

Submission to the Northern Grampians Shire MEMPC on Halls Gap Safety Factsheets for Tourists

1 Background

As described in the CAHG submission to the MEMPC in December 2022, about 350,000 visitors to Halls Gap can be expected each year from inter-state or overseas. They cannot be expected to be aware of Victorian emergency management arrangements (e.g. VicEmergency.) We have a responsibility to inform them about the risks they may face, and how they can respond. They cannot rely on online information due to overwhelmed networks during peak tourist season, so hard copy handouts in accommodation provider Welcome packs, or at Reception desks or Visitor Book side-tables, and at Visitor Centres, are required.

To meet this need, the HGRG has drafted factsheets for each key risk. The objective is to provide tourists with

- just the information they need (not the more extensive multi-page information permanent residents need to know, and which tourists are unlikely to read or identify with),
- information specific to Halls Gap, and
- short hard-copy documents which are no more than a single page, double-sided.

The content of the attached draft factsheets is based on existing agency factsheets or web site information, but adapted to the specific Halls Gap environment.

2 Advice from Agencies

The HGRG does not technically need approval from agencies for its factsheets. However, as part of the submission to the MEMPC in December 2022 HGRG offered

- that if the MEMPC and its agencies committed to work with the HGRG in developing mutually-agreed locally-tailored community emergency management solutions,
- then the HGRG would commit not to issue emergency management messages that have not been approved by the responsible agencies.

On this basis, draft factsheets were submitted to agencies for comment. The feedback included:

2.1 General Advice

In Feb 2010, the Victorian Government announced that its default position for public sector information was now open access. Public information is now covered under Creative Commons 4.0 licensing by default, and HGRG is free to share it (copy and redistribute public information in any medium or format) and adapt it (remix, transform, and build upon the public information for any purpose) provided its source is attributed (see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.) The Australian Government has adopted a similar position for its public information.

Consistent with this, the VICPOL response to our request to use National Security information in the *Survive Terrorism* factsheet was: "...you are free to use the content as it is in line with the National Security Website information. All information on the National Security Website is open source and can be used to promote effective protective security."

In regard to the *Survive the Heat* factsheet, the Department of Health stated that they cannot officially endorse or approve our factsheet, as the Department already has an approved version of its own in circulation, but suggested HGRG address this by simply replacing the Victorian government logo with the HGRG logo prior to circulation of our factsheet.

In summary HGRG believes that it can issue factsheets which have been adapted from public government factsheets or web site information, provided

- the factsheet content is consistent with the content of the public government information,
- we attribute the source of the information as the relevant government agency, and
- we issue the factsheets as HGRG documents.

2.2 Specific Advice

In December 2022 the HGRG Chair and Graham Parkes met with Prue Daley (PV Community Engagement & Tourism Officer) and Jenny McGennissen (CFA Community Engagement Coordinator) to review the proposed draft factsheets.

While the meeting was constructive, some of the advice provided was inconsistent, and some conflicted with the agency advice above. Points raised in discussion included

- HGRG should re-use existing agency brochures rather than develop its own.
- HGRG should nevertheless work with NGSC to develop an *Are you Fire Ready?* brochure for Halls Gap (see Wartook example in the table below.)
- HGRG should focus on communication through accommodation providers.
- The major fire risk is out in the National Park, so the *Plan for a Safe Summer in Grampians National Park* should be used (see table below.)
- The Visitor Centres would not be permitted to stock HGRG publications.

Given the above, it is not surprising that there was little feedback provided on the proposed HGRG factsheets. Instead, a number of brochures and factsheets were presented which had been developed by others (see table below.)

Document	Comments
<i>Wartook residents and visitors: Are you Fire Ready?</i>	This is the equivalent of a <i>Community Information Guide</i> , which has been withdrawn by CFA. It is an 8 page booklet targeted largely at residents but includes tourists. It includes activities tourists have no responsibility for e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• check your bushfire plan and that your property is fire ready• consider your fencing and whether a fire truck has access• think about your landscape design and plant selection, etc.
<i>Bushfire safety advice for travellers</i>	Targeted at tourists. However, the scope is state-wide, so specific Halls Gap information is not provided.
<i>Are you Emergency Aware?</i>	Covers fire, flood and storm emergencies. Targeted largely at residents but includes tourists. Includes activities that tourists have no responsibility for, e.g. for fire <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure industrial and agricultural activities adhere to relevant guidelines• make provision for stock in your vegetation and bushfire plans• prepare your property and roadside frontage• review your insurance The scope is state-wide, so specific Halls Gap information is not provided.
<i>Plan for a Safe Summer in Grampians National Park</i>	Bushfire only. One page double sided. Targeted at tourists but Grampians as a whole, not Halls Gap e.g. specific Halls Gap emergency broadcasters are not listed, one of the Horsham broadcasters is incorrect, and only two of the listed eleven ABC/ACE broadcasters can be received in Halls Gap. It is out of date (e.g. uses old fire danger ratings) and appears to no longer be in use (cannot be found on the PV web site, or the internet generally.)
<i>Survive the Heat</i>	Small double-sided brochure targeted specifically at walkers/ hikers. Meets HGRG objectives, but does not provide the full scope of information required.
<i>Your Guide to Survival</i>	A 20-page bushfire survival guide. Targeted primarily at residents e.g. includes details on how to prepare properties to reduce the impact of fire.

