



# Leaving Early

## Bushfire Survival 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.

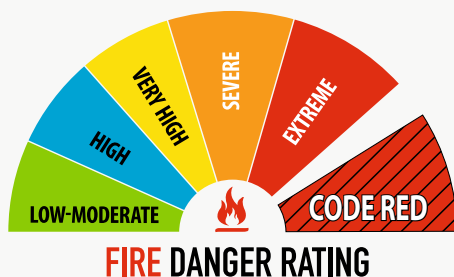
It also lists the preparations you will need to do to help you become fire ready.

**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](http://cfa.vic.gov.au) or call **1800 226 226**.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
<b>CODE RED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; These are the worst conditions for a bush or grassfire.</li><li>&gt; Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions.</li><li>&gt; The safest place to be is away from high-risk bushfire areas.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Leaving high-risk bushfire areas the night before or early in the day is your safest option – do not wait and see.</li><li>&gt; Avoid forested areas, thick bush or long, dry grass.</li><li>&gt; Know your trigger – make a decision about:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– when you will leave</li><li>– where you will go</li><li>– how you will get there</li><li>– when you will return</li><li>– what you will do if you cannot leave.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>EXTREME</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions.</li><li>&gt; If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Spot fires will start, move quickly and come from many directions.</li><li>&gt; Homes that are situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, that are well prepared and actively defended, may provide safety.</li><li>&gt; You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Consider staying with your property only if you are prepared to the highest level. This means your home needs to be situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, you are well prepared and you can actively defend your home if a fire starts.</li><li>&gt; If you are not prepared to the highest level, leaving high-risk bushfire areas early in the day is your safest option.</li><li>&gt; Be aware of local conditions and get information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV, going to <a href="http://emergency.vic.gov.au">emergency.vic.gov.au</a> or call the VicEmergency Hotline on <b>1800 226 226</b>.</li></ul>
<b>SEVERE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions.</li><li>&gt; If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable.</li><li>&gt; Well-prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety.</li><li>&gt; You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Well-prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety – check your Bushfire Survival Plan.</li><li>&gt; If you are not prepared, leaving bushfire-prone areas early in the day is your safest option.</li><li>&gt; Be aware of local conditions. Seek information by listening to ABC local radio, commercial and designated community radio stations, or watch Sky News TV, visit <a href="http://emergency.vic.gov.au">emergency.vic.gov.au</a>, call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 or via National Relay Service on 1800 555 677.</li></ul>
<b>VERY HIGH</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions and homes can provide safety.</li></ul> <b>HIGH</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Be aware of how fires can start and minimise the risk.</li></ul> <b>LOW-MODERATE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Controlled burning off may occur in these conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits or conditions apply.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Check your Bushfire Survival Plan.</li><li>&gt; Monitor conditions.</li><li>&gt; Action may be needed.</li><li>&gt; Leave if necessary.</li></ul>

# 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.		<input type="checkbox"/> *
Ensure underfloor areas are enclosed or screened.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Seal all gaps, vents and roof spaces to prevent embers entering your house.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Store fuels and chemicals away from your house.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Store LPG gas tanks appropriately. They should be vented away from your house.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Move woodpiles away from the house.		<input type="checkbox"/>

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).		<input type="checkbox"/> *
Keep grass areas well trimmed and watered. Grass should be no more than 10 centimetres high within 30 metres of your home.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Rake and clear leaf litter (dead leaves) regularly. Leaf litter must be no more than one centimetre in depth.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Remove flammable mulch from around your house. It is extremely dangerous if used within 10 metres of your home, especially under windows.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Remove or trim shrubs. There should be no shrubs over one metre next to or below windows.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Trim tree branches overhanging your house.		<input type="checkbox"/>

\* 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>

# 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 **Severe**, **Extreme** or **Code Red** days you should not be in a high fire risk area.

Your trigger to leave is:

☐ **Severe** ☐ **Extreme** ☐ **Code Red**

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 app or  
**emergency.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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A change of clothes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food and water.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identification papers (e.g. photo ID, passport, insurance policies, will).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Woolen blankets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A first-aid kit.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medications and toiletries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pet food, water and bedding if needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
A list of the contact numbers for your doctor, dentist, local hospital, chemist, vet, municipal councils, gas, electricity and water providers.			<input type="checkbox"/>

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 Survival Planning Template

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



### WHAT IS YOUR TRIGGER TO LEAVE?

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Your trigger to leave is:

☐ **Severe** ☐ **Extreme** ☐ **Code Red**

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?

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How will you monitor conditions while travelling away from home?

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How will you know it is safe to return?

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**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.

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## Survival Options



### LEAVE EARLY

- › When the Fire Danger Rating is Code Red, 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

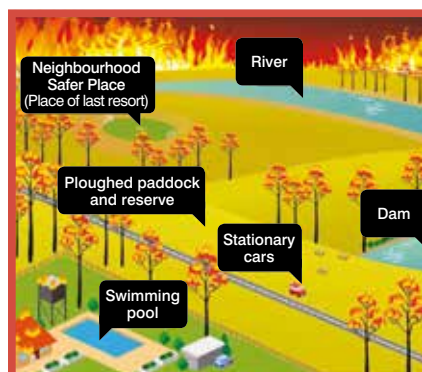


### WELL PREPARED

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 on Severe and Extreme Fire Danger Rating days only
- › private bushfire shelter (bunker) that meets current regulations
- › designated community fire refuge.

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:

- › Neighbourhood Safer Place (Place of Last Resort)
- › 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.

If you need assistance completing this document or have any questions, please visit [emergency.vic.gov.au](https://emergency.vic.gov.au) or call the VicEmergency Hotline on **1800 226 226**.