

# Prepare - Act - Survive



## Why Halls Gap is at risk of bushfire

Fire Authorities have assessed Halls Gap as having an **EXTREME** bushfire risk. Local residents and visitors should be prepared for fire and have a plan for when the Fire Danger Rating is **SEVERE**, **EXTREME** or **CODE RED**.

This community information guide includes a map containing key elements of Halls Gap's bushfire risk. At the time of publication, there is **ONE** designated Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort (see page 13) at Halls Gap.

Important community bushfire safety information is provided to help you make informed decisions about how to survive a bushfire, whether you're a local resident or a visitor to the area. Planning and preparation can save lives in a bushfire. Use this community information guide to help you and your family to prepare.



# Prepare

It's important if **you** live, work and travel in this area, to plan what **you** will do if a fire threatens.

## Understand **your** bushfire risk

- Halls Gap has been assessed as having an EXTREME bushfire risk in accordance with the Victorian Fire Risk Register.
- In 2006, lightning started a fire in the National Park, lasting for two weeks burning 130,000 hectares. Also in 2006, a large grassfire originating at Deep Lead threatened the Halls Gap area.
- Assess and prepare the capability of your property to withstand a bushfire.
- Bushfires move more quickly uphill, so properties situated on hills or ridges will be at greater risk.
- Be aware it is impossible for emergency services to protect every individual home or property.
- Remember your usual travel routes may be limited or blocked. Know your local roads.
- In extreme wind conditions and without any occurrence of fire in the area, roads and tracks may become blocked by falling trees, preventing residents from leaving early.
- Ensure you have backup plans if major infrastructure fails during an emergency (e.g. electricity, water).
- Know the daily Fire Danger Rating in the district where you live or travel **[www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)**