Overall, while Prue and Jen were both very willing to help the HGRG as needed, the actual content of the meeting was not as helpful as HGRG hoped it would be, because

- none of the brochures were designed for the purposes the HGRG has defined, so unsurprisingly none of them meet the exact need,
- none of the brochures cover terrorism, evacuation, or hazardous materials,
- some brochures are targeted more at residents than tourists, and
- most brochures do not provide specific Halls Gap information, nor do they meet the short one-page-double-sided objective.

2.3 Current Status of Proposed HGRG Factsheets

All proposed factsheets are single page double sided documents targeted primarily at the Halls Gap tourist population (see attached drafts.)

Document	Status/Agency Response
<i>Community Evacuation Information for Halls Gap</i>	Based on a VICPOL factsheet which is still available on the internet (https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-01/Community-Evacuation-Information---Dec-2017.pdf .) HGRG has updated it to replace outdated fire danger ratings, correct errors and omissions, and to provide specific Halls Gap information e.g. emergency broadcaster frequencies. Stawell VICPOL: Not supportive of HGRG issuing independent evacuation messaging. It should use agency factsheets and not alter them in any way.
<i>Survive the Heat in Halls Gap</i>	Department of Health: Happy with the content, but doesn't want to formally approve the HGRG factsheet because it already has its own approved version. (The <i>Survive the Heat</i> brochure in the table above could also be distributed, but it is targeted solely at walkers/hikers.)
<i>Hazardous Materials in Halls Gap</i>	Identical to the equivalent CFA brochure other than some minor Halls-Gap-specific tailoring and an update of the Pollution Watch Line telephone number. No feedback provided by agencies.
<i>Survive Terrorism in Halls Gap</i>	Taken directly from National Security web site training information (https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/crowded-places-subsite/Files/trainers_guide_attack_what_you_do.pdf .) Home Affairs: "We have reviewed the brochure and believe it is consistent with current Escape.Hide.Tell advice." VICPOL Media Unit: "...the content of the brochure looks in line with the National Security website" VICPOL Counter Terrorism Command: "...you are free to use content as it is in line with the National Security Website information. All information on the National Security Website is open source and can be used to promote effective protective security" Stawell VICPOL: Not supportive of HGRG putting out independent counter-terrorism messaging.
<i>Halls Gap Visitor Information Guide – Bushfire</i>	Adapted from the 16-page CFA <i>Halls Gap Community Information Guide</i> (withdrawn by the CFA.) Still under review by CFA, and based on recent experience there may be no feedback at all.
<i>Halls Gap Visitor Information Guide – Flood and Landslide</i>	Adapted from the 12-page VICSES <i>Halls Gap Local Flood Guide</i> . Reviewed by VICSES and updated based on their feedback.

When the factsheets were presented to the HGRG for formal approval, the agency representatives were vehement in their opposition to the HGRG distributing any factsheets or guides. Some of the points raised in discussion included:

- The potential liability risk is extreme (e.g. if someone were to die when following HGRG advice.).
- Government policies and requirements that have emerged from Royal Commissions and other reviews require the inclusion of specific information elements in agency factsheets, and in many cases these are missing. (The HGRG is not bound by these requirements, but its agency members are.)
- There are official review/approval processes in place within emergency agencies which have not been complied with. (The HGRG is not bound by these processes but its agency members are.)
- The outcome of the Safer Together workshops may be a *Community Emergency Management Plan* which may require the content of the factsheets to be modified.

It was agreed that if the factsheets were to proceed, they should either be

- submitted to the MEMPC for approval or
- attached to a *Community Emergency Management Plan* which would be submitted to the MEMPC for approval.

The HGRG has no current plans to develop a *Community Emergency Management Plan*.

3 Request for Assistance

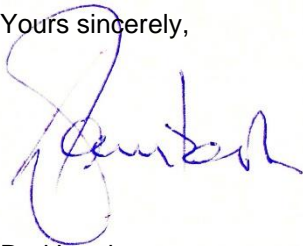
The MEMPC advised the HGRG in March 2023 that: “The agencies that make up the NGS MEMPC are prepared to commit to work with the HGRG in supporting the development of mutually agreed locally tailored community emergency management solutions, where they are needed.”

