



Leaving Early

Bushfire Planning Template

Not everyone thinks clearly in an emergency.

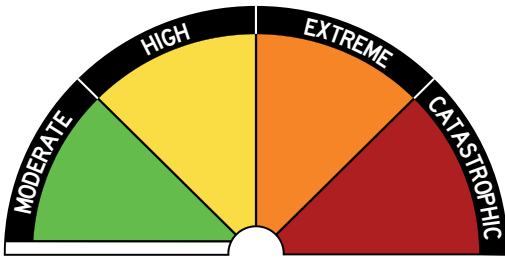
A written and well-practised plan will help you remember what needs to be done during a crisis.

It also lists the preparations you will need to do to help you become fire ready.

Your plan needs to outline:

- Actions leading up to the bushfire season
- Actions during the bushfire season
- Actions leading up to fire risk days
- Actions on fire risk days.

Know your daily fire danger rating



The Fire Danger Rating predicts fire behaviour (should a fire start) and how dangerous it would be to put out. The higher the rating, the more dangerous the conditions. Fire Danger Ratings feature in weather forecasts during the fire season.

To check your district's daily Fire Danger Rating, visit cfa.vic.gov.au or call **1800 226 226**.

	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
CATASTROPHIC	If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost. ▶ These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire.	For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas. ▶ Your life may depend on the decisions you make, even before there is a fire. ▶ For your survival, do not be in bushfire risk areas. ▶ Stay safe by going to a safer location early in the morning or the night before. ▶ Homes cannot withstand fires in these conditions. You may not be able to leave and help may not be available.
EXTREME	Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous. ▶ These are dangerous fire conditions. ▶ Expect hot, dry and windy conditions.	Take action now to protect your life and property ▶ Check your bushfire plan and that your property is fire ready ▶ If a fire starts, take immediate action. If you and property are not prepared to the highest level, go to a safer location well before the fire impacts. ▶ Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas. ▶ Leaving bushfire risk areas early in the day is your safest option.
HIGH	Fires can be dangerous.	Be ready to act. ▶ There's a heightened risk. Be alert for fires in your area. ▶ Decide what you will do if a fire starts. ▶ If a fire starts, your life and property may be at risk. The safest option is to avoid bushfire risk areas.
MODERATE	Most fires can be controlled.	Plan and prepare. ▶ Stay up to date and be ready to act if there is a fire.

Monitor conditions and official sources for warnings by going to cfa.vic.gov.au, emergency.vic.gov.au or call the VicEmergency Hotline on **1800 226 226**

Leaving Early

Actions leading up to the bushfire season

PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY		
HOUSE MAINTENANCE	WHO WILL DO THIS?	DONE
Clear and maintain gutters of leaves, twigs and rubbish.		☐ *
Ensure underfloor areas are enclosed or screened.		☐
Seal all gaps, vents and roof spaces to prevent embers entering your house.		☐
Store fuels and chemicals away from your house.		☐
Store LPG gas tanks appropriately. They should be vented away from your house.		☐
Move woodpiles away from the house.		☐

VEGETATION MAINTENANCE	WHO WILL DO THIS?	DONE
Clear fine fuels from around your home (fine fuels are those that are the same thickness or less than a pencil, such as grass, bark and leaves).		☐ *
Keep grass areas well trimmed and watered. Grass should be no more than 10 centimetres high within 30 metres of your home.		☐
Rake and clear leaf litter (dead leaves) regularly. Leaf litter must be no more than one centimetre in depth.		☐
Remove flammable mulch from around your house. It is extremely dangerous if used within 10 metres of your home, especially under windows.		☐
Remove or trim shrubs. There should be no shrubs over one metre next to or below windows.		☐
Trim tree branches overhanging your house.		☐

* Many of these actions should be ongoing leading up to and during the bushfire season. Depending on your circumstances, you may need to do them more than once.

