



Department of
Sustainability and
Environment

Media Release

From the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE),
CFA and MFB

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COMMUNITY SAFETY IS NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

Fire authorities warn that the Victorian community needs to be fully prepared for extreme fire danger tomorrow, with four large fires still burning across Victoria and predicted temperatures around 40 degrees in Northern Victoria and gusty north-westerly winds. A cool change will move across the state later on Friday as the wind shifts strongly to the south-west bringing possible lightning strikes, which could start new fires.

CFA, DSE and MFB, in conjunction with Parks Victoria and VICSES, are warning Victorians to avoid unnecessary travel tomorrow especially in high fire danger locations.

This includes any tourist activity due to the unpredictability of potential new starts of fire, and the response of emergency vehicles on these roads.

CFA Deputy Chief Officer John Haynes said that as Victoria's fire agencies prepare for tomorrow's extreme fire conditions, communities in all areas, need to review their bushfire survival plans and be ready to implement those plans immediately if required.

"Fires can start anywhere, if you're not comfortable leave early tomorrow. It is not too late to make a fire plan today. Practice your plan, leave early. If you stay, make sure you and your house is prepared," Mr Haynes said.

"For people who have assessed their fire plans and have decided to leave early, they need to register with the Red Cross by calling 1800 727 077 after you arrive at the new location," Mr Haynes said.

DSE Assistant Chief Fire Officer Liam Fogarty said the predicted combination of hot weather, strong winds and very dry conditions meant the Victoria was extremely vulnerable to fires on Friday.

"We urge people to remain vigilant. Those who are considering travelling or spending time in the outdoors to check fire restrictions and conditions well in advance and regularly tune into ABC radio for regular local updates," Mr Fogarty said.

"Victoria continues to experience unprecedented dryness. In these extreme conditions, an accidental spark or careless mistake can easily transform into a fire that threatens communities, homes and the bush," Mr Fogarty explained.

Parks Victoria Chief Executive Mark Stone said a number of parks would be closed due to the extreme fire danger.

"All Victorians thinking of visiting a park should reconsider their plans and stay out of bush and parklands," Mr Stone said.

"We ask all Victorians to be aware of the safety issues throughout this fire season. This also includes the risk of heat stress, falling trees in strong winds and water safety when visiting the coasts, rivers and lakes," Mr Stone said.

VICSES State Duty Officer David Tucek said the extreme heat over recent weeks and the forecasted high winds could result in a high number of falling trees and debris on the roads.

“Victorians should take extra care when on the road with low visibility due to smoke likely,” Mr Tucek said.

MFB Chief Fire Officer Tony Murphy echoed CFA and DSE concerns and reminded people to be prepared, equipped and informed ahead of the extreme forecast predicted for tomorrow.

“Melbourne is not immune to fire. Recent fires in the outer metropolitan areas had highlighted just how dry the whole state is, including outer Melbourne’s urban fringe,” Mr Murphy said.

“We also ask people visiting metropolitan parks to be aware of possible fire danger, avoiding possible ignition sources like power tools and cigarette butts and take care when parking cars on dry grass.” Mr Murphy said.

Important steps to take to avoid the threat of fire include:

- Ensure your property is adequately prepared
- Adhere to any Total Fire Ban or fire restrictions
- If travelling, listen to ABC Local Radio or community radio station
- For bushfire information, check the CFA and DSE websites or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667
- For park closures, check the Parks Victoria website or call the Parks Victoria Information Line on 13 19 63
- Report any suspicious behaviour to Crime Stoppers
- Register with Red Cross on 1800 727 077 if planning to leave property due to fire danger.

For more information contact:

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For information about bushfires, fire restrictions and campfires, call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line 1800 240 667. Callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment may call textphone/telewriter (TTY) on 1800 122 969. Information is also available at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or www.dse.vic.gov.au/fires