Storms are the most common natural hazard in Australia. On average, they cause more damage each year (in insurance terms) than other natural hazards (for example, bushfires, hailstorms, earthquakes etc.). Property damage may be the result of severe wind gusts, hail, lightning strikes, flash flooding or (less commonly in Australia) tornadoes. Storms can also kill and maim people and animals.

There are a number of things people can do to protect their homes from storm damage. These are indicated in the following diagram.

Ways to protect your home

**Before the storm season**

- Remove any debris in the yard that could be dangerous if airborne.
- Check that all roof fittings and tiles are not loose or broken.
- Trim any trees that overhang the roof.
- Cover the inside surface of all glass surfaces (e.g. windows, skylights) with mesh (or similar).
- Check list of emergency numbers is complete and current, and that home insurance is up to date.
- Put together an emergency kit: torch, first aid kit, spare batteries, plastic bags, hammer, wood strips, nails, mobile phone.

**As the storm nears**

- Remain in the house and away from any part where glass may shatter.
- Go to the strongest part of the house (e.g. bathroom, basement, hallway).
- Get under a doona, mattress or table if the house starts to break up.

**After the storm**

- Call relevant agencies for emergency assistance with fallen powerlines, local floods, house damage, gas cuts.
- Cover any minor house damage with nailed-on plastic sheets.
- Check your radio for further advice.
- Don’t sight-see — it could be dangerous.

1. In what ways can storms cause destruction and damage?
2. In the light of the advice given in the above diagram, list all the things that would need to be done for the house you live in to prepare for a storm season.
3. What should you do if your house started to break up during a storm? Explain.
4. Think of reasons why each of the items in the emergency kit (listed in the diagram above) might be needed. Can you think of any others you would include?
5. Suggest why you still need to take precautions to protect yourself and your property after a storm is over.

**References:**  
SOSE Alive 2, pp 114–115 • SOSE Alive Geography 1, pp 138–9 • Jacaranda SOSE Geography 2, pp 52–3