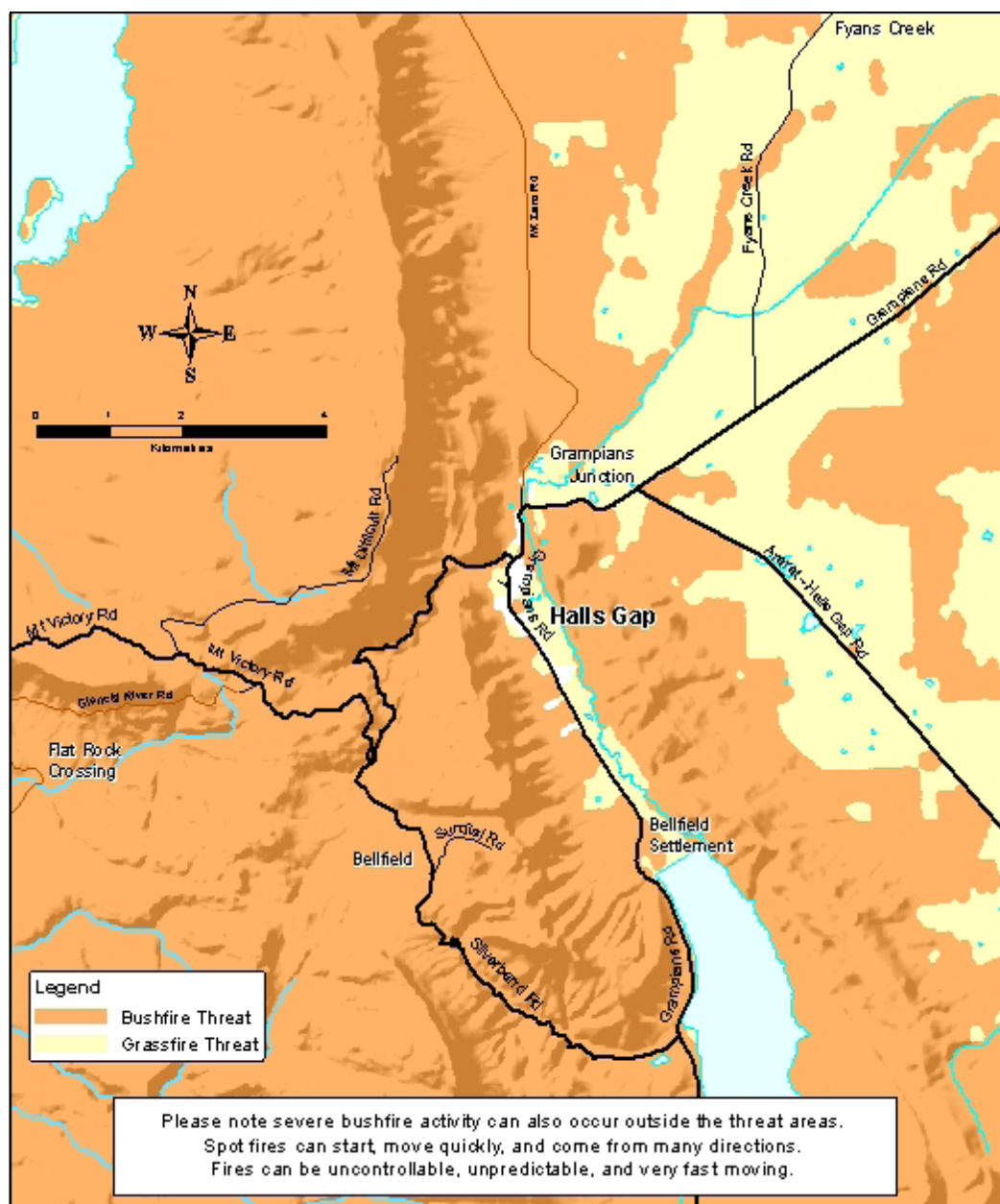
## Reduce **your** bushfire risk

- Homes with too much vegetation and other flammable materials close to them are difficult to protect from bushfires.
- Take advantage of rubbish removal and green waste disposal opportunities.
- Prepare your home and property from bushfire, burning embers and radiant heat.
- Even if your plan is to leave early, a well prepared home has a greater chance of not being destroyed by bushfire.
- Assist your neighbours to reduce their bushfire risk, as this may help make your property safer.
- **Develop and practise your Bushfire Survival Plan.**
- **You will also need to plan for your pets' safety.**
- You can attend or join:
  - A local Fire Ready Victoria meeting
  - A Bushfire Planning Workshop
  - A neighbourhood Community Fireguard Group
- **The Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool is available to help individuals assess the bushfire risk on their own property.**



You can download the CFA FireReady kit, containing the full Leaving Early Planning Template from **[cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au)**, or call **1800 226 226 (TTY 1800 122 969)**

# Halls Gap Fire Threat Map





# Prepare

**FACT**

It is your responsibility to prepare yourself, your family and your home for the threat of bushfire. You need to act decisively in accordance with your **Bushfire Survival Plan** when bushfires threaten. Your survival depends on your preparations and the decisions you make.



## Leave early

Leaving early is always the safest option.

### Leaving early is more important when:

- The Fire Danger Rating is **CODE RED**. Homes aren't designed to withstand a bushfire during these conditions. Any fire that starts and takes hold will be so intense that you won't be safe to stay and defend your home – no matter how well prepared it is.
- There are children, elderly or disabled people in your home. People who are vulnerable due to age, health, or any other reason, should always leave early.
- You have not prepared yourself or your property to give you and your home the best level of protection from a fire.
- Your house is not defensible. Some homes are not safe to defend because of their location or construction.

If you plan to leave, then you should leave well before a fire reaches your area and well before you are under threat. Follow the actions recommended for the Fire Danger Rating of the day (see page 6 and 7). **Visit CFA website [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)**

### Where will you go?

- Is it a safe choice? You may choose somewhere that suits your personal needs and circumstances, e.g. a family member's house in an urban area with a backyard for your pet, or shopping centre complex, or central business district of a large regional centre.
- If you don't have any other options, you may wish to consider the following townships: **Stawell, Ararat or Horsham**.
- Always tell someone that you are leaving and where you are planning to go.
- If you plan to travel by vehicle, ensure it is well-prepared with sufficient fuel before you leave.
- Identify people in your locality who might need more help. Know your neighbours, encourage them to have support networks and offer to help them fill out a Bushfire Leaving Early Plan.