The community members of HGRG believe that short locally tailored hard copy factsheets targeted at tourists, for each significant risk, are needed (see section 1 above.) There are no factsheets available from emergency management agencies to meet this need (see section 2.2.)

In line with the above MEMPC advice, the HGRG is requesting the MEMPC and its agencies to

1. work with the HGRG to review, amend if necessary, and approve mutually agreed versions of the attached factsheets,
2. include an indication of MEMPC approval on the agreed factsheets (see attached examples), and
3. seek NGSC and PV approval to include the agreed factsheets in the Halls Gap Visitor Centres.

Yours sincerely,



Rod Lambert
Chair, Halls Gap Resilience Group



What to do in an attack

Just as it is important that you know what to do in a fire or a storm, you need to know what to do in an attack.

Thinking about the actions you should take ahead of time will ensure you are better equipped to respond.

Use this simple three-word memory tool -
ESCAPE.HIDE.TELL

ESCAPE

If you see a safe route, ESCAPE.

Move quickly and quietly away from danger.

If it is safe to do so, encourage the people you are with to go with you, but don't let the hesitation of others slow you down.

Take your mobile phone with you if it is safe to do so. DO NOT put yourself in danger to get your mobile phone.

Do not let your belongings impede your ESCAPE.

Do not congregate in open areas or wait at evacuation points. It is important to escape the area as quickly as possible.

Active armed offender attacks

When escaping an active armed offender, you should make use of cover and concealment opportunities if needed. This can include:

- blinds, curtains, room dividers, tents (concealment)
- brickwork or concrete walls (cover)
- building walls and partitions
- fences and other large solid structures
- vehicles including caravans
- earth banks and mounds, or creek banks
- bushes and trees.

If it is safe to do so, help people who might be unfamiliar with the area to escape by telling them which direction to move, or where there may be a safe place to hide.

Improvised explosive attacks

Leaving the area will help you to avoid falling debris, minimise your exposure to dust, smoke, and hazardous substances. It will also keep you safe in case a secondary device is present.

If in multi-story accommodation, use stairs not lifts. Be aware of floors and stairways weakened by explosives.

Once you are out of the building, move away from windows, glass doors or other potentially hazardous areas.

Chemical weapons attacks

If a volatile chemical is released inside a building or enclosed space, you should do whatever it takes to find uncontaminated air quickly. Exit the enclosed space if you can do so without passing through a contaminated area, or break a window to access clean air.

If a volatile chemical substance is released in an outdoor or open space, you should avoid any obvious plume or vapour cloud, and move upwind and uphill if possible.

The best way to escape a chemical exposure is to enter a building away from the site and seal the building.

This can include closing doors, closing windows, turning off fans and air conditioning systems, and sealing windows and doors.

If you come into contact with chemicals, you should:

- remove outer clothing if contaminated and place in a sealed plastic bag
- wash yourself with soap and water, flush skin with lots of water, and flush eyes with water if they are irritated
- put on clean clothes if possible
- seek medical attention

Hostile vehicle attack

In vehicle attacks, move as quickly as possible to areas that put as many obstacles between you and the vehicle as possible, but don't leave you trapped.

HIDE

If you are unable to escape, or are unsure if it's safe to do so, HIDE.

Silence your mobile phone and other devices and turn off vibrate. This is extremely important as the noise from your phone could easily identify your location to an attacker.

Be as quiet and still as possible so as not to give away your hiding place.

Be aware of your exits. Knowing your exits can help in case you need to move from your current hiding place.

Only as a last resort consider looking for something you can use to defend yourself if you are located by the offender.

Help others only if it is safe to do so

Constantly re-assess the situation and your options based on the best available information.

Active armed offender attacks

A safe hiding spot in an active armed offender situation is one that has a sturdy physical barrier between you and the offender. For example, locking a door and moving a large object behind the door.

If you are hiding as a group, and it is safe to do so, remind everyone to keep quiet and still, and to turn their phones to silent.

Improvised explosive attacks

If you become trapped in a building after an improvised device has exploded and objects are falling around you, get under a sturdy table or desk until you can escape.

If you are still trapped after an explosion and are sure the attacker has left, signal your location to rescuers by using your phone light, calling out, using a whistle (if you have one) or by tapping on a pipe or wall.

Chemical weapons attacks

Hiding within an enclosed space where a volatile chemical has been released should be avoided. By hiding in the space, you may increase your exposure.

