



# Home Emergency Plan

It pays to have a plan



# Emergency contacts

## Life-threatening emergency

Police Fire Ambulance

Alternative for mobile telephones

Hearing impaired

Triple Zero (000)

112

TTY106

## Victoria State Emergency Service (SES)

Emergency assistance during floods, storms, earthquakes and tsunami

132 500

### SES website

Warnings and information

[ses.vic.gov.au](http://ses.vic.gov.au)

### SES information line

Operates during major emergencies

1300 842 737

1300 VIC SES

## National Relay Service (NRS)

The deaf, hearing or speech impaired can call SES or 000 using NRS:

[www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au)

Speak and Listen (SSR)

users phone:

**Dial: 1300 555 727**

**Ask for: 132 500 or 000**

TTY/Voice users phone:

**Dial: 133 677**

**Ask for: 132 500**

Internet Relay users log in to:

**[www.ireplay.com.au/call/index.aspx](http://www.ireplay.com.au/call/index.aspx)** and enter 132 500 or 000

## Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)

Weather forecasts, warnings, radar, satellite maps and river height information

1300 659 217

[bom.gov.au](http://bom.gov.au)

## Australian Tsunami Warning Centre

Tsunami warnings and advice

1300 878 6264

[bom.gov.au](http://bom.gov.au)

## ABC Radio

Emergency broadcasts during major events

[abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au)

AM/FM

## Your emergency broadcasters:

Your local emergency broadcasters include ABC local radio, commercial radio stations and SKY news television

AM/FM

## Department of Health

For advice on health issues such as water quality, hygiene during disasters and coping with stress

[health.vic.gov.au](http://health.vic.gov.au)

## Department of Human Services

Emergency relief and recovery advice

[dhs.vic.gov.au](http://dhs.vic.gov.au)

## Department of Environment and Primary Industries

Animal health and diseases

[depi.vic.gov.au](http://depi.vic.gov.au)

## VicRoads

Traffic hazard reporting and road closures

13 11 70

[vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au)

## Australian Red Cross

Emergency plans, relief and recovery support

[redcross.org.au](http://redcross.org.au)

## Fire information

For further information on fires refer to the CFA and MFB websites:

[cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au)

[mfb.vic.gov.au](http://mfb.vic.gov.au)

Victoria Bushfire Information Line

1800 240 667

# 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 one.

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 providers such as SES have a responsibility to support people during an emergency, and will make every effort to be there when needed.

During major emergencies there are often many competing demands and calls for help, and no emergency service provider 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.



**It's easy to think "It won't happen to me" until it actually does.**

**Have a plan and know what to do.**

## Your emergency plan

A good 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.



# Writing your Home Emergency Plan

## How to develop an 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.
- At least two ways to exit your house.
- Where you will go if you are unable to get home?
- What will you do if there are road closures or blockages?
- Whether your insurance cover is adequate?
- Putting together an emergency kit, including important contact numbers for getting help and staying in contact with friends and neighbours.
- Practising your plan to make sure everyone knows what to do.



The middle pages of this booklet outline how to put your emergency plan together.

**Get the whole family involved in developing the plan.**

**Practice it, so everyone knows what to do.**

## What if you 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 prearranged safer place to stay.
- Whether you will need to take any special equipment and/or medication with you.
- Whether you will need an alternative power source to run life support equipment.

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

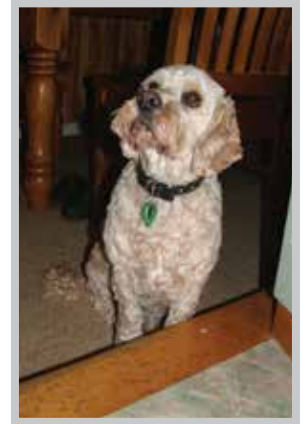
Red Cross Australia has emergency planning advice for people with a disability and their carers at [redcross.org.au](http://redcross.org.au).

# Who should you include?

## Who should be included in your 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 babysitters.
- Pets and other animals.



## What if the emergency happens when you are not 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, as their household may be 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 your plan?

You can share your plan with:

- 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 service providers 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 can affect your risk.

Is your home or property:

- Close to other homes?
- Part of a larger block of units, flats or a standalone house?
- Clearly numbered so it is easy to find during an emergency?
- On flat, low-lying or steep land?
- Near a creek, river or drain that is prone to flooding?
- Surrounded by trees?
- Easily accessible to large emergency service vehicles?
- Self-sufficient or reliant on town power, mains water and telephone?
- Identified as being in a high risk area?



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.

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.
- Lakes, oceans, drains, rivers, creeks or any other waterways that could lead to flooding.
- Areas of natural bush or grasslands.
- Direction of the most common damaging weather patterns such as storm fronts or strong winds.



Add a plan of your house showing the location of bedrooms, kitchen and main living areas. Include features such as gas bottles, heaters and electricity/water meters and make sure you know how to 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 you?

## What emergencies could affect your household?

Think broadly about the kind of emergencies that could impact you. Try not to focus on one emergency at the expense of others.

