

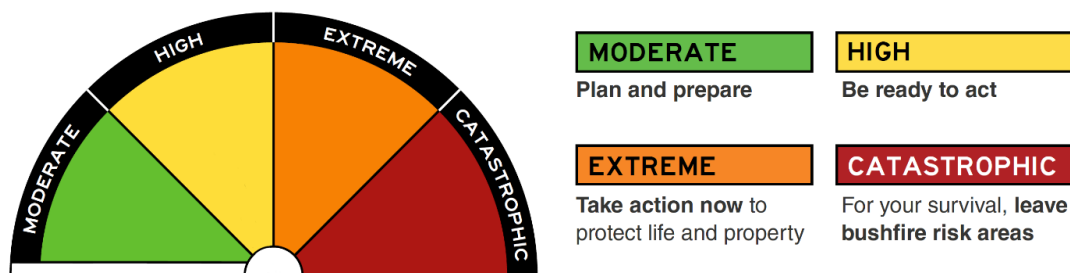
Bushfire Policy and Procedure

Interchange Outer East (IOE) conducts a large number and range of programs, activities supports and services for groups and individuals in a variety of locations within Victoria. In conducting these programs and activities we need to be mindful of both forecast potential and actual bushfire conditions that may make these programs and activities unsafe.

IOE has a responsibility to ensure all people, including staff, volunteers, and participants involved in our programs and activities are safe. This policy sets out the responsibilities of IOE when creating and conducting programs, activities, and support work during Victorian fire danger periods.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) publishes fire danger ratings for every day during the fire danger period using the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS). These ratings are to assist the public to understand how dangerous a fire would be if it started on that day.

Fire Danger Ratings



What do the ratings mean?

Catastrophic	Catastrophic - If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost. These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire.
Extreme	Extreme - Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous. These are dangerous fire conditions. Expect hot, dry, and windy conditions.
High	High – Fires can be dangerous.
Moderate	Moderate – Most fires can be controlled.

Actions for Forecasting of Fire Danger Ratings

CATASTROPHIC		
Programs and services within IOE	<p>1:1 support, mentoring, face-to-face meetings (behaviour support, allied health, etc.)</p> <p>Host and Specialised Care arrangements</p>	<p>Recreation</p> <p>Group services</p>
Direction	<p>All shifts, supports and face-to-face appointments booked in high-risk areas are cancelled.</p> <p>Travelling to, through or into any thick bush areas, going for hikes, bushwalks and similar activities is not permitted on shifts for safety reasons.</p>	<p>All activities and camps in high fire danger areas are cancelled unless a plan to relocate to another location outside the high-risk area is planned.</p> <p>Activities that are already occurring in these areas may be cancelled and returned to IOE or relocated – whichever is safer</p>
EXTREME		
Programs and services within IOE	<p>1:1 support, mentoring face-to-face meetings (behaviour support, allied health, etc.)</p> <p>Host and Specialised Care arrangements</p>	<p>Recreation</p> <p>Group services</p>
Direction	<p>All shifts, supports and face-to-face appointments booked in high-risk areas are cancelled or relocated to another more urban location outside the high-risk area.</p> <p>Travelling to, through or into any thick bush areas, going for hikes, bushwalks and similar activities is not permitted on shifts for safety reasons.</p>	<p>All activities and camps in high fire danger areas are relocated or cancelled.</p> <p>Activities that are already occurring in these areas may be cancelled and returned to IOE or relocated – whichever is safer.</p>
HIGH		
Programs and services within IOE	All programs and services	
Direction	Monitor conditions and avoid unnecessary travel to high-risk areas	

Early planning is crucial in preparing for the fire danger period. The following information will guide participants, families and staff with what is needed to plan for the fire danger period.

Identifying High Risk Areas

IOE recognises that there are some areas that IOE provides support that are of a higher bushfire risk than other areas.

