



Floods, storms and landslides after bushfires

What happens after bushfires?

Bushfires can have long-lasting impacts on the natural environment, increasing the dangers from floods and storms, and the chance of landslides.

Floods

- Plants help to absorb water and reduce runoff. In burnt areas where there are less plants, more water will flow into riverbeds and may pool in low-lying areas, causing flash flooding.
- Flash floods can happen quickly, without warning. They can be very deep, rise quickly and move fast. Floodwater may also carry dangerous boulders, branches and trees.
- Flash flooding may damage and wash away roads and bridges, and erode riverbeds, gullies and banks.

Storms

- Trees that have been damaged by heat or fire may be unstable and more likely to fall when it is windy or wet.
- Storms may also cause flooding and flash flooding due to increased runoff in locations that would normally not flood.

Landslides

- Plants and tree roots help to stop landslides from happening by absorbing water and holding the ground together.
- After bushfires, rain and the loss of plants and roots can make the ground soft and heavy, leading to a greater chance of landslides.
- Landslides can carry debris such as boulders and trees downhill, and cause serious damage to buildings.
- They can be extremely dangerous to anyone on or below the affected area.
- The risk of a landslide occurring in a burnt area depends on how steep the land is, the number of remaining trees to support the land, the soil composition, and the structure of the rocks below the surface.

How long will the effects last?

- The impacts on the natural environment after a bushfire can last anywhere from two to five years, depending on the intensity of the fire, how quickly plants regrow and whether any floods or storms happened afterwards.

Stay safe

- Avoid walking in burnt areas or along river banks and gullies during and immediately after rainfall.
- Stay safe by never entering floodwater. It can take just 15 cm of water to float a car.
- Do not drive in dangerous conditions, including during storms and heavy rain. Follow any road signs and warnings, including detours.
- Access emergency information through the VicEmergency app, website and hotline (1800 226 226), or dial in to emergency broadcasters: ABC Local Radio, designated commercial radio and SKY NEWS TV.

In an emergency

Victoria State Emergency Service

Flood and storm assistance
132 500

Triple Zero

Life threatening medical and emergency assistance
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Did you know?

If you live in a bushfire-affected area your water source could become contaminated from debris, ash, small dead animals or aerial fire retardants.

To learn more about water safety, visit:
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/bushfires-and-water-tanks

What else can I do?

- Think about how bushfires might affect you, your property, and surroundings. Areas most likely to be impacted are located downhill and downstream from burnt areas.
- Have an arborist or qualified professional inspect any fire damaged trees nearby.
- If you are in low-lying land or near a creek or river, be aware of the risk of flooding and landslides during or after rainfall.
- Look out for blocked waterways and redirected water if you are located near a creek or river.
- Stay informed of warnings and emergencies at: emergency.vic.gov.au.
- For more information on floods, storms and landslides, visit: ses.vic.gov.au.



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