, the shaking ceased and the rumbling died away. The light continued to sway, but slower and slower.

“Is it over?” asked Ana nervously.

“It seems to be,” replied Stan, “but sometimes there can be aftershocks.”

“What's an aftershock?”

“Often a big earthquake is followed by smaller quakes.”

They waited quietly, but everything stayed still.

“At least your family has an emergency plan, so you know what to do now to check everyone is safe,” said Stan. “And there's a radio among your emergency survival items, so we'll be able to listen for instructions.”

“Yes, and we've got a first aid kit, too,” replied Ana. “And we have our getaway items ready in case we have to move away suddenly.”

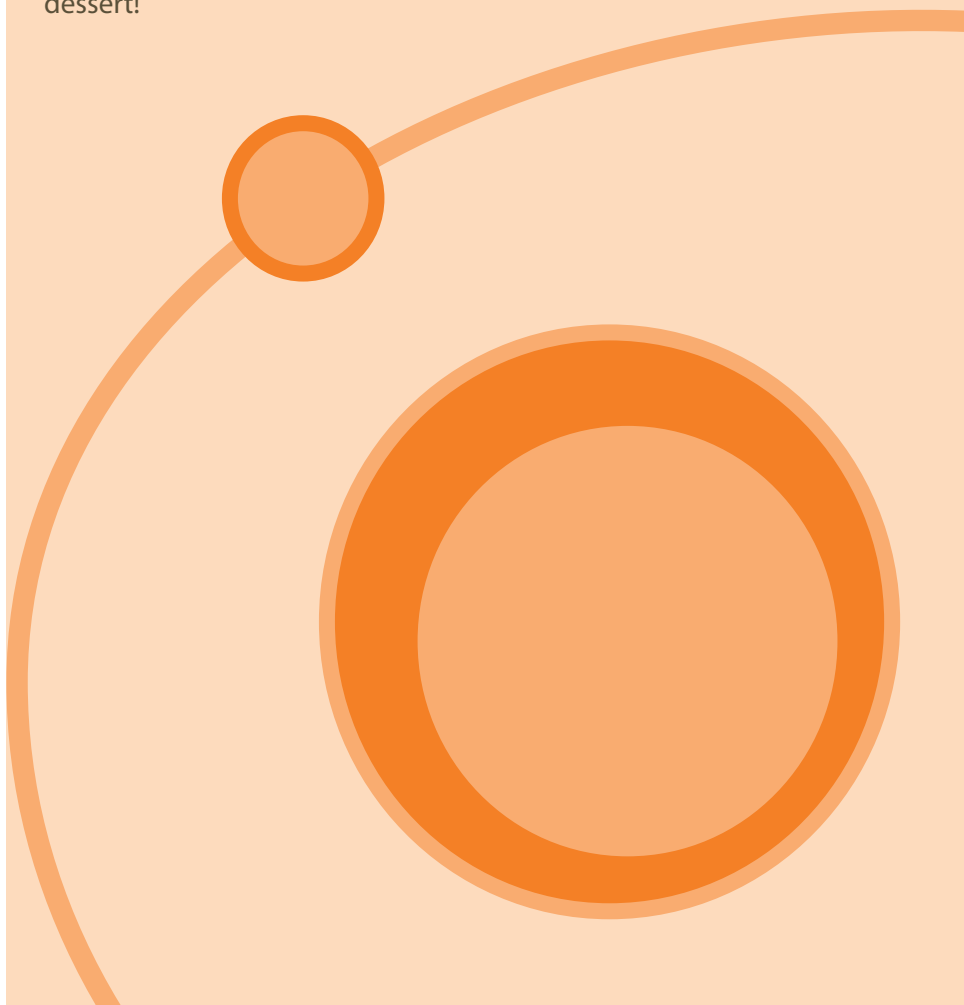


"I think it's safe now," said Stan.

Ana clambered out from under the table. The damage didn't look too bad. She peered round to see what it was that had smashed on the floor during the quake.

"Watch out," she said, "the floor is covered with broken glass."

"And jelly," sighed Stan sadly, looking down at the mess. "So much for dessert!"



What to do in an earthquake



Before

- Practise your earthquake drill: **drop, cover** and **hold**.
- Identify safe places at home and at school.
- A safe place is under a strong table (remember to hold onto the legs), or next to an interior wall. Take no more than a few steps to avoid injury.
- Talk with your family about an emergency plan and survival items.
- Help your parents to secure heavy items of furniture to the floor or wall. Find out more at www.eq-iq.org.nz.

During

- If you are inside a building, take no more than a few steps, **drop, cover** and **hold**.
- If you are outside, move no more than a few steps, **drop, cover** and **hold**.
- If you are in the car you should ask the driver to pull over and stop.
- If you are at the beach or near the coast, **drop, cover** and **hold**, then move to higher ground immediately in case a tsunami follows the quake.

After

- Remember there may be some aftershocks.
- Listen to and follow all instructions from adults or the radio.
- If you are in a damaged building, try to get outside and find a safe, open place.
- Help others who may need it, if you can do so safely.
- Watch out for possible dangers or hazards.
- Remember your prepared emergency plan and follow it, if it is safe to do so.



Hey there, I'm Dan.

I'm a pretty friendly kind of person – one of the team, really. I enjoy riding my skateboard, reading and I especially love swimming at the beach.

Dan's Tsunami Story

"Come on, Stan!" shouted Dan, as he wheeled his bike out of the gate. "Let's head down to the beach for a swim."

"Cool!" answered Stan, jumping up into the basket hanging on Dan's handlebars.

When they reached the beach, they found it crowded with happy people lazing and playing on the sand and splashing about in the water.

