Home Emergency Plan

It pays to have a plan
# Emergency Contacts

| Life Threatening Emergency | 000 (Triple Zero)  |
| Police, Fire, Ambulance | 112  |
| 000 alternative for Mobile Telephones | 106 TTY |
| 000 alternative if you are hearing impaired |

| VICSES Emergency Calls | 132 500 |
| for help with flood or storm |
| VICSES Website | www.ses.vic.gov.au |
| VICSES Flood & Storm Information Line | 1300 842 737 |
| during major emergencies only | 1300 VIC SES |

| National Relay Service | www.relayservice.com.au |
| The deaf/hearing/speech impaired can call SES 132 500 (or 000) using NRS |
| dial | then ask for: |
| Speak and Listen (SSR) | 1300 555 727 |
| users phone: | 132 500 or 000 |
| TTY/Voice users phone: | 133 677 |
| Internet Relay users connect via: | 132 500 |
| | and enter 132 500 or 000 |

| Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) | 1300 659 217 |
| weather forecasts, warnings, radar, satellite maps and river height information | www.bom.gov.au |

| Australian Tsunami Warning Centre | 1300 878 6264 |
| www.bom.gov.au |

| ABC Radio | www.abc.net.au |
| AM/FM |
| Other local radio emergency broadcasters |

| Department of Health | www.health.vic.gov.au |
| for advice on health issues such as water quality, hygiene during disasters, coping with stress |

| Department of Human Services | www.dhs.vic.gov.au |
| emergency relief and recovery advice |

| Department of Primary Industries | www.dpi.vic.gov.au |
| animal health and diseases |

| VicRoads | 13 11 70 |
| traffic hazard reporting and road closures | www.vicroads.vic.gov.au |

| Australian Red Cross | www.redcross.org.au |
| emergency plans, relief and recovery support |

| Fire Information | www.cfa.vic.gov.au |
| For further information on fires refer to the CFA and MFB websites. | www.mfb.vic.gov.au |
Why do you need a plan?

Why do I need a Home Emergency Plan?
Emergencies can happen any time, and can have a big effect on your life.

Many people think they don’t have time to make a plan, or that they don’t need to.

Experience shows that those who plan and prepare for emergencies can reduce the impact of the emergency and may recover quicker afterwards.

Taking the time to think about emergencies and making a plan helps you to think clearly, have a greater sense of control and make better decisions when an emergency occurs.

Won’t SES look after me?
Emergency service organisations like SES have a responsibility to support people during an emergency, and will make every effort to be there when needed.

However, during major emergencies there are often many competing demands and calls for help, and no emergency service can help everyone. SES volunteers respond to calls in priority order depending on the greatest need.

Individuals and communities must share the responsibility for staying safe. Please be patient and check on your neighbours who may also need support.

The best Emergency Plan has three parts:
1. what you plan to do before the emergency to be ready
2. what you plan to do during the emergency to keep safe and minimise the effect of the emergency on you and your property
3. what you plan to do after the emergency to get help, recover and return to normal life as soon as possible.

Make sure your plan includes:
• how you will get further information about the situation
• what you will do if some family members are not at home during the emergency or you have visitors to your home
• who you can ask for help if you need it

It’s easy to think "It won’t happen to me" until it actually does Have a plan - know what to do and when to do it
How do I develop a Home Emergency Plan?

Start by thinking about:

• what types of emergencies could affect you or your property
• who will be part of the plan - adults, children, elderly relatives or others with special needs as well as pets and livestock
• the location and layout of your property
• two ways to exit any room in your house and two ways to exit your area in case one way is blocked
• where you will go if you are unable to get home or need to evacuate because of an emergency
• whether your insurance cover is adequate
• putting together a Home Emergency Kit, including important contact numbers for getting help and staying in touch
• practising your plan to make sure everyone knows what to do

The middle pages of this booklet give you more tips for writing your Home Emergency Plan.

Get the whole family involved in developing the plan
Practice it so everyone knows what to do

What if I have Special Needs?

If you have special needs, you will need to think carefully about your plan. If you have a carer or council support, ask them to help prepare or check over your plan.