IF YOU SEE SIGNS OF TERRORISM, SUCH AS

- online media promoting violent extremism,
 - excess purchasing of dangerous materials,
 - someone at risk of becoming radicalised,
 - someone undermining Australian sovereignty,
 - people being harassed by foreign actors,
 - suspicious travel plans or abandoned luggage,
- please contact the **National Security Hotline**.

TELL

When it is safe to do so, TELL.

Call the police by dialling Triple Zero (000). But never at the risk of your own safety or the safety of others.

The more information you can give about your location, surroundings, the attackers and the events that have occurred, the better.

If it is safe to do so, try to obtain the following:

- exact location of the incident
- description of the offender/s and whether they are moving in any particular direction
- details of any weapons being used
- number of people in the area and any that have been injured
- the motive or intent of the offender/s (if known.)

You may be asked to stay on the line and provide further information that the operator requests or if the situation changes.

Your top priority should be your safety, so maintain awareness of what is going on around you, and keep quiet if you are in danger.

If it is safe, provide advice to others in the area that may be unsure of the current location of the threat and what they should do.

Never put yourself or others in danger.

Police response

When police arrive, follow their instructions.

Their first priority will be to deal with the immediate threat to prevent further injury and this may take time.

It is possible that police may not be able to distinguish you from the offender/s.

It is important to remember:

- Police officers will be armed and could point guns in your direction.
- Police may treat you firmly.
- Avoid quick movements or shouting and keep your hands visible.
- The police priority is to locate the offender. This means they may move past people that need help.

You will be evacuated when it is safe to leave the area.

If you have safely escaped, stay away from the area until the police approach you for information.

Contact Numbers:

If you face a life-threatening emergency, phone 000.

National Security Hotline: 1800 123 400 or SMS: 0429 771 822, or hotline@nationalecurity.gov.au

If calling from overseas, call (+61) 1300 123 401. For TTY users, call 1800 234 889

If you do not speak English well, call the Translating and Interpreting Hotline on 131 450 and ask them to call the National Security Hotline and interpret for you

SURVIVE THE HEAT

Know the effects of extreme heat, who is at risk and how you can prepare yourself and others.

During extreme heat it is easy to become dehydrated or for your body to overheat. If this happens, you may develop heat cramps, heat exhaustion or even heatstroke. Heatstroke is a medical emergency which can result in permanent damage to your vital organs, or even death, if not treated immediately. Extreme heat can also make existing medical conditions worse.

Could you or someone you know be at risk?

Extreme heat can affect anybody however the people most at risk:

- are aged over 65 years, especially those living alone
- have a medical condition such as diabetes, kidney disease or mental illness
- are taking medications that may affect the way the body reacts to heat such as:
 - allergy medicines (antihistamines)
 - blood pressure and heart medicines (beta-blockers)
 - seizure medicines (anticonvulsants)
 - water pills (diuretics)
 - antidepressants or antipsychotics
- have problematic alcohol or drug use
- have a disability
- have trouble moving around such as those who are bed bound or in wheelchairs
- pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers
- babies and young children
- are overweight or obese
- work or exercise outdoors
- have recently arrived from cooler climates.

Coping with the heat outdoors

- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day.
- Avoid heavy activity like sport, renovating and gardening.
- If you are going walking or hiking, take plenty of water – dehydration is a major cause of calls for assistance to the SES.
- Wear a hat and light-coloured loose clothing made from natural fibres like cotton and linen.
- If possible, cancel or postpone outings in hot weather. If you must go out, stay in the shade.

Hot cars kill

- Never leave kids, adults or pets in hot cars. The temperature inside parked cars can double within minutes.

Coping with the heat at home

- Drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty (if your doctor limits your fluids, check how much to drink during hot weather).
- Keep yourself cool by using wet towels, putting your feet in cool water and taking cool (not cold) showers.
- Spend as much time as possible in a cool or air-conditioned space (your or your neighbour's or friend's home, or other air conditioned space.)
- Block out the sun at home during the day by closing curtains and blinds.
- Open the windows when there is a cool breeze.
- Eat smaller meals more often and cold meals such as salads.
- Make sure food that needs refrigeration is properly stored.
- Watch or listen to news reports to find out more information during extreme heat

How you can help others

- Keep in touch with sick or frail friends and family. Call them at least once on any extreme heat day.
- Encourage them to drink plenty of water.
- Offer to help family, friends and neighbours who are aged over 65 or have an illness by doing shopping or other errands so they can avoid the heat. Take them somewhere cool for the day or have them stay the night if they are unable to stay cool in their home.
- If you observe symptoms of heat-related illness, seek medical help.