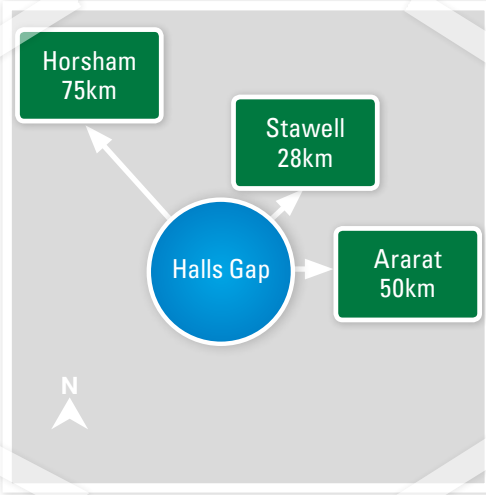
If you - or someone you care for - will need help to prepare and leave early when there is high fire risk, obtain a Red Cross **Bushfire: Preparing to leave early guide** at **[www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)** or request a copy by phoning the **VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226**

## PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

**PREPARE.** You must make important decisions before the fire season starts.

**ACT.** The higher the Fire Danger Rating, the more dangerous the conditions.

**SURVIVE.** Fires may threaten without warning, so you need to know what you will do to survive.



- Roads may become congested and may quickly become impassable, particularly during peak tourist periods.
- Avoid roads that pass through forest.
- Strong winds and fire may cause trees to fall.
- Burning roadside vegetation will create radiant heat.



## How you can stay in touch

- Bookmark the VicEmergency webpage ([www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)).
- Follow CFA on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/cfa\\_updates](http://www.twitter.com/cfa_updates)).
- Join the CFA Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/cfavic](http://www.facebook.com/cfavic)).
- Access the CFA mobile website at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/mobile](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/mobile)
- Download the VicEmergency app if you have a smartphone or tablet Apple (App Store) and Android (Google play).
- Beware, cordless home phones will NOT work if the mains power supply is cut.
- Wireless communications, internet and landlines may vary between service providers.
- Mobile phone coverage in and around Halls Gap is generally poor to non-existent, may not be accessible during times of emergency and may vary between service providers.
- There are no community-alerting sirens operating in this township.
- Sirens sounding nearby are a trigger for you to seek information, as they may indicate fire activity in your area. When you hear a siren, further information may be available via ABC local radio, commercial and designated community radio stations, and SKY News TV (see page 16).
- Regularly observe what is happening outside and check all information sources.

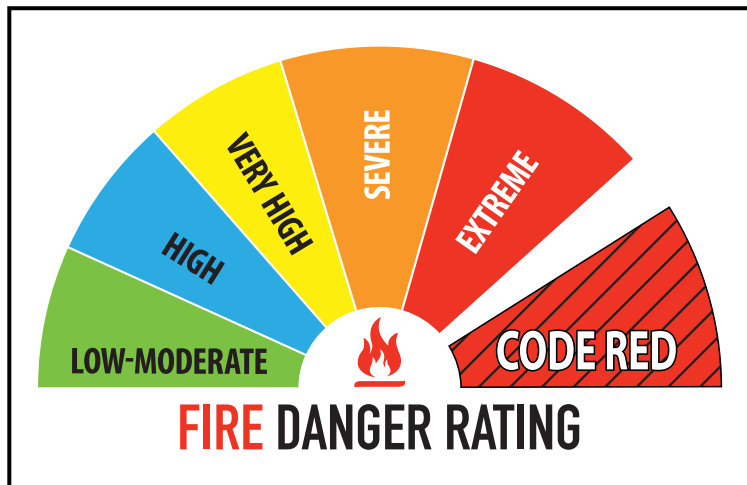


A written fire plan may save your life - would you remember a plan that's just in your head if your surrounded by smoke, heat, flame and noise?