Start by thinking about:

• whether you will need help to leave your home
• having a pre-arranged safer place to stay
• whether you will need to take any special equipment with you
• whether you will need an alternative power source to run life-support equipment

Even if you only need help from a neighbour, talking about it now will ease your mind and ensure everything is in place before an emergency occurs.

Red Cross Australia has excellent emergency planning advice for people with a disability and their carers at www.redcross.org.au
Who should you include?

Who should be in our Home Emergency Plan?
Consider all members of your household including:

- those with special needs
- those who stay with you part-time
- regular visitors to your home such as cleaners, gardeners and baby-sitters
- pets and other animals.

What if the emergency happens when I’m not at home?
Work, school, social life, hobbies, appointments and other activities mean that some members of your household could be at home when others are not.

Your plan should include how you will keep in touch with those who are not at home and how you or others will manage if all members of the household are not there.

Households with members in the emergency services also need to plan for if their household is affected by an emergency while they are away helping others.

Know your Neighbours
Getting to know your neighbours keeps your community strong and resilient.

Even if you don’t see your neighbours often, keeping in touch before, during and after an emergency can help everyone cope.

Your neighbours can also keep watch on your property and call for help if something happens while you’re not at home.

Be especially alert for:
- older adults living alone
- families with young children
- those new to Australia or to your neighbourhood.

Who else needs to know about the plan?
- friends and family who don’t live with you
- employers and workmates, if what you plan to do could affect your work commitments
- local emergency services may wish to know if you plan to evacuate, however this is a local arrangement and may not apply in every community.

Making sure others know what you plan to do in an emergency can save worry, time, phone calls and unnecessary searches
Where do you live?

Where is your property and what does it look like?
The location of your property and the way it is set out can affect the risks you face.

Is your home or property:
- close to other homes or isolated?
- part of a larger block of units, flats or stand-alone houses?
- on flat, low-lying or steep land?
- near a creek, river or drain that is prone to flooding?
- heavily treed, especially near your house?
- easy to access for emergency service vehicles and ordinary traffic?
- self-sufficient or reliant on town power, mains water and telephone?
- well-maintained?
- identified as being in a high risk area?
- clearly numbered so it is easy to find during an emergency?

To get a better picture of where your property may be at risk and what resources you have to help you, try drawing a map of your property.

Mark on your map important details such as:
- the location of your house and its neighbours
- sheds, paddocks, haysheds and animal shelters
- water tanks and dams
- main routes in and out of the area
- closeness to coast, lakes, culverts, drains and waterways that could lead to flooding or flash flooding
- areas of natural bush or grasslands for bush and grassfire risk or falling trees during storms
- direction of the most common damaging weather patterns such as storm fronts or strong winds; these are often affected by hills and valleys or by nearby large structures or buildings.

Add a plan of the house showing the location of bedrooms, kitchen and main living areas. Include features such as gas bottles, electricity and water meters so you know where you can switch these off if needed.

Identify at least two ways in and out of each room of the house and a meeting place such as a letterbox or neighbour’s house that is away from danger and where emergency services can find you.
What emergencies could affect your household?

Think broadly of the kinds of emergencies that could impact you. Don’t fall into the trap of focusing on one emergency at the expense of others.

To find out more about emergencies in your area, check the following:

• neighbours and long-time residents of your area
• local emergency services and emergency service websites
• local council and water or catchment authority
• library and historical societies which may have information on past events

The following emergencies may affect Victorian households. Tick the ones you know might happen in your area.

- storms with damaging winds, flash flooding & hail
- flood
- bushfire
- housefire
- mud slide or land slide
- tsunami
- coastal or tidal surge
- earthquakes and tremors
- medical emergency
- power, gas or mains water outages
- industrial accidents or chemical spills
Our Emergency Action Plan

What emergencies could affect us?
List each type and describe briefly how it could affect your household.

Who is included in this plan?

What will we do if some of us are not at home?

Will we evacuate? When will we go?
For each type of emergency, list the trigger for evacuation.

Meeting place near home

Meeting place away from home
Our Emergency Action Plan

What we will do before the emergency to prepare?

What will we do during the emergency?

What will we do after the emergency?
Don't wait for a personal warning

Will anyone warn me?

SES and other agencies will try to warn you of a potential emergency as soon as possible. However, no emergency service can guarantee a personal warning.