Prepare for extreme heat

- Stock up on food, water and medicines so you don't have to go out in the heat. Visit your doctor to check if changes are needed to your medicines during extreme heat.
- Store medicines safely at the recommended temperature.
- Check that your fan or air-conditioner works well. Have your air-conditioner serviced if necessary.
- Look at the things you can do to make your home cooler such as installing window coverings, shade cloths or external blinds on the sides of the house facing the sun.

Prepare for power failure

- Ensure you have a torch, fully charged mobile phone, a battery operated radio and some spare batteries.
- Stock up on food items that do not require refrigeration or cooking, such as tinned fruit and vegetables, tinned meats or fish, bread and fruit.
- Have plenty of drinking water available.
- Stock up on medications and other essential items.
- Consider a battery-operated or hand held fan to assist with cooling.

Recognising heat-related illnesses

Heat can worsen the condition of someone who already has a medical issue such as heart disease or diabetes. Most reported illness and death is due to the effect of heat on those already ill. Heat can also cause illnesses such as heat cramps and heat exhaustion which can lead to the life-threatening condition, heatstroke. The following table will help you recognise the symptoms of each and what to do.

SYMPTOMS	WHAT TO DO
HEAT CRAMPS Muscle pains Spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs	Stop activity and sit quietly in a cool place Drink cool water Rest a few hours before returning to activity See a doctor if cramps persist
HEAT EXHAUSTION Pale complexion and sweating Rapid heart rate Muscle cramps, weakness Dizziness, headache Nausea, vomiting Fainting	Go to a cool area and lie down Fan if possible Drink cool water if not vomiting Remove outer clothing Wet skin with cool water or wet cloths See a doctor
HEATSTROKE (a life-threatening emergency) Same symptoms as heat exhaustion except sweating stops Mental condition worsens, confusion Seizure Stroke-like symptoms or collapsing Unconsciousness	Call an ambulance – phone 000 Get the person to a cool area and lay them down Remove clothing Wet skin with water, fanning continuously Position an unconscious person on their side and clear their airway

For more information visit the Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

If you are unwell, call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24 for 24-hour health advice or see your doctor.

In an emergency, call 000.

This Resilience Group document is provided as a community service. It was adapted in November 2022 from *Survive the Heat*, a brochure created by the Department of Health, the content of which has been re-used under Victorian Government [Creative Commons](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) arrangements.

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Although the chance of a significant chemical emergency is small, the possible health effects can be serious. Accidental releases can occur quickly and it's important you know what to do.

What is a chemical emergency?

A chemical emergency can be caused by:

- Residential or industrial fires
- Chemical spills
- Explosions
- Transport accidents

They may pollute the air with chemicals or smoke. Even if they don't, you should stay away from the incident, and comply with the instructions of emergency personnel.

What hazards are in your area?

- There are large LPG tanks in Halls Gap. A serious gas leak could cause breathing difficulties and unconsciousness.
- A truck could have an accident in Halls Gap. It could spill a hazardous load. If there is a fire, the fumes could be toxic.

What can I expect?

Hear: You may hear an explosion or fire trucks
Smell: You may smell a strong chemical odour
See: You may see a large fire or smoke

How will I be warned?

- VicEmergency may send you an alert (if you have downloaded the app)
- The incident may be shown on the VicEmergency web site
- Local Radio (107.9 FM, 594 AM or Mixx 98.5 FM) or SKY News TV may broadcast incident information and safety advice

SHELTER IN PLACE



How to stay safe during chemical emergencies or large fires

Emergency phone numbers

000 Fire Brigade, Police, Ambulance
For emergency assistance only

131 450 Interpreter Services

106 TTY

Other phone numbers

1300 372 842 Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Pollution Watch Line

132 500 Victorian State Emergency Service (VICSES)
For storm damage and flood assistance

132 360 WorkSafe incident reporting



Factsheet approved by the
 Northern Grampians Municipal
 Emergency Management Planning
 Committee (MEMPC)

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WHAT TO DO

Shelter-in-place

- ➡ When the plume or smoke is passing over it is safer to stay indoors.
- ➡ After the plume or smoke has passed, it is safer to move outdoors.

Sheltering inside your home or a building in an emergency provides immediate protection from contaminated air outside. The fresh indoor air provides short term protection.

Over time some of the contaminated outdoor air will enter the building through small cracks, and eventually, after the plume or smoke has passed, the outdoor air may be cleaner than the indoor air. At this time it is safer to go outside.

Display this information in your home or place of work. Discuss emergency procedures with family, neighbours and colleagues.

Three steps to take in a chemical emergency:

1. SHELTER

Go inside immediately.



Take family and pets with you.



Avoid phone use. Emergency Services may need to contact you.

2. SHUT

Close the doors and windows.



Close all external doors and windows. Seal gaps with blankets, towels or duct tape.



Turn off heaters, air conditioners and exhaust fans. Close fireplace dampers.

