

Summer planning for all Victorians

Heat

The extreme heat of the summer can pose a serious health risk to anybody. Work out now how to stay cool and healthy in very hot weather.

- Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty (if the doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much to drink during hot weather).
- Spend as much time as possible in cool or air-conditioned buildings such as shopping centres, libraries or cinemas.
- Keep yourself cool by using damp towels and taking cool (not cold) showers in the day and night.
- If you must go outside, stay in the shade and take plenty of water with you. Wear a hat and light-coloured, loose fitting clothing.
- Block out the sun during the day by closing the curtains and blinds and open up windows and doors when there is a cool breeze.
- Do not leave children, adults or animals in parked vehicles.
- Avoid strenuous activity like sport, home improvements or gardening.
- Watch for news reports that provide more information during a heatwave. Stay alert to outside signs of fire such as smoke or emergency services activity.
- Use air-conditioning or fans set to cool. Remember to drink plenty of water if using fans for cooling.
- **Check on friends, family and neighbours, particularly older, sick and frail people who may need help coping with the heat, at least twice a day.**



Health and Human Services
Emergency Management
[www.health.vic.gov.au/
bushfire](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/bushfire)

Bushfires

Every Victorian should have a Bushfire Survival Plan, for where they live, work and anywhere you may visit. Some people may need help in working out their plan, so talk to friends, family and neighbours about what they will do.

You should not expect a fire truck at the house during a bushfire. Your plan should describe how you will look after yourself if there is a fire. If you cannot do this, your plan should be to leave early.

A Bushfire Survival Plan should include:

- **Where will you go?**
- **When will you go?**
- **How will you get there?**
- **Who can help?**
- Normal transport services such as buses may not operate on a high fire danger day or if there is a fire in the area. If you cannot move to a safer area altogether, is there a well-prepared neighbour or friend's place where you can take refuge?
- What do you need to have ready to take with you? For example, medication, ID, cash, mobile phone and charger.
- If there is no option but to stay, how will you protect yourself from radiant heat and bushfire smoke? You will need to have protective clothing available if you plan to defend your property.
- Neighbourhood Safer Places, have been identified in some communities as places of last resort, for when all other plans have failed. They can provide some protection from radiant heat but will not guarantee your safety. A list of these places is available on the CFA website.

Find out the latest information on fires and the fire danger rating online at www.cfa.vic.gov.au, from the Victorian Bushfire Information Line **1800 240 667** and by listening to local ABC or commercial radio stations.

Keep checking for updates throughout the day, as weather patterns can change and fires can move quickly.

Relocation plan

You should consider your relocation options for high fire danger days well in advance. Plan your relocation options by talking to friends, family and neighbours.

- On a Code Red (Catastrophic) day, everyone in **high-risk areas** should relocate to a low-risk area either the night before or early in the morning.
- On Extreme and Severe days, the safest option is to leave early in the day **if you live in a high-risk area**.
- If you do not leave until a fire is in your area, some roads may not be safe to travel on as a fire can move very quickly on a Severe, Extreme or Code Red (Catastrophic) day.
- You may choose to stay with **family or friends** in a low-risk area.
- Other options may include spending the day at shopping centres, swimming pools, libraries, museums, cinemas or other community facilities out of high-risk areas.
- Local councils and community facility operators may be able to tell you about services and facilities with air-conditioning or shade, where you can shelter from extreme heat.
- If you have pets, make sure you plan for their safety and comfort.
- Emergency relief centres may be operated during an emergency. They will only be activated once the location and scale of an emergency is known.
- When emergency relief centres are established, announcements will be made through emergency radio broadcasts on ABC or local commercial radio and through the Victorian Bushfire Information Line **1800 240 667**.

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.
FireReady 

Making Victoria FireReady:

Frequently asked questions

Heat

I don't have air-conditioning in my house, how can I stay cool?

In preparation for extreme hot weather, look at things you can do to make your home cooler such as installing awnings, shade cloth or external blinds on the sides of the house facing the sun. On hot days, block out the sun during the day by closing the curtains and blinds and open up windows and doors when there is a cool breeze.

If you are unable to prevent your house from heating up, spend as much time as possible in cool or air-conditioned buildings such as shopping centres and libraries. Also, remember to drink plenty of water, use damp towels and take cool (not cold) showers in the day and night.

Your local council may be able to tell you about places you may go to on a hot day to avoid extreme temperatures.

Bushfires

I don't know how to write a Bushfire Survival Plan, who can help me?

The CFA have a guide to completing a Bushfire Survival Plan. Log on to www.cfa.vic.gov.au to download this, or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line and ask for one to be posted to you. If you need further assistance, talk to family, friends and neighbours about their plans.

I want to stay, how can I make myself safe and my property ready to defend?

The CFA website contains information that will help you identify whether your house is defensible, but you should not rely on being able to defend a property on a Code Red (Catastrophic) day. Bushfires are frightening. There will be incredible noise, smoke, embers, flames and poor visibility. If you plan to stay and defend you will need appropriate equipment, protective clothing and a well prepared property. You need to be physically capable and mentally fit. The safest place to be is away from any fire.

What are fire danger rating and weather districts and how do I find out which district I live in?

Fire danger rating districts and weather districts are the same. A list of the cities and townships in each district is available on the CFA website or by calling the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on **1800 240 667**.

Relocation

I don't have access to transport, how will I relocate from a high-risk area?

Planning how you will relocate is very important. Discuss your plans with family, friends and neighbours to see who can help. Public transport may not be available on high fire danger days, so you should have a back-up plan.

I live in a high-risk area, but I don't have friends or family to visit or stay with in a low-risk area. Where can I go or stay overnight?

Planning where you will relocate to is very important and it is a good idea to have more than one option. Consider taking a day trip to the nearest regional city where there will be plenty of places to get out of the heat but it will also be easy to stay in touch with family and friends. Check the weather conditions and fire activity throughout the day. If conditions have eased, you may consider going home that night. If not, you may need to check into a hotel, caravan park or hostel.

Why isn't there a relief centre on a Code Red or extremely hot day?

Emergency relief centres are usually only opened once the location and scale of an emergency is known. This is to ensure the safety of those attending the centre.

What should I bring to an emergency relief centre?

Emergency relief centres are not the most comfortable of places as they typically provide only basic support services. Services available will vary between councils. There are no provisions for livestock and there may be no or limited facilities available for pets. If attending an emergency relief centre you should bring with you:

- any medication, prescriptions and other personal health aids

- mobile phone and charger
 - personal identity documents
 - light bedding and clothing
 - cash, 1–2 litres of water and non-perishable foods
 - baby necessities such as nappies and baby formula.
- Remember to pack these early—before a high fire danger day or well before a fire is in your area.

Will I be evacuated?

You should never rely on being evacuated—you must plan how and when you will leave.

Can I relocate to a Neighbourhood Safer Place?

Neighbourhood Safer Places are places of last resort only. They will offer some protection from radiant heat but do not guarantee safety or survival. Amenities such as food, water and toilets may not be available. Only go to a Neighbourhood Safer Place if all your other plans have failed.

Useful contacts

Country Fire Authority

www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Ph: (03) 9262 8444

Victorian Bushfire Information Line

Ph: 1800 240 667

Department of Health

www.health.vic.gov.au/bushfire

www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave

Department of Human Services

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency

Ph: 1300 650 172

Find your local council

www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au

Ph: (03) 9651 7026

NURSE-ON-CALL

1300 606 024

Mental Health Advice Line

1300 280 737