Photo source: Bass Coast Shire Council, 2022

Local Flood Guide

Lower Powlett River

Understand, prepare, and respond effectively to your flood risk.

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

BASS COAST

SES FLOOD STORM EMERGENCY 132 500

000 EMERGENCY If life threatening call triple zero 000

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Victorian State Emergency Service acknowledges Aboriginal Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pays respect to their cultures and Elders past and present.

Disclaimer: Victoria State Emergency Service assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions for any of the content in this document.

Content reviewed: September 2026

For more information visit: ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe

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Local flood information

There are two major waterways within Bass Coast —the Bass River and the Powlett River.

The 2007 flood event was one of the most significant in the area which caused flooding around the Powlett River.

Flooding can happen quickly after heavy rainfall, giving people little to no time to prepare and take action.

Why does Lower Powlett River flood?

Lower Powlett River is at risk of both **flash flooding** and **riverine flooding**, which can happen separately or at the same time. Both are usually caused by heavy rainfall.

Riverine Flooding

- Riverine flooding can occur after prolonged moderate to heavy rain.
- Moderate to heavy rainfall over a period of 12 hours or more usually results in severe flooding in the area.

Flash Flooding

- Flash flooding usually occurs in spring and summer with little warning. It occurs after high intensity rainfall, short in duration and is usually associated with thunderstorms. The local urban drainage system rapidly reaches capacity during these events.
- Significant flooding can still occur during other times of the year.

How do floods impact communities?

Even if your home or workplace stays dry, floods can impact you in many ways.

- Buildings flooded
- Road closures
- Drinking water supply and quality affected
- Power outages
- Mobile and internet network outage
- Sewage overflows inside building

Check your home, work, and travel routes for floodwater

If this map shows potential flood risk for you, ensure you take action to **plan and prepare for floods**. See page 7 for more information.

- This map shows the area likely to flood in a significant flood event.
- This is referred to as a 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP), which means there is a 1% chance of this size flood (or greater) happening in any year.

Indicative Flood / No Flood Guidance Tool

The Bureau of Meteorology does not currently provide flood forecasts for Powlett River.

Floodplain areas of the river begin to rise around 18 to 24 hours after the start of heavy rainfall and peak within 30 to 36 hours for big floods and 2 or so days for smaller floods.

Download your free Property Flood Report

View an interactive version of this map using West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority's Community Flood Portal.

Stay safe by never driving through floodwater. It can take just 15cm of flowing water to float a car, that's the height of an average pen.

What might happen in a flood in your area?

Although no two floods are the same and the environment is constantly changing, the below provides an idea of what to expect for different flood sizes.

Minor impacts

- Water spilling over river banks and nearby low lying areas.
- Water coming up through drains in nearby streets.
- Water will cover paths, tracks, and low level bridges.
- Some backyards and buildings impacted below floor level.

Moderate impacts

- Water spilling over riverbanks and covering large areas of land.
- Water above floor level in some houses and buildings.
- Evacuation may be required in some areas.
- Impact to roads and traffic routes.

Major impacts

- Widespread flooding.
- Many houses and businesses are inundated above floor level.
- Properties and whole areas may be isolated.
- Major roads and rail routes closed.
- Many evacuations required.
- Impact to utility services (for example, water, power, sewerage).

Previous flood impacts

Understanding the impacts of past floods can help you anticipate impacts of future flood events.

2007 flood event

The late June /early July flood event was one of the most significant in the area. Heavy rainfall caused the Lower Powlett River banks to burst and flood the surrounding area.

Historical flooding in Bass Coast has caused the following road closures:

- Bass Highway in Dalyston
- Bass Highway in Kilcunda
- Bass Highway in Lance Creek
- Heslop Road in Wonthaggi
- Kongwak to Outtrim Road
- McCraws Road in Wattlebank

What community infrastructure is likely to flood?

During a flood, the regions main road transport link, the Bass Highway, may be affected due to heavy rain which may cause disruption to major services.

Your local services

Catchment Management Authority

For general advice about flooding and controls based on planning zones and overlays.

- **West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority**
  wgcma.vic.gov.au | 03 5175 7800

Local Council

For relief support after a flood event and general land use planning.

- **Bass Coast Shire Council**
  basscoast.vic.gov.au | 1300 226 278

Floodwater can be very deep, rise quickly and move fast.
Stay safe by avoiding flooded areas. Never drive, ride, walk or play in floodwater.

Plan and prepare for floods

1 How to stay informed

VicEmergency is Victoria's source of emergency information and warnings.

- Set-up a watch zone for your area for alerts when warnings are issued.
- Learn about the three different warning levels.