Some emergencies, like flash flooding, can happen too quickly to warn people. Very heavy rain may be the only ‘warning’ you get. Other emergencies can change quickly.

Make it your responsibility to find out what is happening. Look, listen and smell the air for clues. Check out other sources of information such as radio, websites, friends and neighbours.

You need to be prepared to take action yourself to find out what is happening and to decide the safest way to respond.

Where can I get reliable information?

The Bureau of Meteorology is responsible for official warnings about severe weather, flood, storm and tsunami. Their website has links to many sources of information such as weather radar, satellite photographs, weather charts, river gauge information and warnings.

Emergency Services such as SES will broadcast what is happening and what you can do to stay safe by using:

- Emergency broadcasters such as ABC, commercial and designated community radio stations; SKY News TV
- Websites updates
- Information Lines (during major emergencies)
- Community meetings, noticeboards and newsletters
- Technology such as mobile telephone text messages (SMS) or recorded phone warnings to land lines.

What should I do if I hear a warning?

- **Stay calm.** Stop what you are doing and **pay attention.** If you don’t understand the warning, get someone to explain - ask neighbours, friends or ring an information line
- **Follow the advice of warnings immediately.** People die or are put in danger because they don’t respond right away
- **Keep in contact with family members.** Make sure they know what is happening and what you plan to do
- **Stay informed.** Keep listening for more information in case the situation changes

*Keeping in touch with friends and neighbours provides practical support and information and can help you cope emotionally as well*
Evacuation and Registration

Will we evacuate? When should we leave?

- Make your decision to leave before you are threatened.
- People do die in emergencies, often when they leave late. Travel can be more dangerous during an emergency.
- Listen to the advice of emergency services when making your decision but base your choice on what is happening locally.
- Police and/or SES volunteers may advise you to leave your home. This personal approach is not always possible, so if you think you should leave, don’t delay. Always follow advice from emergency services.
- Make sure everyone knows your meeting place and keep in touch with family, friends and neighbours.
- Take your Home Emergency Kit with you.
- Turn off the electricity, gas and water at the mains as you leave.
- Take your pets with you. Dogs should be on a lead or harness and muzzled. Cats should be in a standard carry box or pet crate.
- Go to a safer place - with family and friends or to a Relief Centre. Register your details or register with Red Cross who use the National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS), so that you can be traced if needed.

Avoid driving in an emergency

If you must drive, take special care as roads are often blocked or damaged and traffic can be chaotic.

Where can we go?

Part of your Home Emergency Plan is working out where to go before, during and after an emergency. A safer place out of the affected area is preferable.

Private Arrangements

The best place to go during an emergency is to friends or family in a safer place where you can be comfortable and secure. In a flood that could be a neighbour’s house on higher ground.

Emergency Relief Centres

These are set up when necessary by Council to provide short-term relief for those caught in a large scale emergency. They provide only basic services such as food, water, clothing, blankets, first aid and emergency shelter. They may also provide advice on how to get financial assistance, personal support and temporary accommodation.

Relief Centres may not always cater for those with special needs. If you or a family member have special needs, plan ahead for the support you need and know where to get assistance.
Putting together a Home Emergency Kit

Your Home Emergency Kit should have everything you and your family need to cope in an emergency.

- a copy of your Home Emergency Plan
- portable radio with spare batteries
- torch with spare batteries
- mobile phone charger
- first aid kit
- medicines and prescriptions
- rubber and strong leather gloves
- important papers such as wills, passports and insurance documents
- waterproof bag for valuables
- any special requirements for young children, the disabled, infirm or elderly
- strong shoes or boots
- enough food and drinking water for three days
- money, bank cards and identification cards such as Driver’s Licence, Medicare, Veteran’s, Disability or Senior’s cards
- favourite toy, pack of cards, game or book for children
- items for animals or pets - food, water, bowls, a leash or harness, identification tags, medications, vet records, kitty litter.

A Home Emergency Kit keeps everything you need handy - whatever the emergency and whenever it happens

What if I have a disability?

