

Extreme Weather and Emergency Management

The purpose of this guideline is to define the processes that should be implemented to ensure the safety and well-being of all Scouts Victoria members, volunteers and employees during extreme weather events and emergencies.

Implementing appropriate emergency planning is a requirement for any Scouting activity regardless of other factors such as program, award scheme requirements, pre-booked accommodation, financial impact, etc.

An emergency is defined as an incident that may result in one or more of the following:

- Unplanned cancellation of a scouting activity due to an incident
- Evacuation of a scouting activity
- Insufficient capacity or capability within the activity to manage an incident
- Injury/illness requiring extensive external medical support or rescue operations

Typical hazardous incidents that could result in an emergency include extreme weather, natural hazards bushfire, onsite fire, missing child, security incident, widespread health incident, etc.

Emergency Response

In an Emergency, the **Leader in Charge** of a Scouting activity should:

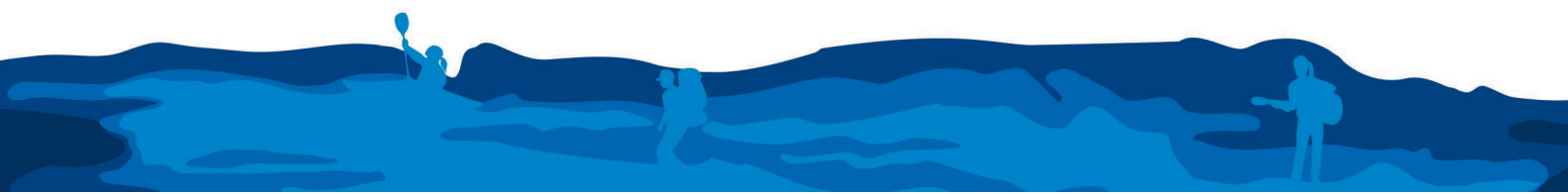
- Alert the appropriate Emergency Services (000)
- If necessary, evacuate the area or seek appropriate shelter-in-place
- Alert the Emergency Contact of affected participants (this may be arranged through the Scouts Victoria Emergency Line if there are large numbers of people to contact)
- Call the Scouts Victoria Emergency Line (03 8543 9877)
- Continue to manage the situation and notify Emergency Services and Scouts Victoria of any updates

Upon notification of an Emergency, the **Scouts Victoria Emergency Line Operator** or other Scouts Victoria member should:

- Record the relevant details of the Emergency
- Alert the appropriate Emergency Services (000), if not already occurred
- Alert the Emergency notification list on emergency.incident@scoutsvictoria.com.au
- Alert the relevant District and/or Region Commissioner and State Leadership Team
- Confirm whether Emergency Contacts of participants have been informed
- Identify an **Emergency Coordinator** to coordinate Scouts Victoria's ongoing response (this may be the Scouts Victoria Emergency Line Operator themselves)

The **Emergency Coordinator** should:

- Act as the primary contact between the Leader in Charge and Scouts Victoria
- Inform the Emergency Contacts of participants if not previously contacted
- Identify appropriate resources and capability to assist the Leader in Charge
- Inform Scouts Victoria media representatives and refer all media contacts to them



Planning an Activity

The **Leader in Charge** of a Scouting activity should:

- Register the activity in Scouts Victoria scOut and About if the activity is at a non-Scouting location outside of the Group's District
- Consider credible emergency risks as part of the planning of a scouting activity
- Determine trigger actions (eg date/time and conditions) to continue, modify, cancel, reschedule or relocate the activity
- Review the emergency plans for the location of the activity (eg a campsite emergency plan)
- Develop a plan for relocation or evacuation of the activity (including transportation away from the location in a timely manner, evacuation route, temporary refuge nearby, shelter-in-place, etc)
- Where appropriate, document the emergency plans and trigger actions in the Risk Management Plan for the activity

Trigger Actions Prior to and During a Scouting Activity

The **Leader in Charge** of an activity must monitor the weather conditions leading up to and during the activity and implement trigger actions based on the conditions.