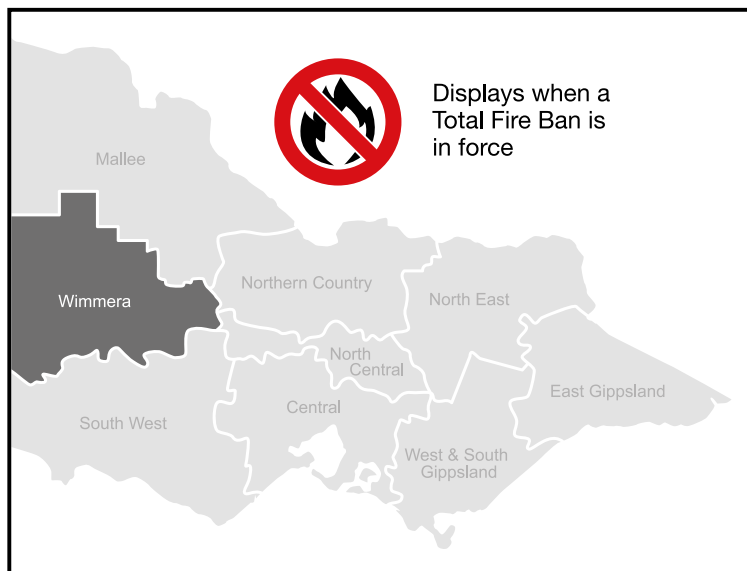


# Act

Note **your** district's  
Fire Danger Rating  
daily as **your** trigger  
to act.



## Halls Gap is in the Wimmera Fire District



## Triggers

CODE RED

EXTREME

SEVERE

VERY HIGH

HIGH

LOW- MODERATE

# Actions

What does it mean?	What should I do?
<p>These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire.</p> <p>Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions.</p> <p>The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas.</p>	<p>Leaving high risk bushfire areas the night before or early in the day is your safest option – do not wait and see.</p> <p>Avoid forested areas, thick bush and long, dry grass.</p> <p>Know your trigger.</p> <p>Make a decision about:</p> <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>
<p>Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions.</p> <p>If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Spot fires will start, move quickly and will come from many directions.</p> <p>Homes that are situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, that are well prepared and actively defended, may provide safety.</p> <p>You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>If you are not prepared to the highest level, leaving high risk bushfire areas early in the day is your safest option.</p> <p>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://www.cfa.vic.gov.au">www.cfa.vic.gov.au</a> or call the VicEmergency Hotline on <b>1800 226 226</b>.</p>
<p>Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions.</p> <p>If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable.</p> <p>Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety.</p> <p>You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</p>	<p>Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety – check your bushfire survival plan.</p> <p>If you are not prepared, leaving bushfire prone areas early in the day is your safest option.</p> <p>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://www.cfa.vic.gov.au">www.cfa.vic.gov.au</a> or call the VicEmergency Hotline on <b>1800 226 226</b>.</p>
<p>If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions and homes can provide safety.</p> <p>Be aware of how fires can start and minimise the risk.</p> <p>Controlled burning off may occur in these conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits apply.</p>	<p>Check your bushfire survival plan.</p> <p>Monitor conditions.</p> <p>Action may be needed.</p> <p>Leave if necessary.</p>



# Act

# Planned Emergency



## Understanding Warnings

- A warning will be issued when any type of emergency could impact you or your property.
- Warnings aim to provide you with the best advice and information on what is happening to help you make good decisions to protect yourself and others.
- Remember: don't rely on an official warning to leave. Emergencies can start quickly and threaten you within minutes.
- Always use more than one source for your emergency information.

## Evacuation

You may be advised to evacuate by police or emergency services. In fast-moving situations, you may not always receive a warning or recommendation to evacuate. Stay informed, aware of local conditions and the Fire Danger Rating, so that you can plan ahead and make the right decision in a bushfire. Leaving early is always the safest option. Refer to 'Community Evacuation Information', available at

**[www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au)**

Should a recommendation to evacuate be made, the following advice would apply:

- A fire is rapidly advancing.
- If advised, travel to the evacuation destination as advised by emergency services.
- Strictly follow all instructions and advice.