IOE will be guided by information provided by the CFA and the bushfire management overlay maps to determine the 'high risk' suburbs that will be referred to within the bushfire policy. This is reviewed annually prior to the fire danger period. Bushfire overlays can be accessed at <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/>

Below is a list of the suburbs that IOE participants reside in that are determined to be of 'high risk'.

Avonsleigh	Kallista	The Basin
Badger Creek	Kalorama	The Patch
Belgrave	Launching Place	Three Bridges
Belgrave Heights	Macclesfield	Upwey
Belgrave South	Millgrove	Wandin
Chum Creek	Monbulk	Warburton
Cockatoo	Mount Dandenong	Warburton East
Coldstream	Mount Eliza	Warrandyte
Dixons Creek	Mount Evelyn	Wesburn
Emerald	Mt Burnett	Wonga Park
Ferny Creek	Olinda	Woori Yallock
Gembrook	Sassafras	Yarra Glen
Gladysdale	Selby	Yarra Junction
Gruyere	Seville	Yellingbo
Healesville	Silvan	Reefton
Hoddles Creek	Tecoma	San Remo

Bordering suburbs

IOE is located and operates mostly within the central district.

There are several suburbs that border 'high risk' bushfire areas that we may need to consider as high-risk in the event of a catastrophic or extreme fire danger day. These include any areas that are close to dense or open bush, among grass or paddocks or near coastal scrub.

Identifying vulnerable participants

IOE will identify those that are vulnerable and residing in high-risk areas.

IOE will work directly with participants and their carer/family and consider the following in determining the participant as highly vulnerable:

- Living independently and solely reliant on support
- Mobility or sensory issues
- Ability to receive and understand information prior or during an outbreak.

A list of vulnerable participants residing in or near a 'high risk' area will be recorded on the fire risk management database and participant's electronic file. An emergency response plan (ERP) will be created and recorded within their support documentation.

Individual emergency response plans

IOE will work with participants at risk to develop individual emergency response plans. Emergency response plans will document how the participant wishes to be supported in the event of a catastrophic or extreme fire danger rating or bushfire event.

The relevant coordinator will review each ERP with the participant, carer/family annually prior to the Victoria fire danger period and check that participant records are updated to ensure appropriate action is taken when a bushfire event is triggered.

Participants travelling independently

IOE will identify all participants that travel independently to access IOE programs/services and travel to/from or through high-risk areas and record the information on the fire risk management database.

During extreme or catastrophic fire periods, IOE coordinators are required to contact these participants/families to plan other arrangements to ensure that person gets to their destination safely.

Bushfire planning with families

IOE believes that participant, carers/families, and staff have a shared responsibility to plan and respond in an emergency. IOE will work in partnership with participants and carers/families in developing emergency response plans.

IOE will work with families residing in high-risk areas to encourage them and link them in with services to assist with preparing a bushfire plan.

- CFA (Country Fire Authority) Fire Ready Kits
- Local community bushfire planning workshops
- Red Cross

Participants and families should consider, as part of their bushfire plan, how they will manage without IOE supports during a catastrophic event or a bushfire outbreak, and their ability to make alternate arrangements or relocate during periods determined as catastrophic or extreme, as these ratings may apply for a number of continuous days.

Staff enacting their own fire plan

IOE understands that staff living in high fire areas may need to enact their own fire plans for their family on these days, making them unavailable for their scheduled employment.

Staff that provide direct support that are intending to enact their family fire plan and not attending scheduled work commitments must contact an IOE coordinator or line manager during business hours or the emergency after hours phone to advise.

During periods of extreme and catastrophic fire rating days and during bushfire outbreaks, there are likely to be less staff available as they are enacting their bushfire plans.

Staff living in high fire areas - working from home arrangements

Staff that live in high fire areas that have existing working from home arrangements are expected to have a bushfire plan in place. During periods of extreme and catastrophic fire danger periods, IOE strongly encourages staff to leave areas that are 'high risk' and work in an alternative workspace. IOE can provide office spaces in one of our existing offices.

