



# How to plan and prepare for floods

## Flooding in Victoria

Victoria has many flood-prone communities with thousands of homes, properties and businesses at risk of flooding. Floods cause more damage per year in terms of dollars and lives lost than any other natural hazard in Australia. Flooding can happen at any time of the year.

If you live in, work in or visit areas on low-lying land, close to creeks or rivers, or near major stormwater drains you may be at risk of flooding.

A well prepared community can reduce the impact of flooding by up to 80%. People who are prepared are more likely to respond to floods appropriately and safely.

### Types of flooding

#### Riverine flooding

In riverine flooding, relatively high water levels overflow above the banks of a stream or river. Depending on the local landscape, some floods may pass quickly, while others will move slowly down the river, sometimes lasting for several months. As the water moves downstream during floods, this may cause flooding in areas where it is not raining.

#### Flash flooding

Flash flooding is caused by heavy rain over a short period of time and is generally defined as developing in six hours or less from rainfall to the onset of flooding.

#### Overland flooding

Overland flooding is a type of flash flooding caused by a large amount of rain falling in a small area, causing storm water drains to overload.

### Weather Warnings

**Flood Watches** and **Flood Warnings** are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) to tell people about possible flooding.

**Flood Watches** mean there is a developing weather pattern that might cause floods in one or two days.

**Flood Warnings** mean flooding is about to happen or is already happening. Flood Warnings are classified into Minor, Moderate and Major depending on the expected size and impact of the flood.

SES will provide information about how the floodwater might affect people and properties.

**Severe Weather Warnings** or Severe Thunderstorm Warnings are issued when heavy rain fall that could lead to flash flooding is expected. Flash flooding happens quickly. There may be little or no warning. The arrival time and depth of a flash flood can not usually be predicted.

Remember that you may not receive any official warning. If you think you are at risk, do not wait for an official warning to act.

### Emergency Alert

During floods, SES may provide an alert through the National Emergency Alert Telephone Warning System. All Emergency Services can use Emergency Alert to warn communities about dangerous situations by voice message to landline telephones or text message to mobile phones.

If you receive an Emergency Alert you should pay attention and act accordingly.

### Emergency broadcasters

During a flood, tune in to your local emergency broadcaster: ABC Local Radio, Commercial Radio, designated Community Radio Stations and SKY News Television. Your Emergency Broadcaster will keep you informed of local events.

Your emergency broadcaster:

### Prepare an Emergency Plan

Flooding can happen at any time, with little warning. People who have planned and prepared for emergencies can help to reduce the impact of emergencies on their homes and families and recover faster.

Your emergency plan should include:

- Emergencies that might affect you
- How they might affect you
- What you will do before, during and after an emergency
- Where you will go if you evacuate and the safest route to get there
- A list of contact numbers you may need

### Prepare an Emergency Kit

Every home and business should have a basic Emergency Kit. An Emergency Kit puts everything you need into one place. A basic Emergency Kit should contain: When a warning is issued, place extra items into your Emergency Kit, including:



Radio



Torch



Spare batteries



First Aid Kit



Gloves



EMERGENCY KIT



Important documents



3 days supply

Food



3 days supply

Water



3 days supply

Prescriptions & medications



Copy of your Emergency Plan

- Mobile phone and charger
- Mementoes and valuables
- Requirements for pets
- Strong shoes
- Clothing for at least three days

# During a Flood

## How SES can help you

SES is a volunteer-based organisation that helps during floods, storms, earthquake and tsunami as well as assisting with other emergencies.

During a flood, SES help may include:

- Providing flood advice
- Protecting essential services
- Helping to protect properties
- Rescuing people from floodwater
- Advising of an evacuation

## What you can do to stay safe

Always keep yourself safe. Floodwater is a powerful force and there are many unseen dangers. You can't see what lies under the water. Roads can be washed away, bridges can be damaged and floodwater may contain sewage and debris. To help stay safe:

- **Never** drive, ride or walk through floodwater
- **Never** allow children to play in or near floodwater
- If evacuated, do not return until it is safe to do so
- Follow the advice of authorities

## Evacuation

During a flood SES and other emergency services may advise you to evacuate to keep you safe. It is important that you follow this advice. In an evacuation, take your emergency kit with you and report to your local evacuation centre, even if you will not be staying there, to let them know that you are safe.

You can plan to leave at any time if you do not feel safe. You do not need to wait to be told to evacuate.

During an emergency, follow the Flood Checklist to help you prepare.

# Flood Checklist

## NOW: Flood Preparation

- Check if your home and contents insurance covers flooding.
- Keep this list of emergency numbers near the telephone.
- Put together an Emergency Kit and prepare a home or business Emergency Plan, see: [www.ses.vic.gov.au](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au).

## When you hear a Flood Watch or weather warning

- Listen to the radio and check the SES website for more information and advice.
- Go over your Emergency Plan. Pack clothing and other extra items into your Emergency Kit and take this with you if you evacuate.

## When flooding may happen soon (a Flood Warning)

- Make sure your family members and neighbours are aware of what is happening.
- Be ready to evacuate. Act early. Conditions change rapidly. Roads and escape routes can be covered or blocked. Don't forget to take pets and medicine with you.
- Put household valuables and electrical items as high as possible.
- Turn off water, gas and electricity at the mains.
- Secure objects likely to float and cause damage. Raise chemicals and oils well above the forecast flood height.

## During the flood

- For emergency assistance, call 132 500 for SES.
- **Never** drive, ride or walk through floodwater. This is the main cause of death during floods.
- **Never** allow children to play in floodwater. This is the main cause of death during floods for children and young people.
- Stay away from drains, culverts and waterways. Water can flow quickly and have strong currents.
- Stay well clear of fallen trees, power lines and damaged buildings.

## After the flood: Recovery

- If your property has been flooded, check with your local council for information and advice.
- Have all electrical and gas equipment professionally tested before use.

# Flood Checklist

## Life threatening Emergency

Police fire ambulance

**000** Triple Zero  
TTY106

## Victoria State Emergency Service (SES)

For flood/storm emergency calls

**132 500**

## SES Information Line

Operates during major floods or storms

**1300 842 737**  
**1300 VIC SES**  
[www.ses.vic.gov.au](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au)

## Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)

Weather Information, forecasts, warnings

**1300 659 217**  
[www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

## National Relay Service (NRS)

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

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

	DIAL	THEN ASK FOR
■ <b>Speak and Listen (SSR)</b> users phone	<b>1300 555 727</b>	<b>132 500</b>
■ <b>TTY / Voice</b> users phone	<b>13 36 77</b>	<b>132 500</b>

**Internet Relay** users log into [www.iprelay.com.au/call/](http://www.iprelay.com.au/call/) then enter: 132 500 or 000

## VicRoads

Road closures and hazard reporting service

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

## Department of Human Services (DHS)

Recovery information and health advice

**1300 650 172**  
[www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

## Department of Primary Industries (DPI)

Road closures and hazard reporting service

**136 186**  
[www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au)

**Complete the following and keep this information handy close to the phone:**

Your insurance provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Your electricity supplier: \_\_\_\_\_

Your gas supplier: \_\_\_\_\_



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