"Race you in!" shouted Dan, peeling off his shirt and rushing towards the sea.

Stan leapt about happily beside him. They dashed into the water, and were soon jumping and splashing each other.

"I've never seen the sea as still as this. It's like a millpond," said Stan, shaking the water off his back in a spray of silvery droplets.

"You're right. The waves aren't trying to knock me over as normal, even though I'm in up to my stomach," replied Dan.

"The sea isn't up to your stomach," Stan pointed out. "Look, it's only reaching up to your knees."

"That's funny, it was up to my stomach a moment ago," said Dan in a puzzled tone. "And look, the water's going all weird."



Sure enough, the sea was beginning to bubble like the froth on a can of fizzy drink.

Suddenly Dan gave out a yell, "Hey, we've got to get off this beach right now! I think there's going to be tsunami!"

"What?" cried Stan, looking round. "I can't see any big waves."

"No, we learned at school that before a tsunami hits, the sea often draws right back! I know there's going to be a tsunami, and we haven't got much time!"

"You're right," said Stan, "we've got to warn all these people."

Dan and Stan hurried out of the sea as fast as they could and ran up to the surf life-saver.

"There's going to be a tsunami. You've got to get everyone off the beach," pleaded Dan.

"How do you know?" asked the life-saver, standing up and looking out to sea.

"The water is falling back quickly and it's beginning to bubble and foam," explained Dan.

"Those are the classic signs of a tsunami, sure enough," responded the life-saver, looking over at where the sea-bottom was now coming into view.



He blew his whistle and began to run along the beach, shouting, "Everyone up onto that high hill over there! There's a tsunami coming!"



People turned around amazed, and then one by one, realising what the life-saver was saying, they began to call their children out of the water and run towards the nearby hill. Within a few moments, the beach was totally empty, and looking wider than ever as the sea drew further back.

Dan and Stan joined the people climbing the hill.

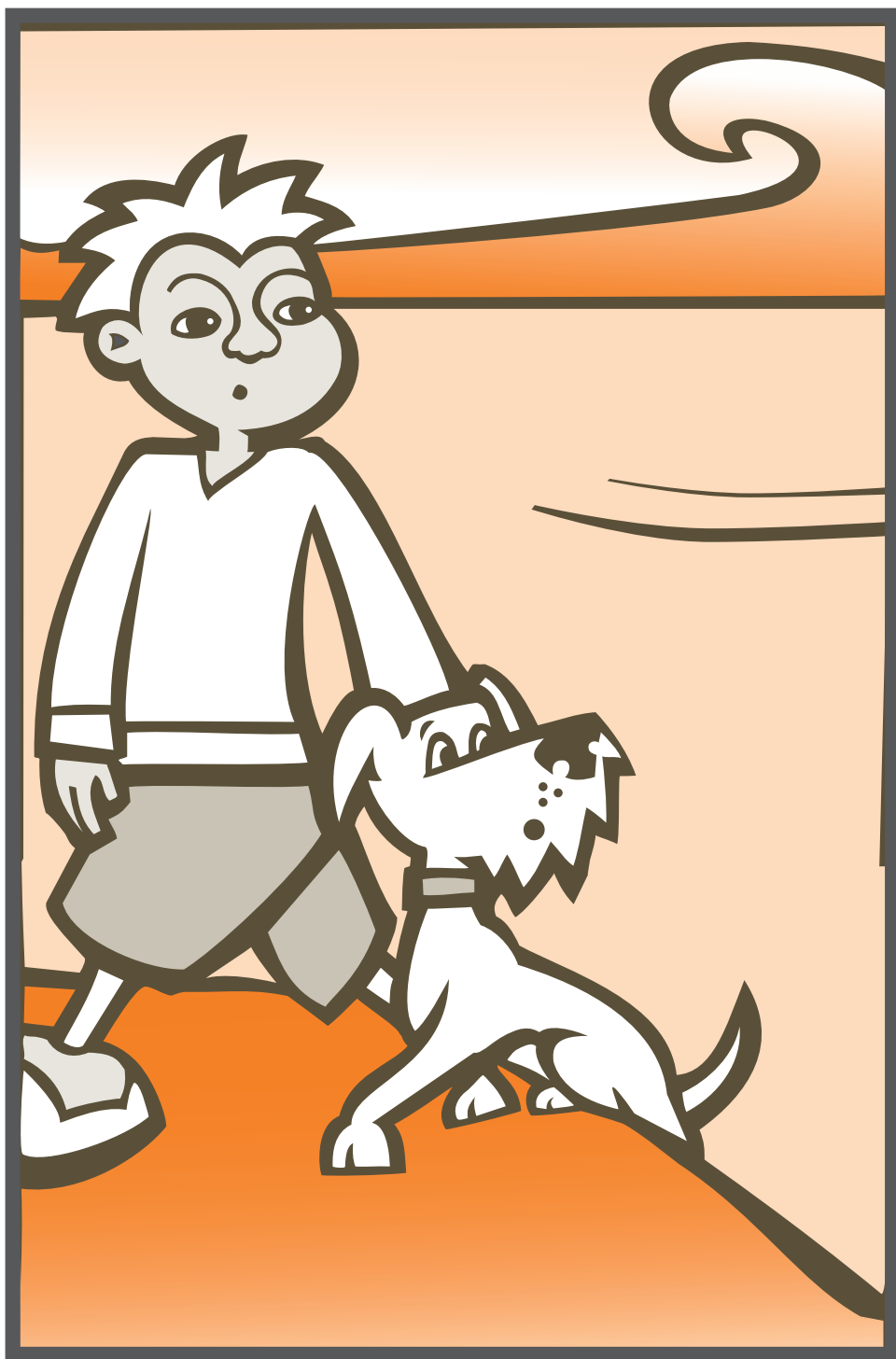
"We've got to go as far inland and as high up as we can," Dan panted.