If staff wish to take time off to enact their individual bushfire plan, they can access time in lieu or other accrued leave. Staff should liaise directly with their manager.

Communication

IOE will work with participants, carers/families, and staff to communicate our bushfire preparation and response in the following ways:

- Direct written correspondence
- Social media
- Newsletters
- Direct phone communication, including SMS

Exceptional circumstances

IOE recognises that there are some circumstances that directions included within this policy are not the safest option for participants or staff. Alternative directions may be provided by the CEO, general manager, or their delegate. Any decisions that differ from directions within this policy will be guided by undertaking a thorough risk assessment.

Monitoring of bushfire ratings and bushfire outbreaks

IOE will monitor bushfire ratings via the Vic Emergency website for the central area and any other area where camps or activities are located.

IOE will communicate to staff and participants/carers when bushfire ratings are catastrophic or extreme via social media, email, and direct messages.

All IOE staff are required to download the Vic Emergency app and check the ratings prior to entering a high-risk area. Staff should then monitor local conditions for outbreaks and notify IOE immediately if an outbreak occurs.

Participants and carers/families that reside in a high fire danger area should monitor conditions during the bush fire season. DO NOT rely on IOE to provide notice of fire danger ratings or bushfire outbreaks. Families should not wait for information from IOE before enacting their own bushfire plan.

IOE sites in high-risk areas

The IOE office sites located in high-risk areas will have a bushfire action plan that will state the actions to be taken during the Victoria fire danger period. This bushfire action plan will identify safe actions for staff and visitors to those sites to take prior to and during a bushfire event. IOE sites located in high-risk areas will close on extreme and catastrophic fire rating days or where there is a bushfire outbreak that may threaten the safety of staff and participants.

Recreation and other group-based activities and camps

During the fire season, IOE will conduct a risk assessment prior to selecting the location of a camp or activity and avoid 'high risk' areas to minimise the need to cancel or relocate the activity.

Each camp or activity will have a relocation plan in place prior to the activity in case of a catastrophic or extreme fire rating or a bushfire outbreak. This will include information about the bushfire district, risk assessment and camp site evacuation plans.

If the risk is too great for a planned activity or camp to go ahead an alternative activity or location may be offered. Recreation activities heading to high-risk areas may be cancelled if IOE is unable to support the activity safely with staff and volunteers, or a safe alternative activity or location is not available.

Responsibilities

CEO	The CEO is responsible for ensuring the organisational governance is in place to enable IOE to build a capability and capacity in continuity of services on during the Victorian fire danger period.
General Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the resources and strategies needed to implement the procedures within the policy. • Provide guidance and direction to team leaders on <u>catastrophic</u> or <u>extreme</u> fire danger rating or during a bushfire event. • Review individual exceptional circumstances and provide direction and guidance.
Team Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all participants within their department that reside in high-risk area are identified and recorded on the fire risk management database. • Provide support to family coordinators with creating emergency plans, planning shifts and activities. • Create a fire watch roster within the team. • Provide guidance and direction to coordinators on <u>catastrophic</u> or <u>extreme</u> fire danger rating or during a bushfire event. • Ensure communication goes out to all relevant staff and participants via social media, direct messaging, etc.
Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify participants that reside in high-risk areas and document them on the fire risk management database. • Identify vulnerable participants within the fire risk management database and record information on the database and within IOE internal systems. • Complete emergency response plans for all vulnerable participants and participants living in high-risk areas. • Follow directions on participants' emergency response plan. • Monitor, implement and communicate any changes during a bushfire event.
Support Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor fire danger ratings via the Vic Emergency app prior to entering high-risk areas. • Monitor conditions in the local area that they are working in. • Notify IOE coordinator of any bushfire outbreaks within the area they are working in. • Support participants in implementing their emergency response plan in consultation with and direction from the family coordinator.
Participants and Families/Carer residing in high-risk areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with IOE to create an emergency response plan or provide IOE with existing plans. • Monitor conditions in their local area. • Advise IOE of any shift changes or cancellations. • Prepare a bushfire plan.