### Community information

- A newsletter containing updates for communities affected by an emergency.
- Can also be used as notification that an incident has occurred but there is no threat to community.



### Advice

- An incident is occurring or has occurred in the area. Access information and monitor conditions.
- Can also be used as a notification that activity in the area has subsided and is no longer a danger to you.



### Warning (Watch & Act)

- An emergency is developing nearby. You need to take action now to protect yourself and others.



### Emergency Warning

- You are in imminent danger and need to take action immediately.



### Prepare to evacuate/evacuate now

- An evacuation is recommended or procedures are in place to evacuate.



# Emergency Service Actions

## Fire Agencies

- Protecting life is the highest priority
- Issue advice and warnings
- Control and manage fire fighting activities
- Where safe to do so protect:
  - Identified community assets
  - Property
  - The environment

## Victoria Police

- Keep people safe and property secure
- Control traffic in bushfire areas
- Manage evacuations
- Register people who have evacuated
- Work with other agencies to keep the community informed

## Halls Gap

- The Halls Gap Visitor Information Centre may not open on days of high fire risk
- Check with Parks Victoria about access information to Parks
- Visitors' well-being must be considered (English may not be their first language)

## VicRoads

- Manage road closures on advice from Police and Fire Agencies
- Undertake safety inspections of roads prior to re-opening
- Provide advice to communities about road closures

## Northern Grampians Shire Council

- Activate Municipal Emergency Management Plans
- Support and work with Emergency Services and responding Agencies
- Assist with the provision of local information to the Community and Media
- Activate and support Emergency Relief Centres when required
- Assist and support the Community to recover from the emergency

NOTE: On Code Red Days, council services may not be available as usual



# Bushfire Survival

## WHAT TO DO

### Leave Early

- When the Fire Danger Rating is Code Red, leaving early is always the safest option
- Leave early destinations could include homes of families & friends who live outside the risk area, a nearby town or 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:

**Your safety is**



**For more information on how to prepare your own**  
**[www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) VicEmergency Hotline**

# Options

- A well prepared home (yours or your neighbours') that you can actively defend on Severe & Extreme Fire Danger Rating days only
- Private Bushfire Shelter (bunker) that meets current regulations
- Designated community fire refuge

**not guaranteed**

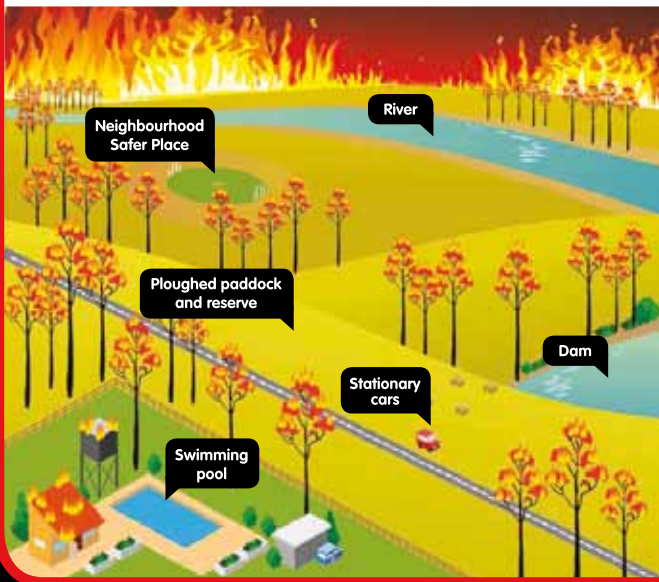


## Last Resort

In situations where no other options are available to you, taking shelter in one of the below may protect 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**



**Bushfire Survival Plan:**  
**1800 226 226**

# **Survive**

*Fire may threaten without warning so **you** need to know what to do to survive.*

## **Community Fire Refuges**

- A Community Fire Refuge is a place that is a building open to the public that can provide short-term shelter from immediate life-threatening effects of a bushfire event.
- There is no Community Fire Refuge located in Halls Gap.