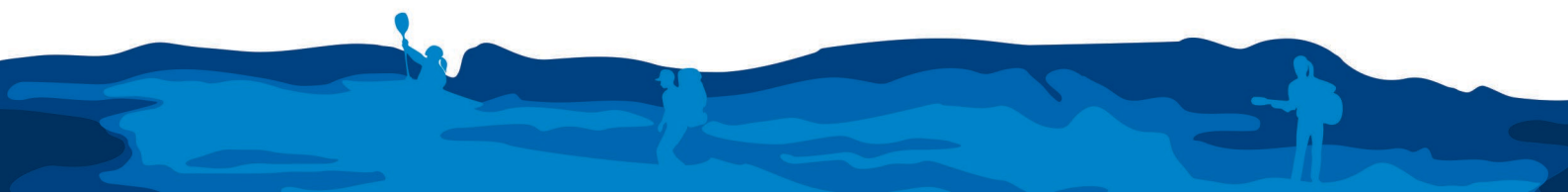
Wherever possible, actions should be undertaken to modify, cancel, reschedule or relocate an activity before an evacuation is required as a last resort. Having Trigger Actions (eg date/time and conditions) for the activity forces a decision to be made with sufficient time to implement actions without leaving it too late. The Trigger Actions should consider the location of the activity and the time required to implement the actions. Example Trigger Actions could be:

- By 7pm on the night we leave for the activity, if storms are forecast for the night, we will delay leaving until the morning.
- First thing in the morning on the last day, if the weather is predicted to be hot, we will pack and be ready to leave early.
- At the start of each day of the event, if there are strong winds expected, we will modify the activities for the day to suit the anticipated conditions.
- At the end of each day on the hike, if the weather conditions for the next day are extreme, we will arrange to be picked up and taken to safe place for the day, returning to the hike only once it is clear.

Cancel, Reschedule or Relocate an Activity

The **Leader in Charge** of an activity must cancel, reschedule or relocate a Scouting activity at the earliest opportunity if any of the following occur:

- A fire danger rating of "Extreme" or "Code Red" is declared for the district in which the activity is planned, and the activity is in a designated 'Bushfire Prone Area'
- An Emergency Warning, a Watch and Act Warning, or Recommendation to Evacuate are issued for the location of the activity
- A warning is issued against travel to the location of the activity



Final Decision Making Authority

The **Chief Commissioner** has ultimate authority over the program operations of Scouting and can, if considered appropriate, override the decision of the Leader in Charge of any Scouting activity with respect to the continuation, cancellation or modification of a Scouting activity during hazardous weather conditions or extreme weather events.

Fire Danger Rating Trigger Actions

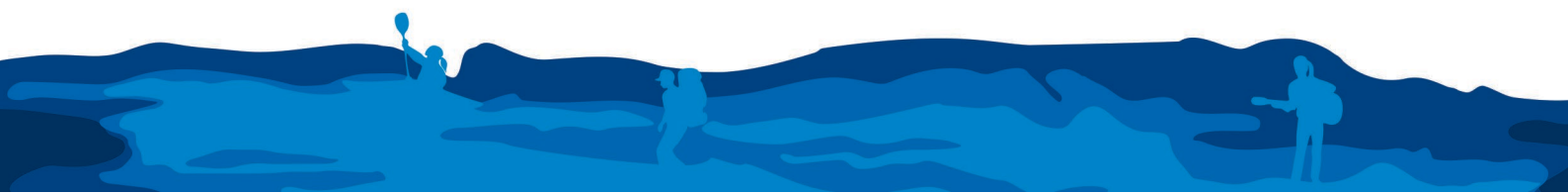
Based on the *Fire Danger Rating*, the **Leader in Charge** of an activity or **campsite** should implement the following trigger actions for activities or campsites within a *Bushfire Prone Area*:

Fire Danger Rating	Leader in Charge of an activity or campsite
CODE RED Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancel the activity – leave the night before or first thing in the morning Campsites are closed for visitors/hirers – all camp occupiers to leave the night before or first thing in the morning
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider rescheduling or relocating the activity Cancel or relocate any activity where there is limited two-way communication capability with the participants Adjust the program to suit the conditions (such as temperature, wind, shade) Monitor weather conditions throughout the activity Ensure evacuation and/or shelter-in-place plans are established Ensure sufficient transport is available to relocate or evacuate the area if required Seek advice and approval from State Commissioner – Risk and Safety, or another relevant commissioner
Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider rescheduling or relocating the activity Adjust the program to suit the conditions Implement a plan for regular communication with remote participants Monitor weather conditions throughout the activity
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard principles apply
Low-Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor weather conditions throughout the activity

Extreme Weather warnings, Fire Danger ratings and bushfire notifications can be accessed from the Vic Emergency app, which allows you to set a watch zone around your activity location. You can also access this information at www.emergency.vic.gov.au

To determine if your activity or campsite is in a bushfire prone area, go to <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/> and enable Bushfire Prone Areas layer. (Note that areas with a Bushfire Management Overlay are still defined as Bushfire Prone Areas.)