VICTORIA - Key information services

Organisation	Contact	Description
Triple Zero	000	To report a fire or emergency
Emergency management (warnings, incidents, and planned burns)	www.emergency.vic.gov.au	Warnings, incidents and planned burns are all displayed on the Vic Emergency website - the single location for all emergency information in Victoria. An app is also available for Apple and Android phones.
Vic Emergency Hotline	1800 226 226	The Vic Emergency Hotline provides information during and after major bushfire incidents. It also offers information to help householders, landowners and small businesses reduce bushfire risk.
National Relay Service	1800 555 677	Callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment can contact Vic Emergency Hotline via the National Relay Service
Emergency broadcasters include ABC Local Radio .	A complete list of official emergency broadcasters can be downloaded from the Emergency Management Victoria website.	During significant fires in Victoria, stay tuned to your emergency broadcasters to hear fire updates, community alerts and other important messages.
Facebook	www.facebook.com/cfavic	CFA warnings are posted automatically 24/7 on their Facebook and Twitter channels.
Twitter	@CFA_Updates	CFA warnings are posted automatically 24/7 on their Facebook and Twitter channels.
Emergency Management Victoria		The Vic Emergency app is the official Victorian Government app for access to community information and warnings for all types of emergencies in Victoria.
VicRoads - road closures	www.alerts.vicroads.vic.gov.au	On this website you will find information about unplanned (emergency) road closures and traffic alerts. It is Victoria's official source of information about roads and traffic during incidents and emergencies that may impact road users.
Emergency Alert (telephone warnings)	www.emergencyalert.gov.au	Emergency Alert is the national telephone warning system used by emergency services.
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)	www.delwp.vic.gov.au	Latest information on current fires on public land, including threat alerts, warnings and community meetings
Parks Victoria	www.parkweb.vic.gov.au	This site includes information about closures to roads, tracks, visitor sites and picnic areas
Victoria Police	www.police.vic.gov.au	Information for motorists travelling in a bush fire environment - access during road closures.
Victorian Local Government (Local Councils)	www.cfa.vic.gov.au/links	Provides a list within CFA's website of all Local Councils
Bureau of Meteorology	http://www.bom.gov.au	Victorian weather and warnings

Wildlife Victoria OR Help for Wildlife	www.wildlifevictoria.org.au	Wildlife rescue teams are on standby to assist in fire-affected areas to treat wildlife in need of help.
Department of Health	https://www.health.vic.gov.au/our-role-in-emergencies	This site has important information for the bushfire season from the Department of Health and Human Services.
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires	Information about catastrophic day closures, the Bushfire At-Risk Register and support resources.
State Emergency Service (SES)	www.ses.vic.gov.au	Floods, severe storms, earthquakes, road accident rescue, search and rescue and other emergency support.
Ambulance Victoria	www.ambulance.vic.gov.au	
Australian Red Cross	www.redcross.org.au	Includes information about relief centres, registering and comforting evacuees and first aid care.
Energy Safe Victoria	www.esv.vic.gov.au	Includes information on electricity and gas safety advice during fires and incidents
Emergency Management Victoria	www.emv.vic.gov.au/	Find out about emergency management in Victoria.

Outside of Victoria - Key Information Services

Triple Zero	000	To report a fire or emergency
WA Department of Fire & Emergency Services	www.emergency.wa.gov.au	Western Australia
Queensland Government Disasters and Alerts	https://www.qld.gov.au/alerts	Queensland
Emergency NSW	https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/	New South Wales
TASAlert	http://alert.tas.gov.au/	Tasmania
ACT Emergency Services Agency	https://esa.act.gov.au/	Australian Capital Territory
Northern Territory Emergency Service	https://www.pfes.nt.gov.au/emergency-service	Northern Territory