

## If you are caught in a fire

Bushfires can occur without warning, are unpredictable and can quickly impact your holiday destination.

The biggest killer in a fire is radiant heat, which is the heat you feel from a fire. The best protection from radiant heat is distance.

In situations where no other options are available to you, taking shelter in one of the below may protect you from radiant heat.

- A well prepared property that can be actively defended.
- A Neighbourhood Safer Place (place of last resort).
- A stationary car in a clear area.
- A ploughed paddock or reserve.
- A body of water such as a beach, swimming pool, dam or river.

While these survival options carry a high risk of trauma, injury or death they may provide you with some protection from radiant heat.

## If you are caught in a fire when driving

- Stay in the car to protect yourself from radiant heat. It offers better protection than being outside. Do not get out and run.
- Find a clear area to park away from trees, shrubs or long grass. If possible, park behind a solid structure to block radiant heat.
- Face the car towards the fire front.
- Keep windows up and vents closed.
- Put hazard and headlights on and turn the engine off.
- Cover exposed skin with clothing made from natural fibres such as cotton or wool.
- Get down as low as possible below window level and cover up with a dry woollen blanket until the fire front passes.
- Drink water to stay hydrated.

## Fire Danger Ratings

The Fire Danger Ratings predict how bad a fire would be if one started.

During the warmer months, check the Fire Danger Rating for the area you are visiting every day so that you know when the local conditions are dangerous. The Fire Danger Rating will feature in weather forecasts and be broadcast on radio and TV and appear in some newspapers. It can also be found at [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au), on the VicEmergency app or by calling the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.



	What does it mean?
<b>Code Red</b>	These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire. Holiday properties are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions. The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas. Avoid forested areas, thick bush or long, dry grass.
<b>Extreme</b>	Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Reconsider plans to visit parks and forests. The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas.
<b>Severe</b>	Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable. Well prepared holiday properties that are actively defended can provide safety. Be prepared to change your plans.
<b>Very High</b>	If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions.
<b>High</b>	Check if any fire restrictions are in force. Be aware of how fires can start and minimise the risk.
<b>Low Moderate</b>	Plan your activities carefully on hot, dry and windy days.

## Fire warnings and further information

- **Call** the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 (National Relay Service 1800 555 677)
- **Visit** [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au)
- **Listen** to the emergency broadcasters: ABC Local Radio, commercial radio, designated community radio stations or Sky News television
- **Download** the VicEmergency app
- **Visit** an accredited Visitor Information Centre
- **Follow** VicEmergency on Facebook and Twitter.

For help with English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask for the VicEmergency Hotline.

For park and forest closures and information, go to [parks.vic.gov.au](http://parks.vic.gov.au) or call 13 19 63.

For road closures and traffic information, go to [vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au).

## In an emergency

**CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) TO CONTACT POLICE, FIRE OR AMBULANCE (TTY 106). CALLS ARE FREE.**

You should only call 000 in life threatening or time critical situations when an urgent response is needed from police, fire or ambulance.

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# Bushfire safety advice for travellers



For fire updates call 1800 226 226 or visit [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au)

**FireReady** VICTORIA State Government

# Your Bushfire Safety

The warmer months are the perfect time to discover Victoria. However, if you are travelling in a high risk bushfire area between November and April please follow these simple bushfire safety tips to ensure that your visit is safe and enjoyable.

Victoria's high risk bushfire areas are typically heavily forested, have thick bush or long, dry grass, or are coastal areas with lots of plant life.