Information on Victorian Parks Information on Victorian Parks that are affected by fire can be obtained here <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/safety-in-nature/fire-affected-parks>



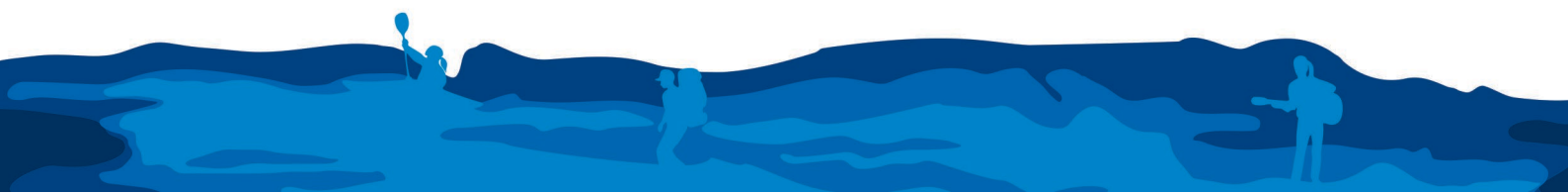
Emergency Management Plans for Campsites and Major Events

A Scouts Victoria managed **campsite**, or any facility that is regularly used by members of more than one formation, must have an Emergency Management Plan.

The organising committee of a **Major Event** must develop an Emergency Management Plan for the major event that works in conjunction with the site Emergency Management Plan. A Major Event is a State run event or any event with 200 or more participants.

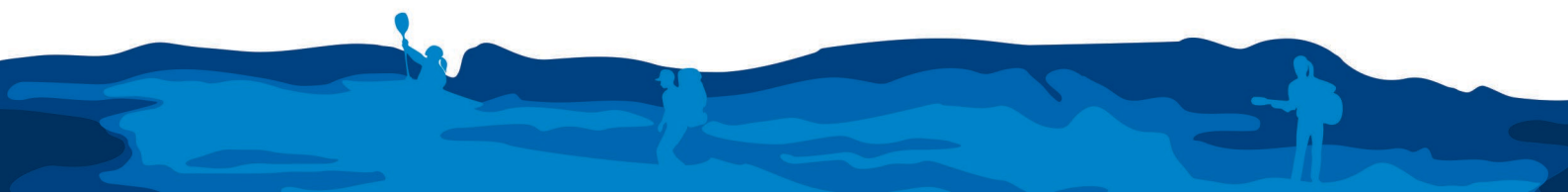
The Emergency Management Plan for a **campsite** and/or **major event** should include:

1. Consideration of the types of incidents that may occur that could require evacuation or external assistance from emergency services. This includes:
 - Extreme weather or natural hazard
 - Bushfire or onsite fire
 - Severe injury requiring onsite medical or rescue operations
 - Onsite security incident
 - Missing Child
 - Widespread health incident, etc
2. A clear definition of who is responsible for undertaking all actions defined in the emergency plan, especially those actions that trigger emergency response and/or evacuation. The responsibilities should take into account whether the site has:
 - Permanent Ranger / Warden who will be onsite coordinate the response
 - Part-time Ranger / Warden who might not be onsite during an incident
 - No onsite Ranger / Warden
3. Criteria for the closure of the site for visitors/hirers due to forecast weather conditions:
 - A fire danger rating of “Extreme” or “Code Red” is declared for the district, and the site is in a designated ‘Bushfire Prone Area’
 - A procedure for informing current and future participants in relation to closure due to Fire Danger Rating
4. A description of the process for monitoring extreme weather conditions during an event, including the geographic area that should be monitored, who is responsible for monitoring and the trigger actions to be taken based on the monitoring
5. Fire protection tasks that are routinely undertaken to prevent fires and to mitigate the effects of external fires impacting on the site, and who is responsible for those tasks
6. A description of the resources onsite to prevent and deal with emergencies
7. A description of the process for evacuation of the site including:
 - triggers for commencing an evacuation of the site,
 - register of participants onsite and who is responsible for maintaining the register
 - method for alerting participants
 - evacuation procedures, including transport arrangements
 - location of onsite assembly areas, access points and egress points



