



Local Flood Guide

Bemm River

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

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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.

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Content reviewed: November 2025



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

Local flood information



There have been 4 significant flood events in the Bemm River township between 1998 and 2023.



The largest flood on record was in 1998 when the Princes Highway Bridge and around the Bemm River Hotel flooded.



Flooding usually lasts a day or two, but if road damage has occurred the town may be isolated for longer periods.

Why does Bemm River flood?

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

Riverine flooding

When the Bemm River and Sydenham Inlet rise and overflows their banks, and spill water onto land, it causes **riverine flooding**. The most common cause of this is prolonged heavy rainfall.

- Bemm River township is built around the Bemm River and Sydenham Inlet, and parts of the town are on the floodplain, the naturally low-lying areas more likely to be impacted in a flood.
- Rainfall from as far away as Combeinbar can end up flowing into the Bemm River potentially causing, or adding to flooding.
- Low-lying coastal areas surrounding Sydenham Inlet may flood due to storm surges caused by strong winds and low pressure during storms, resulting in an abnormal rise in sea level and the formation of large waves.
- Abnormally high tides are a natural and predictable exceptionally high tide where the ocean meets the land. They may cause or add to existing flooding.

Flash flooding

This type of flooding can happen quickly and you may not receive an official warning. Although these floods only last short time, they can cause severe damage.

- The Bemm River may quickly rise, causing water to rise and overflow its banks.