At the top of the hill, everyone turned and watched the sea uneasily. For a moment Dan worried if he had been mistaken and had caused everyone to panic needlessly.

"There it is!" gasped one of the crowd.

The water was beginning to rise as the tsunami hit the shallower water. It soon turned into a high, fast-moving hump that swelled ashore with surprising force, picking up and twirling the abandoned deckchairs and picnic baskets. The raging water surged up over the beach, and on into the parking lot, swirling around the cars. On it swept, across the road, and only slowed when it had travelled quite a way inland.

People stared at each other in horror, not believing what they had just seen.



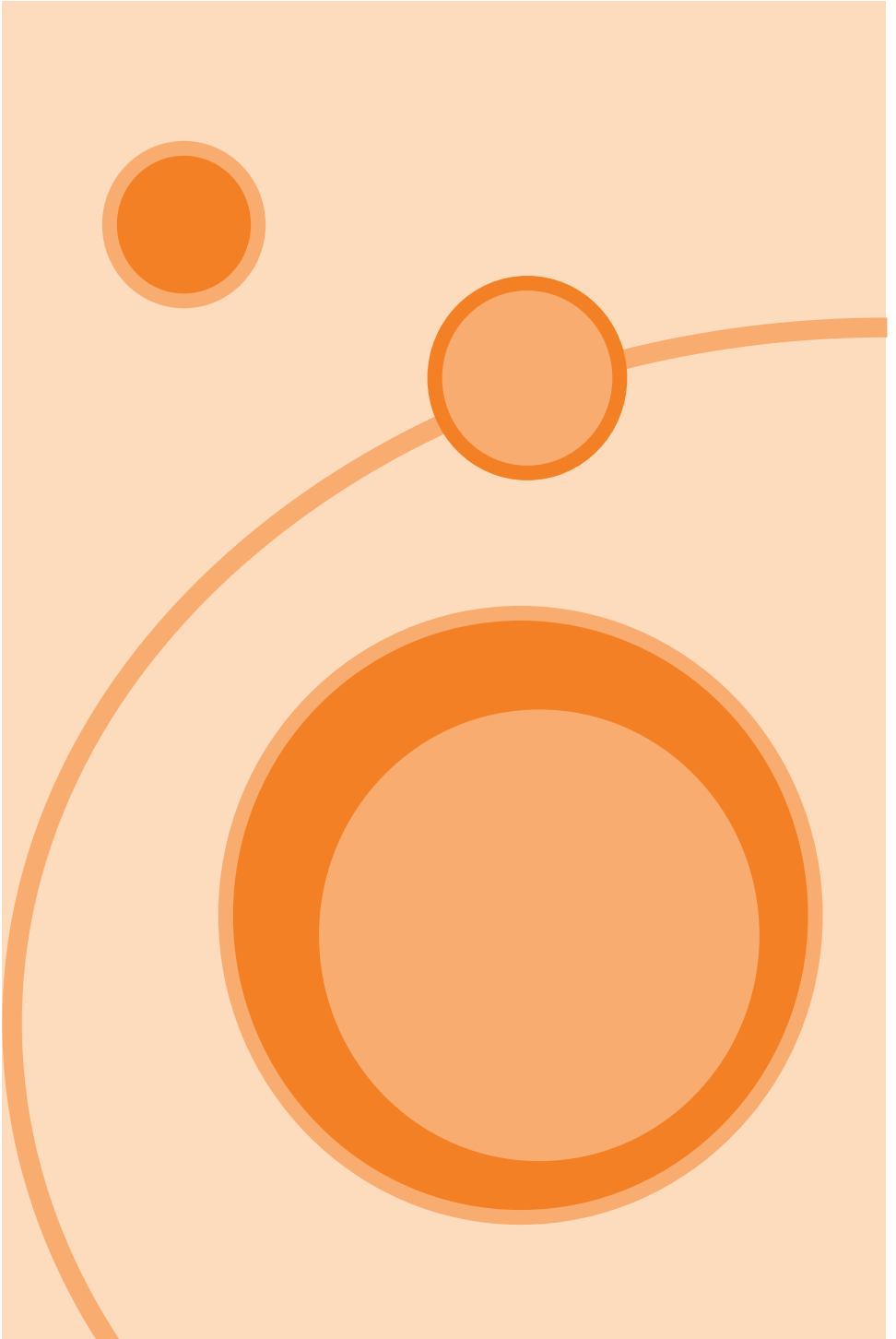
"Phew!" exclaimed the life-saver, turning to Stan and Dan. "If you hadn't warned us, a lot of people would've been caught up in that."

"We learned all about tsunami at school," replied Dan. "I recognised the signs."

"Well, I'm certainly glad you were paying attention in class," declared the life-saver.



Note: This story is based on the true story of 10-year-old Tilly Smith during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Tilly recognised the warning signs from what she had learned in a geography lesson two weeks before. She ended up saving the lives of about 100 tourists.



What to do in a tsunami



Before

- Know if your local area could be struck by a tsunami.
- Talk with your family and prepare an emergency plan.
- Identify safe places close to your home and school – as far inland and as high up as possible.

During

- Stay calm.
- Leave the area immediately if you are on the beach or near a river when a strong earthquake occurs. Move quickly but safely.
- Go as far inland and as high up as you can.
- Don't go to a river or beach to watch the waves come in if a warning has been issued.