- location of offsite emergency evacuation location including directions and time to travel
 - actions to be undertaken subsequent to the evacuation (eg whether it is safe to return)
8. A description of the process for shelter-in-place (if applicable) including:
- triggers for commencing the shelter-in-place option
 - register of participants onsite and who is responsible for maintaining the register
 - method for alerting participants
 - shelter-in-place procedures including location and description of shelter-in-place building
9. Procedures for evacuation or shelter-in-place of any Permanent Ranger / Warden, etc.
10. A review date or review frequency for the Emergency Management Plan

The Emergency Management Plan should be made available to participants prior to attending an event at the site. A 1 or 2 page summary guide of what participants must do in an emergency should be readily available at key locations around the site.



State-Wide Monitoring

The **State Commissioner, Risk & Safety**, or other member of the Scouts Victoria Operational Safety Leadership Committee (OSLC), should review the weather forecast at least weekly by the Thursday prior to any weekend and:

- Determine if the weather conditions trigger the need for a state-wide warning and if necessary, issue a state-wide weather warning in consultation with the Chief Commissioner (refer below)
- Confirm that activities and locations within regions with Severe or higher weather warnings are aware of the conditions
- Notify the **Scouts Victoria Emergency Line Operator** of any activities registered in scOut and About that may be of concern

Continue to monitor conditions using the Scouts Victoria Fire and Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (SVFEM-COP) and advise relevant Groups if the situation changes.

State-Wide Severe Weather Alert

The following is a typical email to be issued where there is state-wide Severe fire danger rating or severe weather warnings. This email should be tailored to the conditions forecast.

Severe Weather Forecast for the Weekend

The weather forecast for this weekend indicates that there will be high temperatures across the State. The fire danger rating for the weekend is currently XXXX.

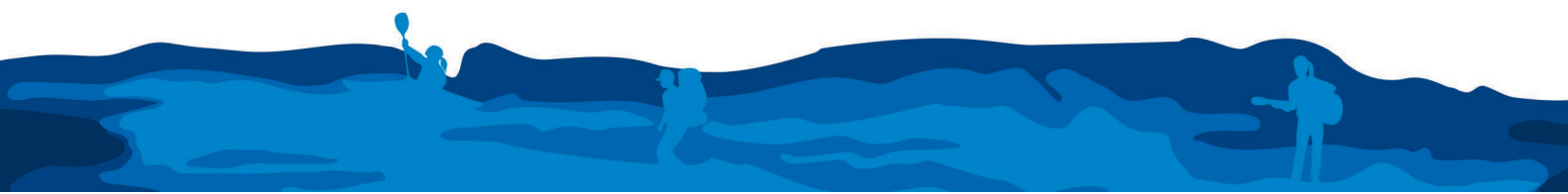
High temperatures are associated with these risks for Scouting:

1. Heat exposure/dehydration
2. Increased risk from bushfires
3. UV/Sun Exposure

All Leaders of activities involving youth and/or adults should take the following precautions:

1. Register the activity in Scouts Victoria [scOut and About](#) if the activity is at a non-Scouting location outside of the Group's District.
2. Download the Vic Emergency app or check the [Vic Emergency website](#) for active fires and fire danger ratings in the vicinity of your activity.
3. If you are undertaking an outdoor activity in a bushfire prone area:
 - If the fire danger rating is Extreme or Code Red, the activity must be cancelled, rescheduled or relocated.
 - If the fire danger rating is Severe, you should seek advice and approval from our State Commissioner – Risk and Safety, (sc.risk@scoutsvictoria.com.au), to ensure we can appropriately help you manage any risks.
4. Implement controls to manage sun and heat exposure of participants.

If your activity is in a National Park or similar, you can check the status of the park at <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/safety-in-nature/fire-affected-parks>





Fire Danger ratings and bushfire notifications can be accessed from the Vic Emergency app, which allows you to set a watch zone around your activity location. You can also access this information at www.emergency.vic.gov.au

To determine if your activity is in a bushfire prone area, refer to <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/> and enable Bushfire Prone Areas layer.

Was this notification useful? Feedback or questions to State Commissioner – Risk and Safety, (sc.risk@scoutsvictoria.com.au).

For more information or suggestions please contact:
State Commissioner – Risk and Safety sc.risk@scoutsvictoria.com.au
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