



BUSHFIRE ALERTS AND WARNINGS

WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

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

Remain alert, monitor the outside environment for signs of fire and actively seek information. Tune into your emergency broadcasters: ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations and SKY News TV, for fire alerts and warnings. Alerts and warnings will also 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 alert levels

When bushfire alerts and warnings are issued you need to understand what each one means. There are three levels, each increasing in importance:

- 1. Advice** – a fire has started. There is no immediate danger; 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 danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted by fire.

How you could receive bushfire alerts

- Information will appear on the CFA and DSE websites, and be broadcast on ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations and SKY News TV. The Victorian Bushfire Information Line will also have the same information available
- A distinctive siren sound may be played over the radio or TV prior to an emergency warning being broadcast. This is known as SEWS (Standard Emergency Warning Signal)
- Emergency Alert, the telephone-based emergency warning system may also be used to send warning voice messages to landlines. Text messages may be sent to mobile phones based on a phone's billing address:
 - If you live in an area that has minimal mobile coverage, consider installing a landline telephone so you can receive a message. Consider using a non-cordless phone as cordless phones do not work if the power goes off

What information will bushfire alerts provide?

- Alerts and warnings may include information about:
 - the level of alert
 - the fire's behaviour
 - which direction the fire is moving
 - predicted time that communities will be impacted
 - a list of towns or areas that may be affected
 - what actions to take
- Warnings received on your phone will alert you to the level of danger and direct you to seek further information or take action, such as activating your Bushfire Survival Plan. You must act on the advice provided to you. If you do not understand the message, seek assistance from a relative, friend or neighbour
- It's not always possible to list all townships or suburbs in the message; it could instead cover a broader area.

Be prepared and act to survive

- Consider any day forecast as Severe, Extreme or Code Red as a trigger to implement your Bushfire Survival Plan; continue to stay alert on all high-risk days
- Fire Danger Ratings will be broadcast on radio, TV and on the websites. Look out for these forecasts as part of your planning and preparation
- Make sure you have access to an AM/FM battery-powered radio in case the power goes out, plus extra batteries for the radio – so you can continue to monitor for information
- Keep a map of your local area or the area you are visiting; you can check the map to see where the fire is and look for escape routes and safer locations.

Remember – you may not receive a personal warning, so it is always safer to leave well before bushfire threatens. Just because you don't receive a warning, does not mean there isn't a threat. Do not expect a firetruck.

Further sources of information

- Victorian Bushfire Information Line 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. Fire Danger Ratings, alerts and warnings will be published on the CFA website
- Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) website www.dse.vic.gov.au for information about planned burns and fire management on public land. Bushfire warnings will also be published on the DSE website
- Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) website www.bom.gov.au for detailed weather information.