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



Power outages



Mobile and internet network



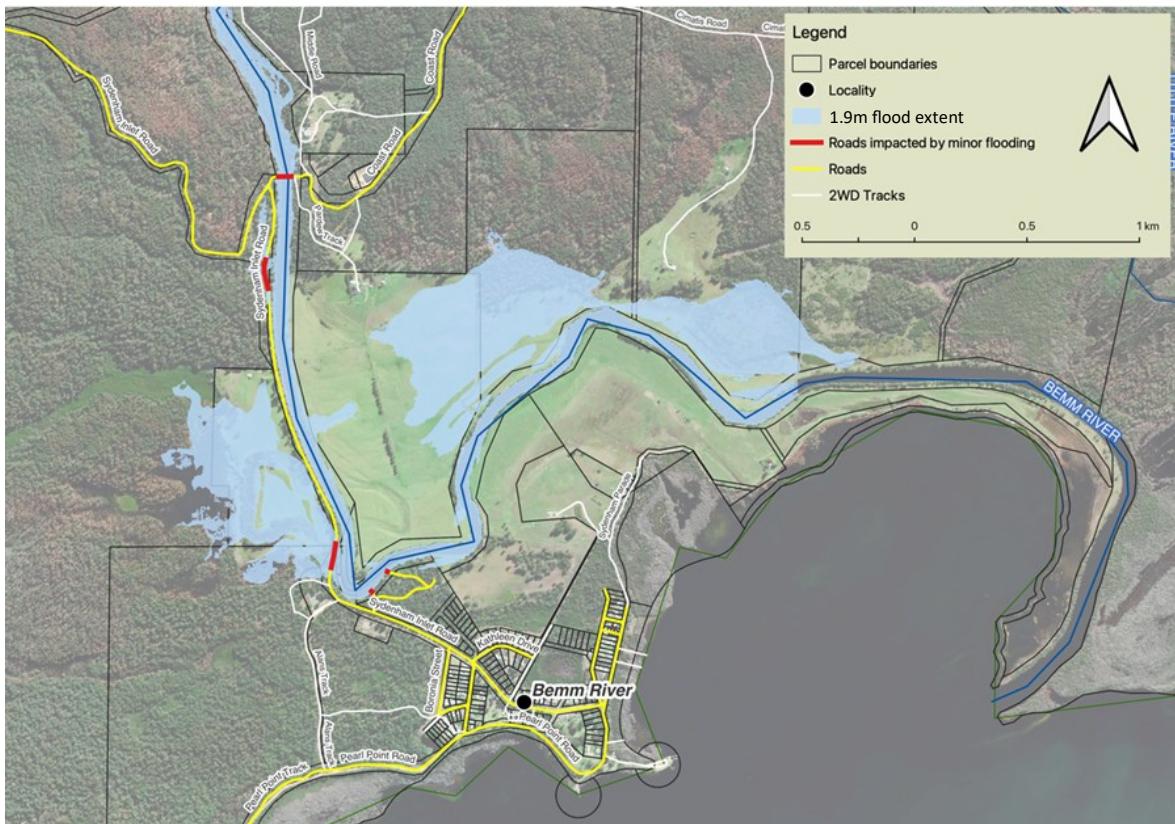
Sewage overflows inside building

Check your home, work, and travel routes for floodwater

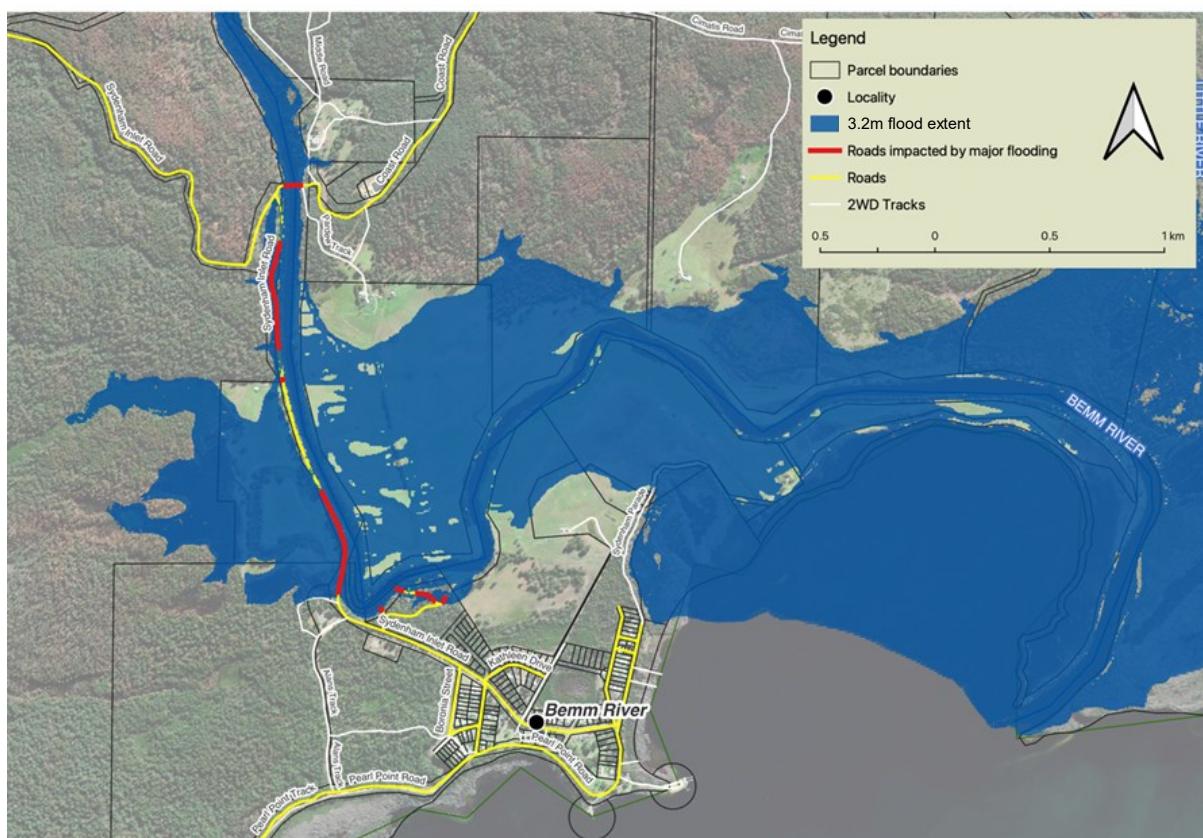
If this map shows potential flood risk for you, ensure you take action to **plan and prepare for floods**. See page [8](#) for more information.

- The following maps show the area likely to flood when the height of the floodwater at the [Bemm River Upstream Gauge](#) reaches 1.9m and 3.2m.

1.9 Metre Flooding:



3.2 Metre Flooding:



What might happen in a flood in your area?

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

- **Before a flood:** Use the floodwater heights in the table to help you decide when you will need to act to protect yourself and your property in a flood event.
- **During a flood:** When a warning is issued by [VicEmergency](#), use the predicted floodwater height and warning information to understand what the potential impacts may be for you and your community.

Flood Height (metres)*	Potential impacts^
1.9m	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Floodwater covers large areas southeast of Pardew Track affecting agricultural properties and livestock.■ Areas of the Sydenham Inlet Road between Bemm River and Bemm River Bridge flood up to 0.3 meters.
2.3m	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Floodwater on the Sydenham Inlet Road rises to a depth greater than 0.3 meters.■ The floodwater flow speed and depth increases and limits access of Sydenham Inlet Road.
3.2m	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Sydenham Inlet Road becomes unpassable.■ Properties or areas at the end of Sydenham Parade can become isolated or impacted by flood water.■ Floodwater breaches the banks to the East of the Bemm River onto the land between Sydenham Inlet Road and Sydenham Parade, including Bobs Bay and Cozy Nook Flats.
	<p>During a flood that is larger than 3.2m;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Sydenham Inlet Road becomes unpassable.■ Flooding extends from the Bemm River Bridge to the southern point of the flood plain and across to Bobs Bay.■ Riverside camp areas and some low lying caravan parks impacted.■ Relocation of stock required in some cases.

*The height measurement is at the [Bemm River upstream gauge](#).

^This table includes information from previous flood events and flood studies, which are scientific models used to predict impacts at different flood heights and flows.

What roads are likely to flood?