3. LISTEN

Listen to the radio for further information and additional instructions.



Listen to local, ABC or any commercial radio station, turn on the television for media messages, or visit emergency.vic.gov.au or www.cfa.vic.gov.au



Wait for "all clear" message, then open doors and windows to ventilate building. Go outside.

Halls Gap Visitor Information Guide -Bushfire

Your bushfire planning guide

Visitors can prepare for bushfire and have a plan for when the Fire Danger Rating is **EXTREME** or **CATASTROPHIC**, as shown in the diagram below.

Important visitor bushfire safety information is provided in this guide to help you make informed decisions about a bushfire. Planning and preparation can save lives. Use this guide to help you and your family stay safe.

Prepare

Understand **your** risk

Halls Gap has been assessed by fire authorities as being at risk of bushfire.

You should keep in mind:

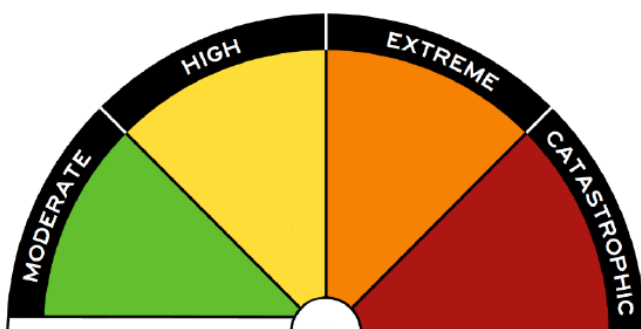
- It is impossible for emergency services to protect every property i.e. there is no guarantee that a fire truck will respond when you are at risk from bushfire.

Reduce **your** bushfire risk

Things you can do:

- If the Fire Danger Rating is **EXTREME** avoid activities in the bush. Spend a day at the pool, visit the Halls Gap Zoo, visit the Brambuk National Park and Cultural Centre, or similar ideas (if they are open for business.)
- Have a plan e.g. keep things packed so you can quickly leave early. Have a good fall back option if leaving early is not possible.

- Learn your local roads so you know alternate routes if a road is blocked.
- Be prepared for service failures during a fire (e.g. loss of electricity, water.)
- Check the Fire Danger Rating for the Wimmera District every day at <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/home/local-information>. (The Grampians National Park is closed on **CATASTROPHIC** days.)
- Download the VicEmergency app from the App Store or Google Play. The app will send fire alerts to your mobile phone (if you are in a good reception area.)
- If you get an alert, check the situation on the VicEmergency web page <https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/>
- Monitor the situation by listening to emergency broadcasters: ABC Local Radio (107.9 FM, or 594 AM), commercial radio (Mixx 101.3 FM) or SKY News TV.



MODERATE

Plan and prepare

HIGH

Be ready to act

EXTREME

Take action now to protect life and property

CATASTROPHIC

For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas

Act

Halls Gap is in a high risk bushfire area. This means that if the Fire Danger Rating is **CATASTROPHIC**, or you receive an alert on an **EXTREME** fire danger day, you should:

Leave early

It may be disappointing to cut short your visit to Halls Gap, but leaving early is always the safest option, particularly when:

- The Fire Danger Rating is **CATASTROPHIC**. Houses aren't designed to withstand a bushfire during these conditions.
- There are children, elderly or disabled people staying with you. People who are vulnerable should always leave early.
- Your accommodation has not been well prepared to give you and your family the best level of protection from a fire.

You should leave well before a bushfire reaches your area and well before you are under threat. If you don't leave early, you may be ordered to evacuate by emergency services. However, in fast-moving bushfires you may not receive any warning at all.

Leaving late is dangerous, because travel during a fire is dangerous. Visibility may be poor, roads may be blocked both in front of you and behind you, and the risk of being overrun by bushfire is very real. **Leaving late may result in serious injury or death.**

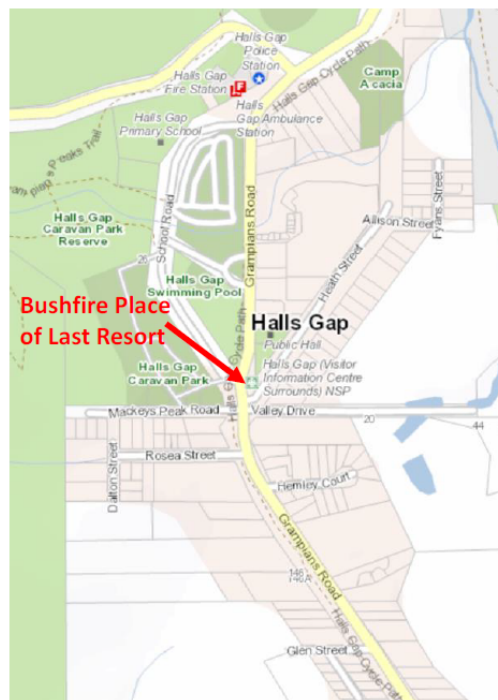
Where will you go if you leave early?