After

- Listen to, and follow, instructions from adults or the radio.
- Do not go to the sea or river until you have been told it is safe to do so.
- Help others who may need it, if you can do so safely.



Hi there, I'm Matt.

I'm really lucky, as I get to travel a lot with my family. We go to some pretty exciting places, so I'm always taking photos with my digital camera.

Matt's Volcano Story

Matt looked very tired and dishevelled as he emerged from the taxi outside his house. Stan bounded up to the front gate and sat, wagging his tail excitedly.

Matt crouched down and patted him affectionately. "Hey, Stan! It's great to be home again. What a holiday that turned out to be!"

"What do you mean, Matt?" asked Stan. "Where's your luggage?"

"I've got my camera here," replied Matt, holding up the digital camera hanging round his neck, "but that's about all. Come on in, I'll show you my photos and tell you what happened."

Once they were inside, Matt sat on the couch and Stan jumped up beside him. Matt turned on his camera to show him the first picture on the viewing screen.

"That's my uncle's house where I went to stay," said Matt.

"Nice," Stan commented approvingly, "and look at that cool mountain in the background – that's pretty spectacular."

"Yes, and it became a lot more spectacular later, I can tell you," replied Matt.

"How come?" asked Stan.



"Well, when I got to my uncle's place, he told me how they had been having quite a few small earthquakes recently. We even felt a few more earthquakes the next day."

"I hope you remembered to drop, cover and hold," said Stan.

Matt nodded. "Yes, though fortunately the quakes weren't too bad. But we still listened to the radio to find out what was happening."

"That was wise," said Stan. "It's always a good idea to listen to the radio in emergencies."

"You're right. The radio announcer told us that there was a possibility of a volcanic eruption, so we had to do some things to be prepared."

"Volcanoes can pollute water, so saving as much as you can beforehand is a good precaution," said Stan.

"We had to stay indoors with all the doors and windows shut tightly," said Matt. "And if you had been with us, even you would have had to stay inside."

"I know," replied Stan. "Animals and pets should be kept indoors or under shelter in an eruption. So what happened next?"

"My uncle already had his emergency items, so we gathered up what we needed in case we had to get away in a hurry."

"Ah, a getaway kit," nodded Stan. "Besides all the emergency items, what else should be in a getaway kit?"



"We packed our passports in with the emergency supplies," replied Matt, "and my uncle also had his insurance policies and some of his special photo albums."

"Good idea," said Stan. "I'd hate to be without some of those things – though I don't have a passport."

"No, I guess dogs don't," smiled Matt. "Anyway, the earthquakes got worse, and clouds of steam and ash started belching out of the volcano."

"Ah, so that's what you meant about that mountain becoming more spectacular," said Stan. "What happened then?"

"The radio told us we needed to evacuate, so we grabbed our getaway kit and left the house. It was almost like winter outside because the ash was falling like snow."

"Did you drive away from the house in your uncle's car?"

"No, cars stir up the ash, which can clog engines and make them stall. Plus you don't want a huge traffic jam. So we walked to the gathering point that civil defence asked us to go to."

"So that's why you didn't bring your luggage – you had to walk." Stan peered closer at one of the photos on the camera. "Hey, you guys look like masked robbers."

"We had to tie damp cloths around our faces to keep from breathing in the ash," answered Matt.





"And I see you are wearing long sleeves in the photo, instead of your normal T-shirt."

"I had to protect my skin," said Matt. "Ash is very hot and can irritate your skin."

"It's a shame you haven't got many photos here of the eruption itself," commented Stan, looking at the camera.

"No, we didn't hang round. The blast from a volcano can travel far and fast, so you don't want to be hanging round taking photos or anything."

"I bet it was scary," said Stan.

"It sure was – I don't think I've ever been as scared in my life," answered Matt.

