

BUSHFIRE WARNINGS AND INFORMATION

What to expect and where to find information

Fire agencies will provide you with as much information as possible when there is a bushfire. It is important to understand that bushfires can spread quickly and threaten lives and property within minutes. If a fire starts nearby you may not receive an official warning.

You need to remain alert, monitor the outside environment for signs of fire and actively seek information. Tune into your emergency broadcasters: ABC and commercial radio stations, and SKY News TV, for fire updates and warnings during the fire season. All alerts and warnings will be posted on the CFA and Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) websites at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or www.dse.vic.gov.au. You can also phone the Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL) on 1800 240 667 (TTY 1800 122 969).

Bushfire warning levels

When bushfire warnings are issued you need to understand the level of warning. There are three levels, each increasing in importance:

1. **Advice** – a fire has started – general information to keep you up-to-date with developments.
2. **Watch and Act** – a fire is approaching you, conditions are changing; you need to start taking action now to protect your life and your family.
3. **Emergency Warning** – you are in imminent danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted by fire.

How you could receive warnings

- Warnings will appear on the CFA and DSE websites, and broadcast on ABC and commercial radio stations and SKY News TV
- You will need an AM/FM battery-powered radio in case the power goes out, plus extra batteries for the radio
- You may hear a distinctive siren sound that will be played prior to an emergency warning being broadcast. This is known as SEWS (Standard Emergency Warning Signal)
- A new telephone-based emergency warning system may issue warning messages via landlines based on the location of the handset and mobile phones based on an individual's billing address:
 - You may receive a warning via a text message to your mobile phone or a voice message to your landline telephone
 - If you live in an area that has minimal mobile coverage, consider installing a landline telephone so you can receive a message. The landline phone should not be cordless as cordless phones do not work in a power blackout
 - Don't rely on receiving a message, individuals and communities must still prepare themselves in case of an emergency. There is no guarantee this system will be used for every bushfire.



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What information will warnings provide?

- Warnings on the radio and websites may include information about:
 - the level of warning
 - the status of the fire
 - which direction the fire is moving and towards what area
 - possible time to impact
 - which towns may be affected
 - what actions you may have to take
- Warnings received on your phone will alert you to the level of warning and direct you to seek further information or take action. You need to act on the advice of the warning and if you do not understand the message seek assistance from a relative, friend or neighbour
- You will also be advised to activate your Bushfire Survival Plan
- Not all townships or suburbs may be mentioned in a warning. It may instead cover a broader area. Have a local map book handy to identify where bushfires may be burning in relation to you.

Be prepared and act to survive

- Consider any day declared as Severe, Extreme or Code Red (catastrophic) as a trigger to implement your Bushfire Survival Plan, but also stay alert on all other high-risk days
- Fire Danger Ratings will be broadcast on radio, TV and on the websites. Look out for these weather warnings as part of your planning and preparation.

Remember – you may not receive a personal warning. It is always safer to leave before bushfire threatens than to wait for a warning. Not receiving a warning does not necessarily mean there isn't a threat.

Further sources of information

- VBIL 1800 240 667 (TTY 1800 122 969) for bushfire updates and information. Store the number in your phone
- CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au for information on bushfire safety and preparation. Bushfire warnings will be published on the website
- Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) website www.dse.vic.gov.au for information about planned burns and fires on public land. Bushfire warnings will be published on the website
- Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) website www.bom.gov.au for detailed weather information.

For more information please visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or phone the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

FireReady The logo for 'FireReady' in a large, bold, red font, followed by the Victorian state logo which includes a blue square with a white 'V' and the word 'Victoria' below it.