If you have a disability, you will need to plan for your needs and include special items in your kit. These may include:

- an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and cleaning kit
- an extra hearing aid with battery
- a repair kit and canned air for wheelchair tyres; spare inner tubes
- an extra battery or backup power for a battery-operated wheelchair, life-support system or other power dependent equipment. You cannot rely on mains power in an emergency
- copies of specifications for adaptive equipment or medical devices
- pencil, paper or spare communication aids if you have a speech-related or communication disability
- a message card that indicates that you are hearing impaired and whether or not you sign
- special food or drink for those on restricted diets
When Disaster Strikes

What can we do before the emergency to be prepared?

- find out as much as you can about emergencies that could affect you. Attend community information sessions, check websites and read brochures to learn in detail what you can do to prepare and cope with specific emergencies.
- learn about what warnings you may receive, what they mean and how you should act
- put together a Home Emergency Kit, including a copy of your plan and emergency contact number list
- check your insurance policies are up-to-date, adequate and include the cost of clean-up and debris removal
- learn how to turn off your power, water and gas safely and correctly
- get to know your neighbours
- decide early whether you will evacuate and when - late decisions can be deadly.

Things to do regularly to be prepared

- make sure your home and property are well-maintained, that gutters and downpipes are cleaned, roof and fences are in good repair and items such as trampolines are tied down
- go over your Home Emergency Plan with household members and regularly check the contents of your Home Emergency Kit
- make sure any protective clothing fits and is in good condition.

When you receive a warning or realise the emergency is about to happen

- make sure household members and neighbours know the danger - keep in touch
- get more information - observe what is happening, talk to neighbours, listen to the radio and check websites
- follow your Home Emergency Plan and keep your Home Emergency Kit handy
- dress appropriately - strong shoes, protective clothing - NOT shirts, singlets and thongs!

What will we do during the emergency?

- stay informed about what is going on in case the situation changes - keep a look-out to see, hear and smell what’s happening
- keep calm and stay in touch with family, friends and neighbours
- take active steps to reduce damage to your property
- stay safe - shelter indoors away from strong winds and hail; stay clear of windows; watch out for fallen trees and branches; beware of roads damaged by rain; never walk, drive or play in floodwaters
- listen to emergency broadcasters for information and updates from emergency services.

For life-threatening emergencies, call 000 immediately.
For help with storm or flood damage, call SES on 132 500
What will I do once the danger has passed?
• check that everyone is present and that no-one is injured
• if it is safe to do so, check your house and property for signs of damage
• contact your insurance company for advice - take photos of damage as soon as possible
• if you have evacuated, stay away until authorities tell you it is safe to return - take care when travelling as roads may still be dangerous.

If your home or property is damaged
If you need help because of a flood, storm, earthquake or tsunami, call SES on 132 500. There may be many people in danger or needing help, so calls will be prioritised.

SES volunteers are trained to assess damage, to effect temporary emergency repairs and to advise and/or assist with some preventative measures. This may include:
• placing tarpaulins on damaged roofs
• removing dangerous items such as fallen trees or branches
• giving safety advice
• providing access to homes and businesses
• rescuing people trapped or injured in damaged buildings.

VICSES cannot guarantee an immediate response to every affected property during a major incident
Residents need to be prepared to help themselves and each other

If you need financial or emotional help
There are many agencies and groups who help after emergencies.
• Department of Health and Department of Human Services provide health and recovery advice and financial support
• Department of Primary Industries can advise you on animal care, including injured wildlife
• Community groups and welfare agencies such as the Red Cross provide support including donations of food, clothing and household goods as well as compassion and care.

Contact your local council in the first instance, they will help you access the support you need.

If you need further help
If you suffer troubling physical or emotional symptoms such as sleeplessness, changes in appetite, irritability or anxiety, see your local doctor. These symptoms are common after an emergency and may occur long after the emergency has happened. They can be treated.

Finally, don’t underestimate the importance of sharing your experience with family, friends and your local community. They will help you recover and get your life back to normal as soon as possible.
# Home Contact List

## Out-of-Area Contacts

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<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Phone</th>
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## Local Contacts/Neighbours

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## Family Numbers

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<th>Name &amp; Phone</th>
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## Emergency Telephone Numbers

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<td>Hospital</td>
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<td>Gas</td>
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<td>Electricity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance Policy Number</td>
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- For flood or storm assistance call 132 500
- For life-threatening emergencies call 000