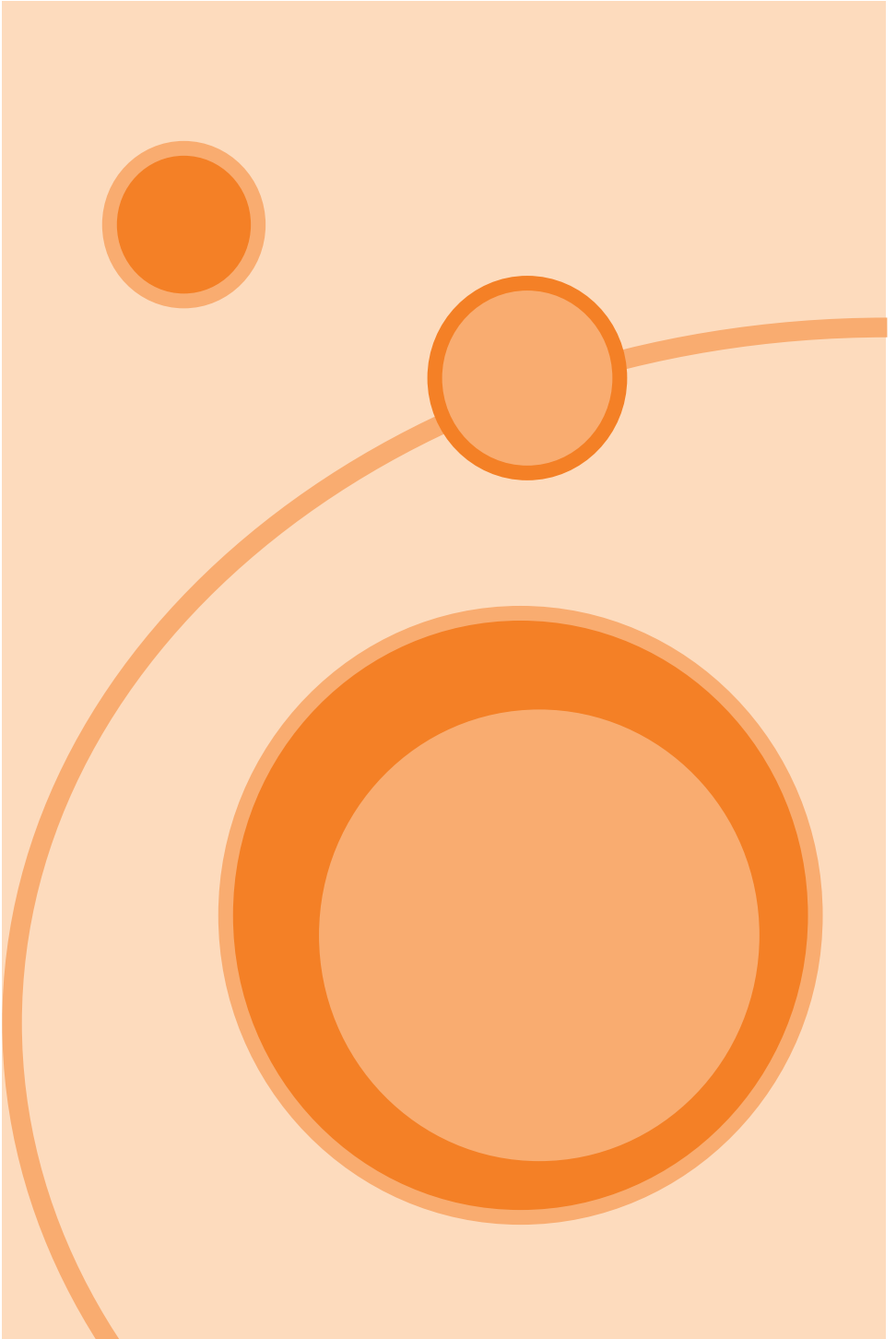
"But we didn't panic because that would only make things worse. Anyway, we got away safely, thank goodness."

"No wonder you're so relieved to be back here again, even without your luggage."

"Yes, after looking forward so much to that holiday, I must say that I love being back home."

Stan looked at Matt with a doggy-smile on his face. "Well, I 'lava' having you at home again too."





What to do in a volcanic eruption



Before

- Know where active volcanoes are and whether they are likely to affect you.
- Talk with your family about an emergency plan and what you will need at home.
- Talk to your family about an evacuation plan – where to go and how to get there.

During

- Listen to the radio for instructions.
- Stay indoors – keep windows and doors shut. Bring your pets indoors if you can.
- Save water in your bath and other containers at an early stage, as the water supply may become polluted.
- If outdoors – find shelter.
- If told to leave, cover your face and mouth, wear a dust mask and goggles if you can, and take your essential emergency survival items.
- Do not go sightseeing.
- Take your outer layer of clothing off before entering a building – volcanic ash is difficult to get rid of.

After

- If in a safe place – stay put.
- Listen to the radio for information.
- Return home only when told.



Hello, my name is Beth.

My school reports say I'm quite serious. I guess that's because I've always got my nose in a book – I just love reading. Maybe that's why I'm also pretty good at my school work, and why I just love doing projects.

Beth's Flood Story

Beth trudged into the kitchen and shrugged off her school bag.

"How was your day at school?" asked Stan, sitting up in his dog basket and wagging his tail.

"Pretty good, actually," Beth replied. "I've nearly finished my New Zealand disasters project."

"What disaster are you doing your project on?" Stan asked as he stood and stretched out his paws.

"Well, I remember Dad telling me about the big floods that happened before I was born, when he was still living with his parents in Invercargill. So I decided to do my project about that. Do you want to see it?"

Beth bent down and opened her bag. She pulled out the project and spread it out on the table. Stan jumped up onto a chair to look at it.



"Is that your dad?" he asked, pointing his paw at a photo of a smiling young man standing on the front steps of a house. "Boy, he looks young."

"Well, it was a few years ago now," smiled Beth. "1984 to be exact."

"And what's this newspaper clipping," asked Stan, peering at a yellowed scrap of newsprint enclosed in the project folder. "It looks like a weather forecast."

"You're right, it is," replied Beth. "I'll read it to you. '26 January 1984 – heavy rain in Southland and Fiordland for the next 18 hours. A north-westerly air-stream meeting with a southerly front is going to cause heavy falls of rain in the hills."

"Was the forecast right? Did it rain heavily?" asked Stan.

"Dad said it sure did. Apparently it rained cats and dogs ..."

"Hey, careful with the metaphors," interrupted Stan, smiling.

"Oh, sorry ... it teemed down. Before they went to bed that night they heard there had been some surface flooding in parts of the city. Dad didn't think too much of it at that stage, but then his parents woke him in the middle of the night."

"Why? What had happened?"

"Well, there was just too much water coming down from the hills. The rivers broke their banks, and even the walls of sandbags couldn't stop the water flooding into houses, shops and factories. Even the airport was under three metres of water. Dad said that the mayor had to call a state of emergency."

"Must have been bad, then," nodded Stan. "They only declare states of emergency when the normal emergency services, like police, ambulance and fire, can't cope any more."

"Yes, they even had to call in the army and air force to help," replied Beth.





"What did your father and his family do?" asked Stan.

"They had to move all their valuables up as high as possible. Dad said they lifted whatever they could up into the attic. That way, if water did get into the house, the important things wouldn't get ruined."

"I hope they also moved their chemicals up high, too," remarked Stan. "You wouldn't want things like weed-killer and pool chemicals floating around in flood waters."