VicEmergency app
emergency.vic.gov.au
1800 226 226

vicemergency

@vicemergency

2 Make an Emergency Plan

Use information from your Local Flood Guide and your Catchment Management Authority, to help you decide;

- What you will do in a flood emergency
- When you will do it
- Who you will inform

Red Cross RediPlan is a free tool that helps you create a simple emergency plan that supports the flood actions you have chosen.

- Visit redcross.org.au/prepare
- Download the Get Prepared app

3 Prepare an emergency kit

You may need to stay safe for 72 hours in a disaster before help arrives. Make sure you have safe drinking water, food, and any special needs or medications for all family.

There will be extra items to be added to your emergency kit in an emergency like clothes, a phone and charger.

Watch a video on how to get your Emergency kit ready.
youtu.be/XgyLnKDMkNo

4 Reduce impacts to your property

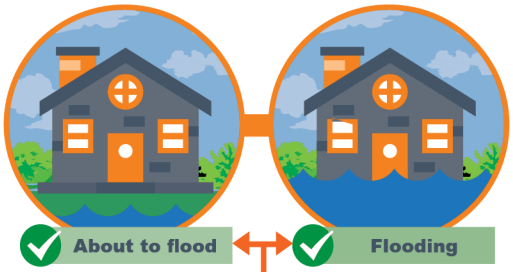
- ☐ Keep gutters and drains clear of debris including leaves and any other items.
- ☐ Check your building and contents insurance, what kind of flooding does it cover?
- ☐ Move your valuable possessions up high.
- ☐ Back up important files and documents to a cloud storage or USB kept elsewhere.
- ☐ Identify higher ground on or around your property, away from the danger area.
- ☐ Consider buying sand and sandbags ahead of time, refer to our Sandbag Guide for more information.

SES

For more details and other tips, visit:
ses.vic.gov.au/flood

What to do in a flood emergency

When to call VICSES



Flood emergency assistance call VICSES 132 500

If life threatening call triple zero 000

Stay Informed

VicEmergency

Emergency warnings will provide information on what is happening and advice of what you should do.

You may not receive an official warning before a flood.

VicEmergency app
emergency.vic.gov.au
1800 226 226

vicemergency @vicemergency

- Set-up a watch zone for alerts for your area.

Bureau of Meteorology

Monitor rainfall, river levels, weather forecasts/warnings.
bom.gov.au/vic/flood/west_gippsland.shtml

Emergency broadcasters

Radio | ABC Melbourne 774 AM
TV | Sky News

If you expect floodwater at your property

1

Bag it

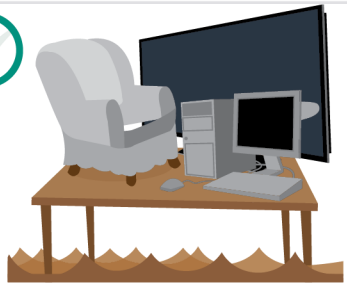
Sandbag doorways and low-lying windows to slow floodwater entering your home.

2

Block it

Block toilets, bath and drains using a sandbag ideally placed inside a plastic rubbish bag.

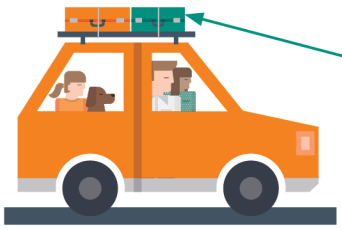
3



Lift it

Put your valuables and electrical items as high as possible. Turn off power, gas, and water at the mains.

4



Leave

- Leave **before** the flood arrives.
- Check warnings from VicEmergency for information like evacuation or relief centres, and road closures.
- Travel to the home of family or friends who are in a safe location, away from the flooded area.

Take your emergency kit and add the items below:

- Phone & charger
- 3 day supply: Prescriptions & medication
- 3 day supply: Clothes for your family
- Strong shoes
- Pet needs

Never drive through floodwater

Large

A Large 4WD can be moved by water only 45cm deep.

Small

A small car can be moved by water only 15cm deep.

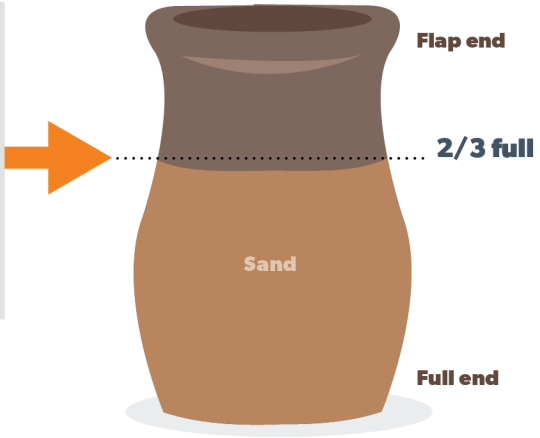
For more details and other tips, visit:
ses.vic.gov.au/flood

Sandbagging

Sandbags won't stop the water completely, but can reduce the amount of water entering your home.