## **Activate **your** bushfire survival plan **early****

- Remember, bushfires can happen when least expected. Planning and preparation are essential.
- A last minute decision may cost you and your family your lives.
- **You may not receive an official warning about a bushfire.**
- Do NOT expect a fire truck at your property.
- Your survival and safety depends on the decisions you make.
- Protecting people will always be more important than property.
- Always tell someone what you are planning to do.
- Observe the weather, including the direction the wind is blowing.
- Watch what is happening around you and where a bushfire may be located.

## **Leaving late is **DANGEROUS****

- Travel on roads in this area during a fire is dangerous.
- You may be impacted by fire and visibility may be poor due to smoke.
- The roads may be blocked due to falling trees, collisions or emergency vehicles.
- Usual travel routes may not be accessible.
- Don't assume you can turn back, as the road may have become blocked behind you.
- Lives are more likely to be lost when people make a last minute decision to flee a bushfire.
- The risk of being overrun by bushfire is very real.
- People caught in the open are likely to face severe and often fatal levels of radiant heat.
- Leaving late is a DEADLY option.



- **SURVIVAL IS NOT GUARANTEED**
- It should only be used if your Bushfire Survival Plan fails and you have nowhere else to go.
- Welfare facilities will not be available.
- It may not provide shelter from smoke and embers.
- The closest Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort (NSP) in the vicinity of Halls Gap is located at:

## Visitor Information Centre Surrounds

Cnr Grampians Road and Heath Street, Halls Gap

*See map on page 15 for Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort locations.*



High risk journeys to Neighbourhood Safer Places during a fire and outside of your immediate area are not recommended.