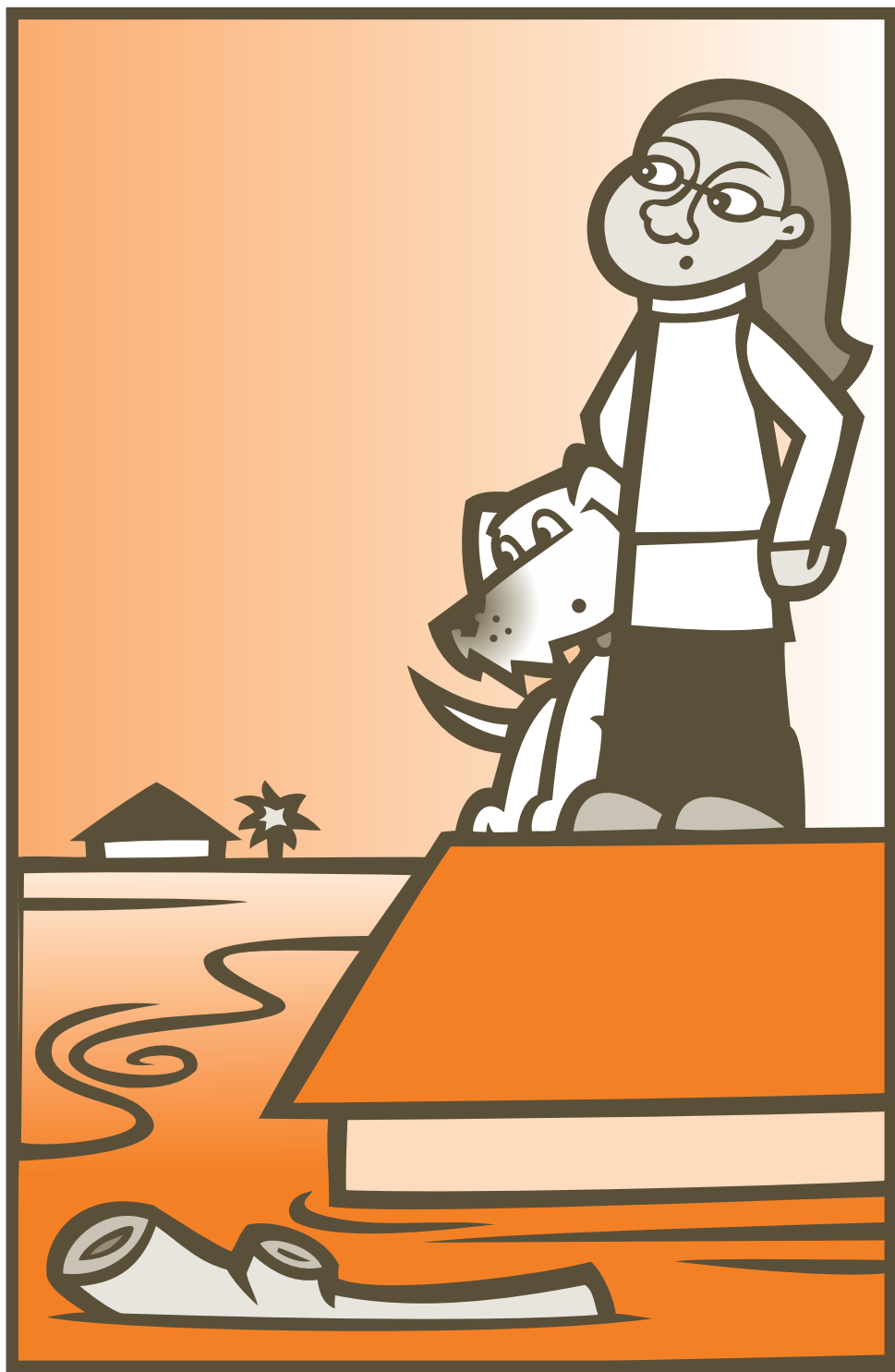
"Yes," answered Beth, "and they also had to make sure their pets were safe, too."

"Phew, I'm glad about that," said Stan.

"Well, the water kept on getting higher and higher. They listened to the radio for weather reports and updates. In the end, the water got so high my Dad and his family had to climb up on the roof. Luckily they had organised their getaway items, so they had everything they needed when they got lifted off the roof by helicopter."

"Wow, helicopter! Where did it take them?"

"There were welfare centres set up. They must have been pretty busy places, though. About 5,000 people had to be evacuated, and every one of them had to be fed and looked after. They even had to give them water, which seemed a bit odd when there was so much of it around. But you can't drink floodwater."



"No, floodwater isn't safe to drink because it could be dangerous for your health," said Stan. "You never know what could be mixed in it."

"They couldn't come home till they were told it was safe, which took about a week or so. When they were eventually allowed to go home, they had a massive job cleaning up. Just look at this photo."

Stan stared at the old snapshot that Beth was pointing at. It showed Beth's father, wearing gumboots, pushing a broom through a sea of mud inside the house. Piles of sodden carpet and water-logged furniture were stacked in the background.

"At least they could actually move back into their house, though, once it was cleaned up," added Beth. "A lot of houses were so badly damaged that they could never be lived in again."