- You can go back home, or go back to the place you visited from, or continue with your travel outside Halls Gap.
- If you only intend to leave until the fire danger has passed, you may visit one of the nearby towns e.g. Stawell, Ararat or Horsham (if it is safe to do so.)
- Tell someone that you are leaving and where you are planning to go.
- Ensure your vehicle is well-prepared with sufficient fuel. Take drinking water with you so you stay hydrated.

Survive

Last resort

Halls Gap has a **Neighbourhood Safer Place – Bushfire Place of Last Resort**. It is the grassed area at the corner of Grampians Road and Heath Street. **It cannot accommodate large groups** and is not a building, so does not protect from smoke, embers or radiant heat.



If no other options are available, you may be able to shelter in the following:

- A stationary car facing towards the fire front in a clearing away from dense bush, provided you get down below window level and use woollen blankets to protect yourself from radiant heat.
- A body of water (swimming pool, Fyans Creek, Lake Bellfield.) **Beware deep water!** Your face, head and lungs may be exposed to smoke/heat. A last resort only!

These last resort options have a risk of trauma, injury or even drowning/death.

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Halls Gap Visitor Information Guide – Floods and Landslides

Your flash flooding and landslide guide

Visitors can prepare for flash flooding and landslides, and plan how to respond.

Important safety information is provided in this guide to help you make informed decisions about a flood or landslide emergency. Planning and preparation can save lives. Use this guide to help you and your family stay safe.

Prepare

Understand **your** flood/landslide risk

Floods and landslides occur in Halls Gap.

You should keep in mind:

- It is impossible for emergency services to protect every property.
- As a result of significant rainfall and storm events, roads may become blocked by floodwater, falling trees or large rocks.
- Don't try to protect your accommodation provider's property. Doing so may put you or your family at risk of injury or death.

Reduce **your** flood and landslide risk

Things you can do:

- Have a plan e.g. keep things packed so you can leave quickly, identify higher ground to move to if leaving is not possible, etc.
- Learn your local roads so you know alternate routes if a road is blocked.

- Be prepared for service failures (e.g. loss of electricity, water.)
- If you are in a camp ground and don't have a vehicle to evacuate, move away from waterways and gullies, and to higher ground, before floods/landslides begin.
- Monitor weather warnings. A Flood Watch means floods may happen in 1-2 days. A Flood Warning means a flood is about to happen or is already happening.
- Download the VicEmergency app from the App Store or Google Play. The app will send alerts to your mobile phone (if you are in a good reception area.)
- If you receive an alert, check the situation out on the VicEmergency web page <https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/>.
- Monitor the emergency by listening to emergency broadcasters: ABC Local Radio (107.9 FM, or 594 AM), commercial radio (Mixx 101.3 FM) or SKY News TV.



Photo: Parks Victoria 2011

Act

Leave early

Leaving early is always the safest option, particularly when:

- There are children, elderly or disabled people staying with you i.e. people who are vulnerable.
- Your accommodation is located in a low-lying area which is likely to be flooded.

You may be ordered to evacuate by emergency services, but in any case you should leave well before a flood reaches you:

- Flood water is often contaminated and may contain snags, strong currents and other hazards.
- Travelling through flood waters is dangerous. Heavy rain may make visibility poor, roads may be blocked by flood water, mud, debris, and fallen trees, and the risk of being washed off the road by fast moving water is very real.

Leaving late may result in injury or death.

Where will you go if you leave early?

- You may choose to continue with your travel plans outside Halls Gap, or go back to the place you visited from, or go home.
- If you only intend to leave until the danger has passed, you may choose to visit one of the nearby towns e.g. Stawell, Ararat or Horsham (if it is safe to do so.)
- Tell someone that you are leaving and where you are planning to go.
- Ensure your vehicle is well-prepared with sufficient fuel. Take drinking water with you so you stay hydrated.

Survive

Safer higher ground

If leaving is no longer safe, you will need to find a safe location, typically higher ground.

This should be away from waterways (particularly Stony Creek, which is subject to flash flooding), and away from gullies (where landslides may occur.)

You should have already planned for this eventuality. You should have

- identified an area of higher ground which you can get to easily,
- made sure that the evacuation route is clear of hazards, streams and gullies, and
- practised walking this route.