- ✓ **Before you travel**, download the VicEmergency app, bookmark [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au), and save the VicEmergency Hotline 1800 226 226 – into your mobile phone. Make sure your mobile phone has a fully charged battery.
- ✓ **Know the fire district** of any destination you plan to visit.
- ✓ **Stay aware of the Fire Danger Rating for the area you are visiting and find out if there is a Total Fire Ban.** Contact the VicEmergency Hotline 1800 226 226, go to [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au) or use the VicEmergency app.
- ✓ **Monitor local weather conditions.** On hot, dry and windy days it's better to visit safer places such as regional cities.
- ✓ **Seek information from locals.** Your host or the nearest accredited Visitor Information Centre may be able to suggest alternative holiday activities on high risk days and provide local bushfire information.
- ✓ **Obtain a Community Information Guide - Bushfire.** These provide local information that will help you decide what to do on high risk days or if a fire starts.
- ✓ **Listen to local or ABC radio for warnings and advice while you're on the road.**
- ✓ **Carry hard copy maps.** Electronic mapping devices or mobile phones may be affected by smoke.
- ✓ **Watch for signs of fire such as smoke and emergency vehicles.** Do not expect an official warning.

- ✓ **Plan carefully when a Code Red Fire Danger Rating is forecast.** If you are staying in a high risk area and a Code Red is forecast, leaving early is always the safest option. Leave the night before or early on the day of a Code Red. Keep monitoring warnings and signs of fire activity, and return only when it is clearly safe to do so. A Code Red Fire Danger Rating is rare, but when it is forecast it is very serious.
- ✓ **Be aware of grassfires when you're travelling.** Grassfire can move at speeds of up to 25 km/hr and jump highways

## Total Fire Bans

A Total Fire Ban sets legal restrictions on certain activities that may start a fire, including restrictions around barbecues and campfires.

### On days of Total Fire Ban:

- Campfires and open flame barbecues are not permitted. This includes the use of kettle/Weber style barbecues and camp ovens.
- Solid fuel barbecues (e.g. wood, charcoal and briquettes) are not permitted.
- Liquid fuel barbecues or appliances are not permitted to be used in the open, or in a tent, annexe or tent-like trailer.
- Gas and electric barbecues are permitted, provided that:
  - The area three metres around the barbecue is cleared of flammable material.
  - You have a hose connected to a water supply or vessel with at least 10 litres of water.
  - An adult who has the capacity and means to extinguish the fire is present at all times.
  - The fire is completely extinguished before the adult leaves.

Find out more about Total Fire Bans at [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au).

## Community Information Guides

Community Information Bushfire Guides provide valuable local information that will help you to decide what to do on high risk days or if a fire starts.

Guides have been prepared for a number of communities in Victoria that are at risk of fire, and include local maps and information on local risks. The guides will also tell you if there is a Neighbourhood Safer Place in the area, which is where you can shelter from fire when all other plans have failed.

To find out whether the area you are visiting has a Community Information Guide, go to [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au), or ask your host or an accredited Visitor Information Centre.

## Leaving early

If you are visiting a high risk area and the Fire Danger Rating is forecast to be a Code Red, leaving early is always the safest option. Do not wait and see. Leave the night before or early on the day of a Code Red. Return only when it is clearly safe to do so.

High risk areas are generally areas that are heavily forested, have thick bush or long, dry grass, or coastal areas with lots of plant life.

Visit a place of relative safety such as a large shopping complex or the central business district of a regional city. You will need to know the safest route to take and have an alternative route in case a road is blocked or congested.

Your host or an accredited Visitor Information Centre may be able to suggest alternative holiday activities on high risk days.

## Will I receive a warning?

Some fires will start so quickly that there will be no time for any official warning. If you are travelling in a high risk area you need to check for warnings, watch for signs of fire and stay aware of the Fire Danger Rating.

In some emergency situations, however, you may receive an Emergency Alert message on your phone or hear a community alert siren.

### Emergency Alerts

In an emergency situation, such as a bushfire or flood, you may receive an Emergency Alert text message on your mobile phone or a voice message on the landline phone in your holiday property.

If you receive an Emergency Alert on your phone, follow the instructions provided in the message and seek further information by tuning into an emergency broadcaster such as ABC Local Radio.

### Community alert sirens

Some locations in Victoria use an alert siren as a way of alerting the community to an emergency or possible danger. A prolonged, five minute signal will indicate a current emergency has been identified in the local area.

If you hear a community alert siren, seek further information by contacting the VicEmergency Hotline 1800 226 226, go to [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au) or use the VicEmergency app.