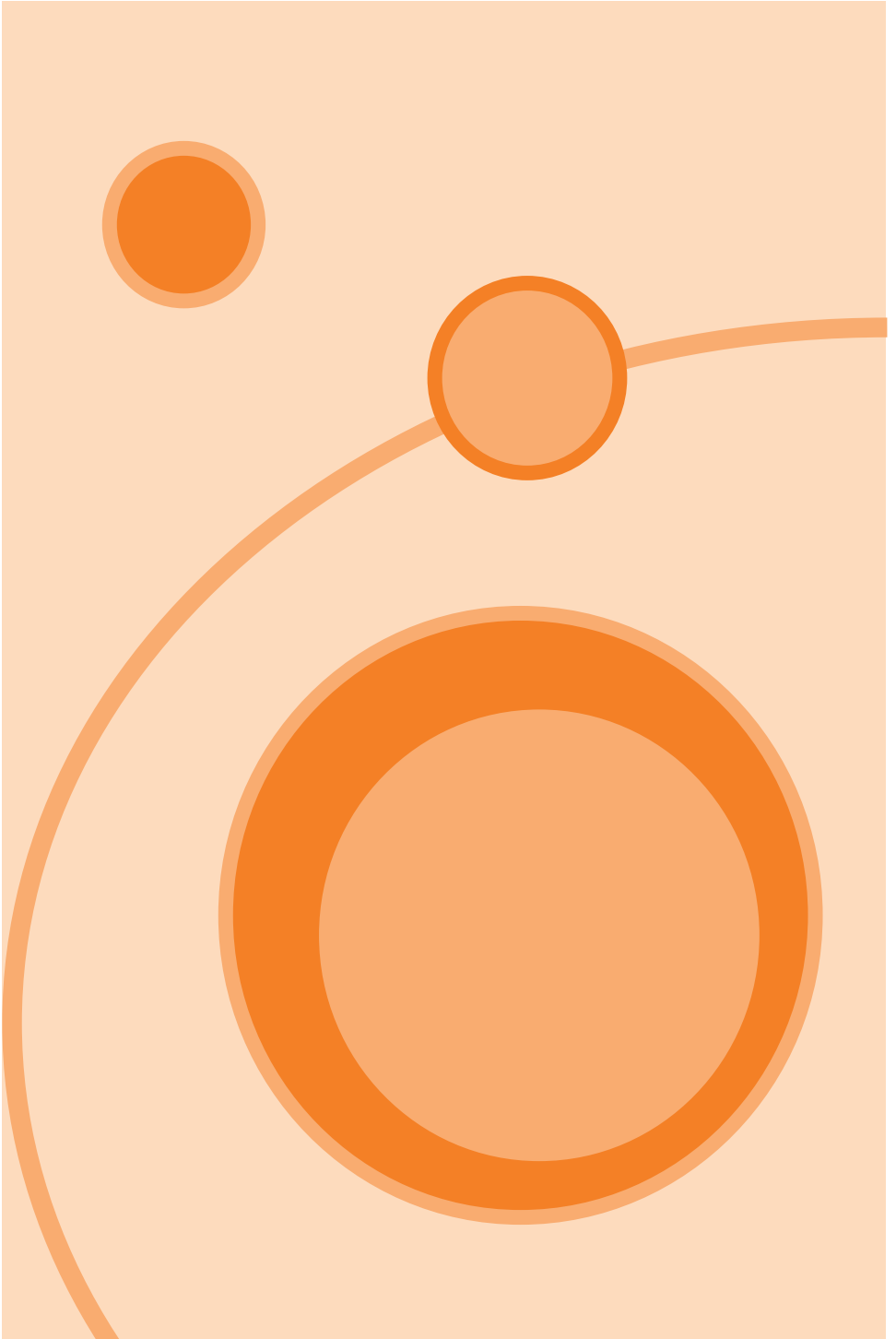
"There was one good thing that came out of it all," said Stan, smiling at her.

"What's that?" asked Beth.

"It gave you a terrific story for your project!"



Note: This story is based on the real Southland floods of 1984, which caused \$55 million worth of damage. No people were killed, but 12,000 sheep, 100 cattle, 334 pigs and 75 deer were lost.



What to do in a flood



Before

- Find out about the worst flood in your area and how high the flood waters reached.
- Know how to reach the nearest high ground.
- Move animals to safety.
- Keep valuables and some food and water above the high water mark. Attics or upstairs rooms are good places for storage, as long as there is easy access.
- Remind your family to store chemicals in a high, safe place. If a flood occurs, leaking chemicals could be dangerous.

During

- Listen to your local radio station for information and instructions on what to do.
- Help move household items as high above the floor as possible.
- You may have to move out of the flooded area or go to the nearest high ground.
- Don't go into flood waters alone and don't go sightseeing.
- Take your essential emergency survival items with you if you have to leave your home.
- Remind adults to turn off mains electricity and gas.

After

- Only return home once you are told it is safe.
- Do not go sightseeing through flooded areas.
- Do not drink floodwater. It could be contaminated.



Hi, my name is
Frankie.

I love going to
school, but like most
kids, I love it when
we get a day off too!
However, a recent
unexpected day off
didn't turn out to be
so much fun after
all...

Frankie's Storm Story

Frankie opened the back door and peered out. The clouds were big and dark, and the sky looked almost black, even though it was the middle of the day.

"Hey, Stan," she called, "can you come inside?"

Stan ran up, tail wagging. "Why, what's happening?"

"The radio says there's a big storm coming, and we have to make sure our pets are inside. And school's been cancelled for the day – yeah!" Frankie clapped her hands and smiled.

Stan plumped himself into his favourite place in front of the heater. He cocked his head to one side.

"Hey, I saw you carrying in the garden furniture and outside toys."

"Yes," Frankie replied, "that's so they won't become flying missiles in the wind."

"I hope you didn't forget my kennel, I wouldn't want that to blow away, would I!"

"Don't worry, it's quite light and Dad has put it in the garage, Stan," said Frankie, patting his head comfortingly.