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

- Neighbours and other long-term residents.
- Local emergency service providers and emergency websites.
- Local council and water catchment authorities.
- Library and historical societies, for information on past events.



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

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storms with damaging winds, flash flooding and hail | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal or tidal surge                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flood   | <input type="checkbox"/> Earthquakes and tremors                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bushfire or grassfire*                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical emergency                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housefire   | <input type="checkbox"/> Power, gas or mains water outages       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mudslide or landslide                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial accidents or chemical spills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tsunami   |  |

\*Check with either the CFA or MFB for advice about fires.

# Our emergency plan

## What emergencies could affect us?

List each type and describe briefly how it could affect your household.

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## Who is included in this plan?

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

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## Will we evacuate? When will we go?

For each type of emergency, list the trigger for evacuation.

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## Meeting place near home:

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## Meeting place away from home:

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# Our emergency action plan

**What we will do before the emergency to prepare?**

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**What will we do during the emergency?**

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**What will we do after the emergency?**

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# Emergency warnings

**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 to find 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 service providers 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 and SKY News Television.
- Website 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 to do if you 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 the 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 will provide practical support and information that can help you cope with emergencies.**

# Evacuation and registration

## Will you evacuate? When should you leave?

If you plan to evacuate:

- 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 service providers when making your decision but base your choice on what is happening locally.
- Police and/or emergency service volunteers may advise you to leave your home. This is not always possible, so if you think you should leave, don't delay.
- Make sure everyone knows your meeting place and keep in touch with family, friends and neighbours.
- Take your 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.
- When you leave, register your details at a relief centre or register with Red Cross who use the National Registration and Inquiry System, 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 you go?

Part of your emergency plan is working out where to go before, during and after an emergency. Think about places that will not be affected by the same emergencies as your property.

### **Private arrangements**

The best place to go during an emergency is to friends or family. A place where you can be comfortable and secure.

### **Emergency relief centres**

These are set up when necessary by the council to provide short term relief for those caught in an 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 has special needs, plan ahead for the support you need and know where to get assistance.

# Home Emergency Kit

Every home and business should have a basic emergency kit:

Copy of your emergency plan



Radio



Torch



Spare batteries



Copy of documents & records



Long life food



3 days supply

First aid kit



Safe drinking water



3 days supply

Gloves



Check your kit often. Make sure things work. Replace out of date items.

When a warning is issued, have ready for use or pack into your kit:

Mobile phone and charger



Prescriptions & medicines



Pet needs



Strong shoes



Clothes for your family



3 days supply

3 days supply

## I need to add:

Write your list here. Tick items as you pack them into your kit.

- Special needs \_\_\_\_\_
- Photos \_\_\_\_\_
- Family keepsakes \_\_\_\_\_
- Valuables \_\_\_\_\_
- Documents \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



# When an emergency happens

## What can you do before an emergency to be prepared?

- Find out as much as you can about emergencies that could affect you by attending community information sessions, checking websites and reading brochures.
- Learn about what warnings you may receive, what they mean and how you should act.
- Put together an emergency kit, including a copy of your emergency plan and emergency contact list.
- Check your insurance policy is up to date, adequate and includes the cost of clean-up and debris removal.
- Learn how to safely turn off your power, water and gas.
- Get to know your neighbours.
- Decide early whether you will evacuate and when. Late decisions can be deadly.



### Things to do regularly:

- 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 emergency plan with household members and regularly check the contents of your emergency kit.
- Make sure any protective clothing fits and is in good condition.

### When you receive a warning or when an 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 emergency plan and keep your emergency kit handy.
- Dress appropriately – wear strong shoes and protective clothing.

## What will you do during the emergency?

- Stay informed about what is going on in case the situation changes – keep a lookout 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.
- Listen to emergency broadcasters for information and updates from emergency services.

**For life-threatening emergencies, call Triple Zero (000) immediately.**

**For SES emergency assistance call 132 500.**

# After an emergency

## What will you do once the danger has passed?

Once you're sure 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. In life-threatening emergencies call Triple Zero (000).

SES volunteers are trained to assess damage, to erect 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.



**SES 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, including:

- Department of Health and Department of Human Services provide health and recovery advice and financial support.
- Department of Environment and 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.

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

Fill out the contact list below and keep this plan with contacts in your emergency kit.

## Out of area contacts

Name and phone:

Name and phone:

## Local contacts or neighbours

Name and phone:

Name and phone:

## Family numbers

Name and phone:

Name and phone:

Name and phone:

Name and phone:

Name and phone:

## Emergency telephone numbers

Doctor:

Hospital:

Local Police:

Local Council:

Vet:

Gas:

Electricity:

Water:

Telephone company:

Insurance phone number:

Policy number:

- For life-threatening emergencies call Triple Zero (000).
- For SES emergency assistance call 132 500.

# Never

Drive, Walk or Ride  
Through Floodwater

For more information visit  
[ses.vic.gov.au](http://ses.vic.gov.au)



Australian Government



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