The *Halls Gap Local Flood Guide* has maps of areas that are subject to floods and landslides <https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Council/Governance-and-transparency/Council-publications/VicSES-Halls-Gap-Local-Flood-Guide>

Last resort

If you cannot get to higher ground because you are trapped inside your accommodation, and floodwater comes inside, move to a higher point such as a kitchen bench or second storey and call the SES on 132 500. If the water continues to rise, you may have to climb onto the roof of your accommodation.

These last resort options have a risk of trauma, injury or even death.

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Community Evacuation Information

Remember: Leaving early is always the safest option

What is 'evacuation'?

Evacuation is the planned relocation of people from a dangerous or potentially dangerous area to a safer area. This is a safety strategy that uses distance to separate you from the danger.

Who is responsible for co-ordinating an evacuation?

Victoria Police is responsible for co-ordinating an evacuation in an emergency.

Get ready now

Prepare: Develop a family evacuation plan and practice it. Pack an 'Emergency Kit' including items from 'What should I take with me'. Make sure your vehicle has fuel.

Why should I leave early?

The safest option in the lead up to an emergency is always to leave early. Leaving early is the recommended course of action and should be your first consideration and included in your planning.

What are the types of emergencies where I may be advised to evacuate?

There are many types of emergencies that may require you to consider evacuating. These emergencies may include fire, flood, storm, landslide and chemical hazard or spill. If there is a bushfire in your area you should not rely on a call to evacuate. On **Catastrophic** days the safest option is to leave before fire threatens.

How will I know when to evacuate?

You should remain vigilant on days of severe or extreme weather events, such as **Catastrophic** and **Extreme** fire danger days, for warnings and other information about the emergency. Key sources of information are:

- Listen to your emergency broadcasters: ABC Local Radio (107.9 FM, or 594 AM) or commercial radio (Mixx 101.3 FM) or SKY News TV (Channel 56.)
- Visit **VicEmergency** - <http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au>
- Download the VicEmergency app from the App Store or Google Play.
- Phone the VicEmergency hotline: 1800 226 226

You may receive a warning to evacuate from a number of sources including telephone, Emergency Alert (fixed line and SMS), emergency service websites, or from a local option such as doorknocking or police car loudspeaker.

What do I do when I am advised to evacuate?

Secure your premises if time permits. Close doors, windows and curtains. Turn off lights and appliances. You should immediately follow the directions contained in the evacuation advice. When evacuating, follow ALL directions from emergency services.

What should I take with me?

Medication and prescriptions, protective clothing, drinking water, personal identity documents, mobile phone and charger, portable radio, torch and batteries, woollen blanket, change of clothes and personal hygiene items.

Evacuation will only be recommended if there is an imminent threat, and evacuation can be undertaken safely. Where a safe evacuation is not possible, you need to seek a safe shelter option. In fastmoving emergencies you may not receive a warning or a recommendation to evacuate.

What should I wear?

Fire: Natural fibre (wool or cotton), long sleeve top and long pants, solid footwear (leather), wide brimmed hat, smoke mask, goggles, leather gloves, towel

Flood: Solid footwear (leather), warm clothing, wet weather gear

Where should I go?

You should go to the safe location advised in the warning. The warning advice may recommend a route. Once you have evacuated to the safe location you may be required to register your personal information.

What do I do about my animals?

You need to pre-plan for pets and livestock in the event of an emergency. Leave early with your pet emergency kit, with leads and cages for transportation and containment (see <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/pets-and-emergencies>.) Livestock and horses need to be evacuated early or left with internal gates open so they can move freely within the property (see <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/emergency-management/emergency-animal-welfare/horses-and-livestock-in-emergencies>)

What if I require assistance to evacuate?

If you would require assistance to evacuate this should be taken into account as part of your planning. If you do not have a means of transport to leave the area you need to have an alternative plan in place, such as leaving with your neighbours or arranging for family to help you evacuate. Remember: Leaving early is always the safest option.

When can I return?

Police or emergency services will advise you when it is safe to return to your home. Do not return until you are advised that it is safe to do so.

What if I do not want to evacuate?

If you choose not to evacuate you may place your life and that of your family at risk, particularly if you do not have a plan in place which has been practiced and communicated to your family.

Personal Safety

Continue to listen to your emergency broadcasters (see above) for updates. Fires and storms will reduce visibility on the roads. Turn on your car headlights. Some of the roads which feed Grampians Rd are single lane, so if you are on them, watch out for on-coming traffic when visibility is low.

Drive with caution at all times as roads may be blocked by things such as flood water, fallen trees or power lines. Don't drive, ride, or walk through floodwaters. Never attempt to remove power lines from the road.

THE PRESENCE OF POLICE OR OTHER EMERGENCY SERVICES DURING AN EVACUATION CANNOT BE GUARANTEED