The wind was really picking up now. Branches brushed against the side of the house, and Frankie and Stan could feel the whole house shaking in the gusts. Rain was drumming down almost sideways, the wind was so strong.





"We better keep away from the windows, in case they smash in the wind. At least the curtains are closed, so that might stop some flying glass if they do break."

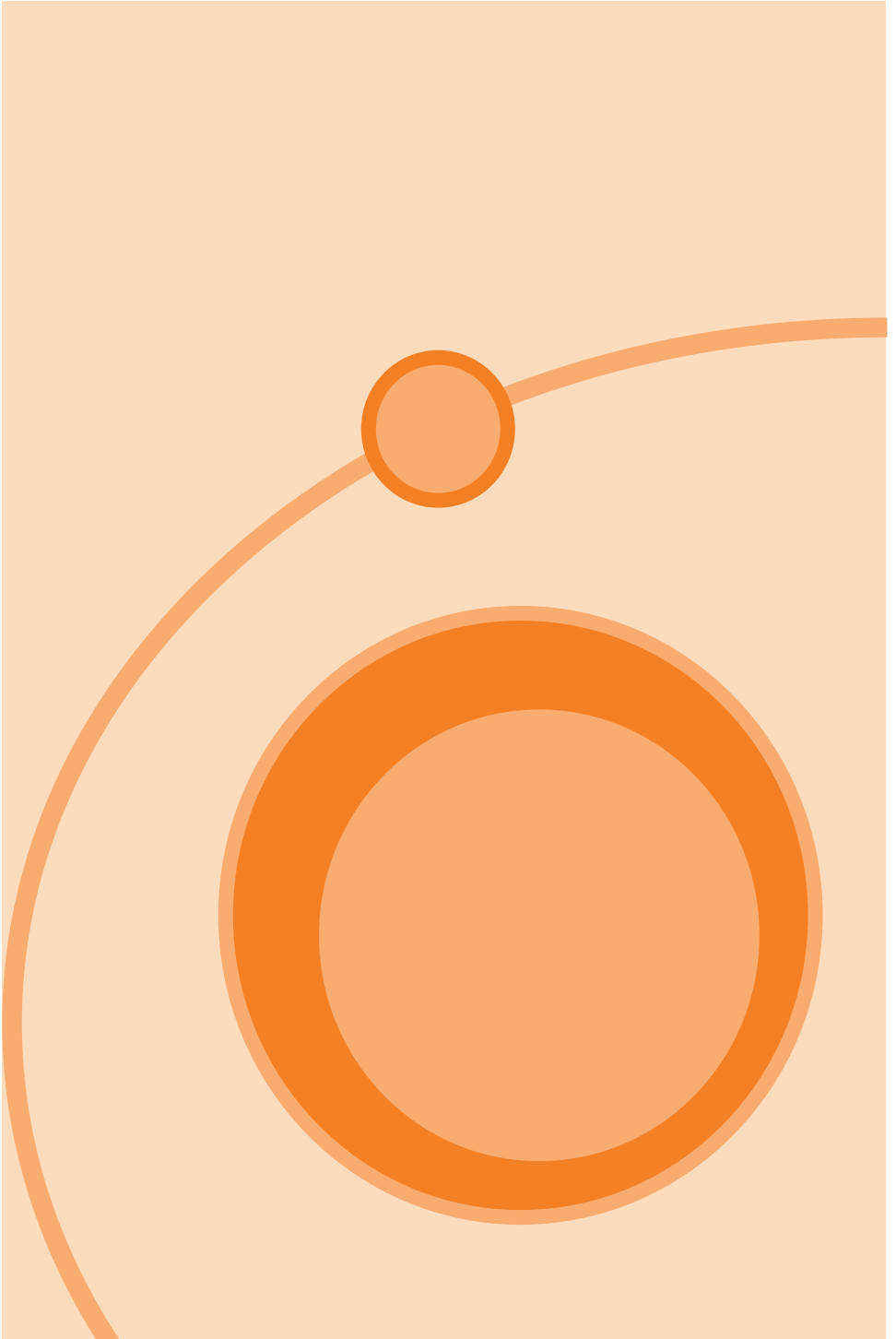
Frankie, Stan and their family stayed inside all day while the storm battered the house outside. Fortunately Stan was good at telling jokes, which kept their spirits up and stopped them from being too scared of the noise and buffeting.

The following morning the storm finally died down. They turned on the radio and heard on the news that the storm had been one of the biggest in recent history. Civil defence had had to evacuate some parts of town because of floods and slips.

"Well, now the storm's over, I guess you can go back to school today," said Stan.

"No," Frankie answered. "The news said we're not allowed to go out because the power lines might be hanging down. So no school again ... and I might actually enjoy the day off this time, because yesterday was really way too scary!"





What to do in a storm



Before

When a strong wind warning is issued:

- Listen to your radio for information.
- Bring pets inside if possible.
- Help clear away anything outside that may become a flying missile in the wind.

When a snow warning is issued:

- Listen to your local radio station for information.
- Avoid leaving home unless absolutely necessary.
- If you have to travel, help make sure you are well prepared with snow chains, sleeping bags, warm clothing and essential emergency items.
- Remind your family to check fuel supplies for wood-burners, gas heaters, barbeques and generators.
- Bring pets inside if you can and help move stock to shelter.

During

- Stay inside. If outside find shelter quickly.
- Close all curtains to slow down flying glass.
- Stay away from doors and windows. If the wind becomes destructive, shelter further inside the house.
- Stay away from metal and electrical fixtures.

After

- Stay indoors and listen to the radio.
- Avoid dangling and broken power lines.