## Relocation checklist

Protective clothing made from natural fibres

Woollen blankets

## Water and medications

Toiletries and sanitary supplies

Mobile phone and charger

7

## Important documents

7

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First aid kit

1

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Cash, ATM/credit cards

7

1

Valuables and photos

4

5

Battery powered radio

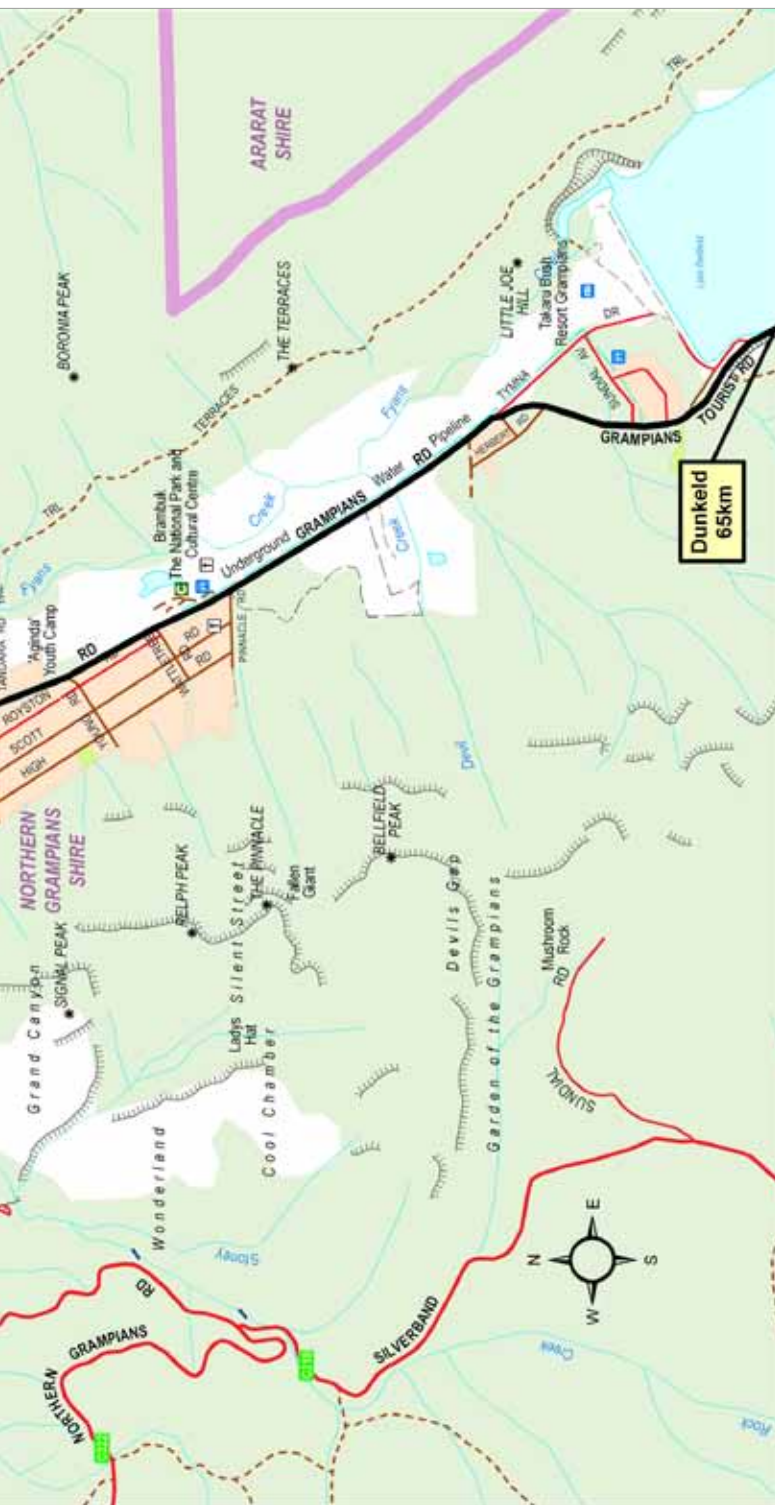
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## 14







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## In EMERGENCY dial 000 (TTY 106)

Do not call Triple Zero for information or advice. Calling Triple Zero unnecessarily may put others who are in a genuine emergency situation at risk.

### **VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226** **Emergency Contact Information**

Download the VicEmergency app, the official Victorian Government App for access to community information and warnings.

Monitor the VicEmergency App and tune into your emergency broadcaster and VicEmergency website ([www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)) on days of high fire danger ratings is the most reliable way of staying informed. Mains power may be unavailable, or fail, during fire and emergencies – keep a battery powered radio available.

**Emergency Broadcasters:** Sky News TV, ABC 594 AM, ABC 107.9 FM, 3WM 1089 AM, Mixx 101.3 FM, Mixx 98.5 FM

**Road closures:** 13 11 70 [www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au)

**National Park, State Forest and Park closures:** 13 19 63 [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)

**School, early childhood services and bus route closures:** [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

**24 Hour Wildlife Emergency:** 13 000 WILDLIFE or 1300 094 535

**24 Hour NURSE-ON-CALL:** 1300 60 60 24

### **Bushfire Information:**

**VicEmergency website:** [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)

**CFA website:** [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

**Follow CFA on Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/cfa\\_updates](http://www.twitter.com/cfa_updates)

**Join the CFA Facebook page:** [www.facebook.com/cfavic](http://www.facebook.com/cfavic)

**FFMvic website (Planned burning):** [www.ffm.vic.gov.au](http://www.ffm.vic.gov.au)



### **Further Information**

**Dept of Human Services:** [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency)

**Forest Fire Management Victoria:** 13 61 86 [www.ffm.vic.gov.au](http://www.ffm.vic.gov.au)

**Weather:** [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

**CFA District Office:** (03) 5352 9600 (**non emergency calls only**)

**Northern Grampians Shire Council:** (03) 5358 8700 [www.ngshire.vic.gov.au](http://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au)

Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired? **Contact the National Relay Service on 1800 555 677** if you use a **TTY, 1800 555 727** if you use Speak and Listen, and then ask for: **1800 226 226**