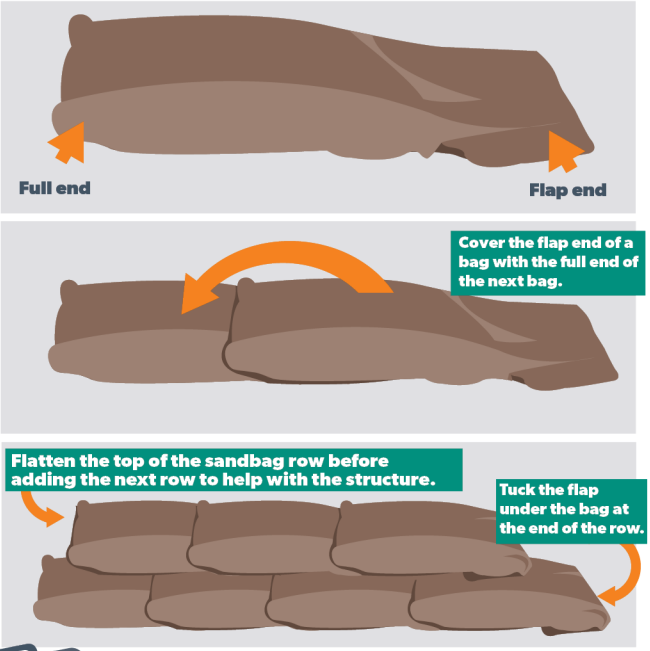
How do I fill a sandbag?

- Only use sand to fill hessian bags. Do not use dirt.
- Only fill sandbag two-thirds full.
- Do not over fill the sandbag as it will be too heavy to carry.
- Do not tie the top of the sandbag.
- Take care when filling and lifting the sandbag, to avoid injury.



How do I lay sandbags?

- Lay sandbags like brickwork. Stagger rows so that the joins do not line up.
- Start at one end and work to the other end.
- Ensure the unfilled part of the bag is covered by the next bag.
- Tuck flap under the bag at the end of the row.
- If the sandbag wall is going to be more than five (5) bags high, you will need to lay two (2) rows wide.



Where do I place the sandbags?

- Place sandbags in plastic bags to cover drainage holes in home (e.g. showers, toilets, sinks) to stop back flow of water.
- Place a small wall across doorways, at least the height of the expected water level. Be careful not to trap yourself inside.
- If available, plastic sheeting may be used under sandbags to reduce the seepage.

What do I do once I have finished with the sandbags?

- Sturdy gloves should be worn when handling wet sandbags as they can contain chemicals, waste and diseases.
- Sandbags that have been in contact with floodwater need to be thrown away.
- Contact your local council to find out how to dispose of your sandbags safely.

Sandbags and sand

Preparing your home

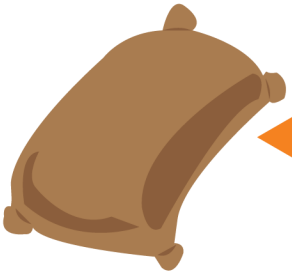
Having sandbag supplies ready can assist you before a flooding emergency occurs.

What supplies do I need to sandbag my home?

- Sandbags
- Sand
- Plastic sheeting
- Gloves and safety goggles
- Shovel and hand scoop

Where can I purchase these supplies?

- Many sandbag supplies can be purchased from hardware stores or garden centres.
- VICSES do not routinely supply sandbags to households.
- During floods, sandbag distribution points may be established in flood-affected areas.



How many sandbags will I need and how much sand?

- Most homes can be protected by less than 25 sandbags.
- The number of sandbags will depend on your local flood risk and availability.
- Sandbags are filled 2/3 full which requires around 15-20kgs of sand per bag.

How do I store my sand and sandbags?

- Filled sandbags only have a short shelf life.
- It is recommended to store sandbags empty.
- Sandbags should be stored in a cool dry area away from UV light.
- Sand should be kept dry and can be stored in water resistant containers or under a tarp.
- Sand is heavy - ensure it is stored so it can be moved safely.

When should I sandbag my home?

- **You** are best placed to decide if there is a need to sandbag your home, based on local knowledge and past flood events.
- Monitor your local conditions. Stay up-to-date with weather forecasts and warnings by downloading the **BOM Weather** and **VicEmergency** apps, or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.
- If you think you are at risk, do not wait for an official warning to act.