OTHER	DONE
Ensure you have adequate home and contents insurance.	☐
List your irreplaceable family keepsakes and valuables. Identify a safe location to store these valuables. Where will you locate them? Consider moving these out of the area during summer.	☐

Actions during the bushfire season

How will you monitor weather conditions and know the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) in your area?

WHAT IS YOUR TRIGGER TO LEAVE?		
Your trigger to leave is what prompts you to act. You should use the Fire Danger Rating to determine your trigger. On Extreme or Catastrophic days you should not be in a bush fire risk area.	Your trigger to leave is: ☐ Extreme ☐ Catastrophic	
When will you leave?	☐ The night before	☐ Early in the morning
Do all household members know what to do on trigger days?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do you care for older people, children or those with a disability?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is the trigger the same for everyone in the household?	☐ Yes	☐ No

Where to find warnings and updates

 Listen to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations and watch Sky News TV.	 VicEmergency website: VicEmergency.vic.gov.au
 Social Media outlets: Twitter @CFA_Updates and facebook.com/cfavic	 1800 226 226 The VicEmergency Hotline is a freecall.
 1800 555 677 Callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment can contact VicEmergency via the National Relay Service on this number.	 131 450 If you do not speak English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service for translated information from VicEmergency. If you know someone who cannot speak English, give them this number.
IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES	
 You may receive an SMS to your mobile phone.	 You may receive a call to your landline phone.

PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR EMERGENCY KIT

	DONE		DONE
Protective clothing.	☐	A change of clothes.	☐
Food and water.	☐	Identification papers (e.g. photo ID, passport, insurance policies, will).	☐
Woolen blankets.	☐	A first-aid kit.	☐
Medications and toiletries.	☐	Pet food, water and bedding if needed.	☐
A list of the contact numbers for your doctor, dentist, local hospital, chemist, vet, municipal councils, gas, electricity and water providers.			☐

Where will you store your Emergency Kit? It must be easy to access.

What is your plan for the safety of pets during relocation? Pets need to be kept cool and hydrated.

Your Emergency Kit

Overnight bag with change of clothes, toiletries and sanitary supplies

Identification and important items
 › photo ID
 › passport
 › photos
 › will
 › jewellery
 › insurance papers
 › USB with important files

Medicines, first-aid kit and prescriptions

Mobile phone and charger

Battery-powered radio, torch and spare batteries

Adequate amount of water and food

Woolen blankets

Contact information
 › doctor
 › council
 › power company



Actions leading up to fire risk days

Who is likely to be at the house?

Weekdays	Weekends/school holidays
Monday _____	_____
Tuesday _____	_____
Wednesday _____	_____
Thursday _____	_____
Friday _____	_____

Does **everyone** on the list know the plan?

List contact details of those who need to know about your plan.

Name	Relationship	Contact numbers
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Where will you go (Is your destination pet friendly)?

Can you stay there for a number of days?

How will you travel there?

What route will you take to get there?

Know your local area – have a map. List the names of your surrounding towns and suburbs.

List alternative routes out of the area.

Tips leading up to fire risk days

- Ensure you have enough petrol or fuel so you don't need to stop to fill up.
- Have cars facing out of the driveway.
- Remove flammable items such as boxes, doormats and furniture from decks and verandahs.

Leaving Early

Bushfire Planning Template

Fill out this Template and take it with you when you leave.



WHAT IS YOUR TRIGGER TO LEAVE?

Your trigger to leave is what prompts you to act. You should use the Fire Danger Rating to determine your trigger. On **Extreme** or **Catastrophic** days you should not be in a bush fire risk area.

Your trigger to leave is:



Extreme



Catastrophic

When will you leave?



The night before



Early in the morning

BEFORE YOU LEAVE	DONE
Add final items to your Emergency Kit such as medications, prescriptions, mobile phone chargers, pet food and water for everyone.	☐
Pack the car, remembering your most important items such as wallet, cards, keys, banking, medical and insurance documents (these should be easily accessible on a USB stick or in an expanding file).	☐
Turn off the gas supply.	☐
Block the downpipes and partially fill the gutters with water, if time permits.	☐
Make sure everyone is wearing protective clothing – long pants, long-sleeved shirts and sturdy shoes such as leather boots. Clothes should be loose fitting and made from natural fibres such as pure wool, heavy cotton drill or denim. Do not wear synthetics.	☐
Tell people you are leaving.	☐
Close all doors and windows and lock doors.	☐
Leave the front or access gate unlocked.	☐
Decide on your primary destination	☐
Decide on your back-up destination	☐

GETTING READY TO GO	DONE
Stay updated on fire information so you will know if a fire has started near you.	☐
Move livestock to a large, safely fenced area and put your pets in a safe place ready for loading in the car.	☐
Pack personal items such as a change of clothing for each person and toys for children and pets and put them in the car.	☐
If your car is behind an electric garage door, take it out of the garage and position it in the driveway facing out or on the side of the road.	☐
Remove any material that could burn easily from around your house, on decks, verandahs and pergola areas. This includes mats and outdoor furniture.	☐



CAUTION

Leaving early is you taking action to protect your life and the lives of your family members. In some conditions, any fire that starts is likely to be uncontrollable.

Leaving early does not mean waiting for a warning or a siren. It does not mean waiting to see or smell smoke. And it certainly does not mean waiting for a knock on the door.

Which radio station/s will you be tuned into?

How will you monitor conditions while travelling away from home?

How will you know it is safe to return?

Other things to consider: How will your plan be affected by several fire risk days in a row?
Remember, it is important to minimise the disruption caused to your household by relocating.
It is best to go to places where you can continue with normal activities as much as possible.

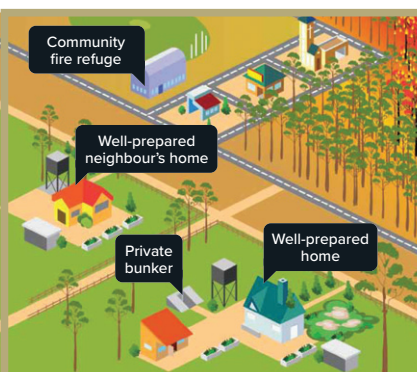
Survival Options



LEAVE EARLY

- › When the Fire Danger Rating is Catastrophic, leaving early is always the safest option.
- › Leave early destinations could include homes of family and friends who live outside the risk area, a nearby town or other built-up area.

ALWAYS THE SAFEST OPTION



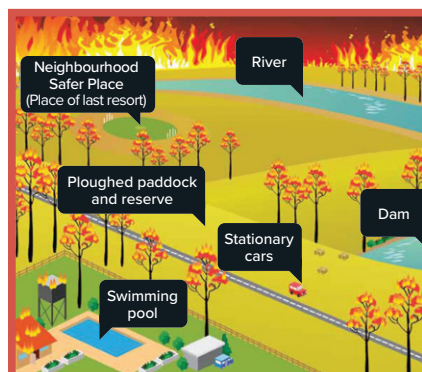
WELL PREPARED

If leaving the high risk area is no longer an option, there may be options close to where you are that could protect you.

These include:

- › a well-prepared home (yours or your neighbour's) that you can actively defend
- › private bushfire shelter (bunker) that meets current regulations
- › designated community fire refuge
- › think about how you will get there.

YOUR SAFETY IS NOT GUARANTEED



LAST RESORT

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

- › Bushfire Place of Last Resort (Neighbourhood Safer Place)
- › stationary car in a clear area
- › ploughed paddock or reserve
- › body of water (i.e. beach, swimming pool, dam, river, etc).

HIGH RISK OF TRAUMA, INJURY OR DEATH. GUARANTEED

If you need assistance completing this document or have any questions, please visit emergency.vic.gov.au or call the VicEmergency Hotline on **1800 226 226**.