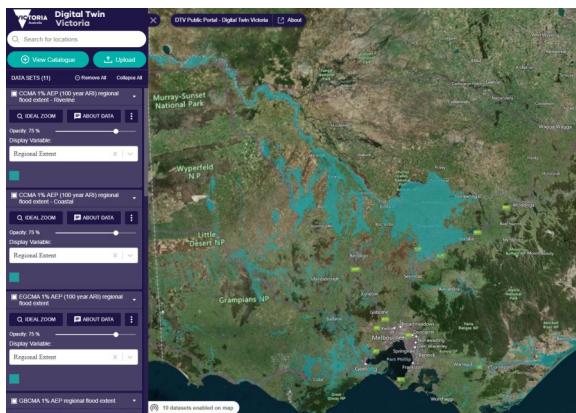
During a flood, the roads listed above may flood and could be closed.

For current road closures, check [VicTraffic](#). [VicEmergency](#) may include road closures in its warnings, see [page 7](#) for more information.



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.

View the interactive flood map on Digital Twin Victoria (DTV)



The [Digital Twin Victoria Public Portal](#) brings together 2D, 3D and live data in a single online place for everyone to use. The portal hosts some flood mapping data.

- Use the map to zoom in on where you live, work and travel to see if it's likely to be affected in a flood event.

Go to digitaltwin.vic.gov.au



In a flood emergency, stay informed through [VicEmergency](#), see [page 7](#) for more information.

Your local services

Catchment Management Authority

For flood advice and information on flood levels or depths when developing your property.

- **East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority**
egcma.com.au | 03 5152 1184

Local Council

For relief and recovery support after a flood event.

- **East Gippsland Shire Council**
eastgippsland.vic.gov.au
03 5153 9500

East Gippsland Emergency Dashboard

East Gippsland Shire Council's Emergency Dashboard provides community with centralised real-time access to emergency information including weather, emergency warnings, road closures, river heights and power outages.

To support community preparedness the East Gippsland Emergency Dashboard provides access to:

- Local Flood Guides, via the Victoria State Emergency Service website, and
- Community Emergency Management Plans and Local Incident Management Plans on the 'Your Community' page.

Go to emergencydashboard.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au



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



3 Prepare an emergency kit



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.



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

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](#)



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.

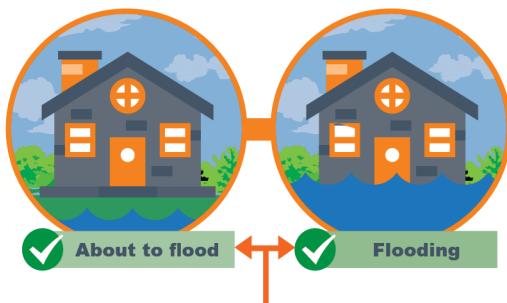


Watch a video on how to get your Emergency kit ready.
youtu.be/XgyLnKDMkNo



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



vicemergency @vicemergency



1800 226 226

- 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/east_gippsland.shtml

Emergency broadcasters



Radio | ABC 100.7FM or 828AM, REGFM 105.5
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.

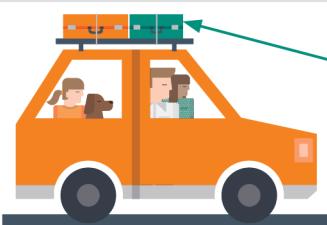
3



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

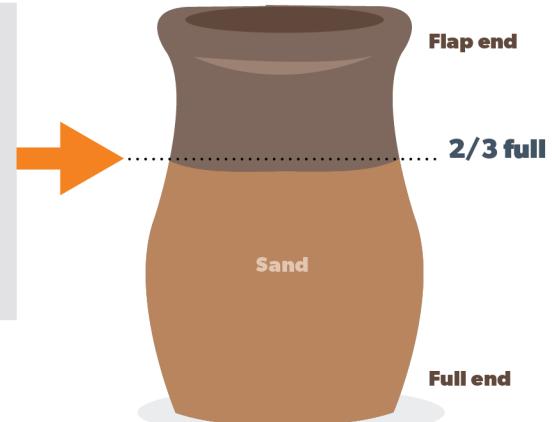


Sandbagging

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

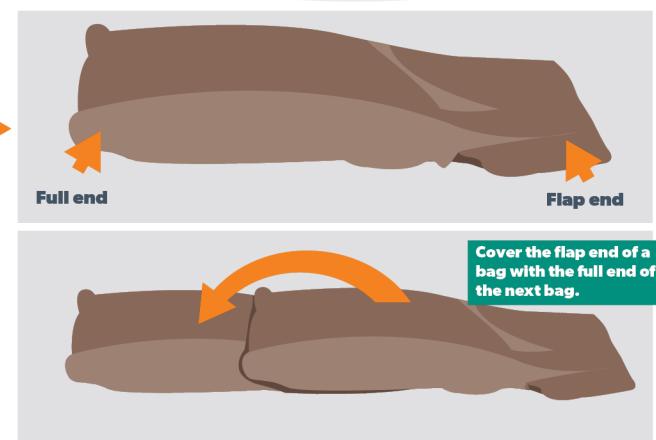
How do I fill a sandbag?

- 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.



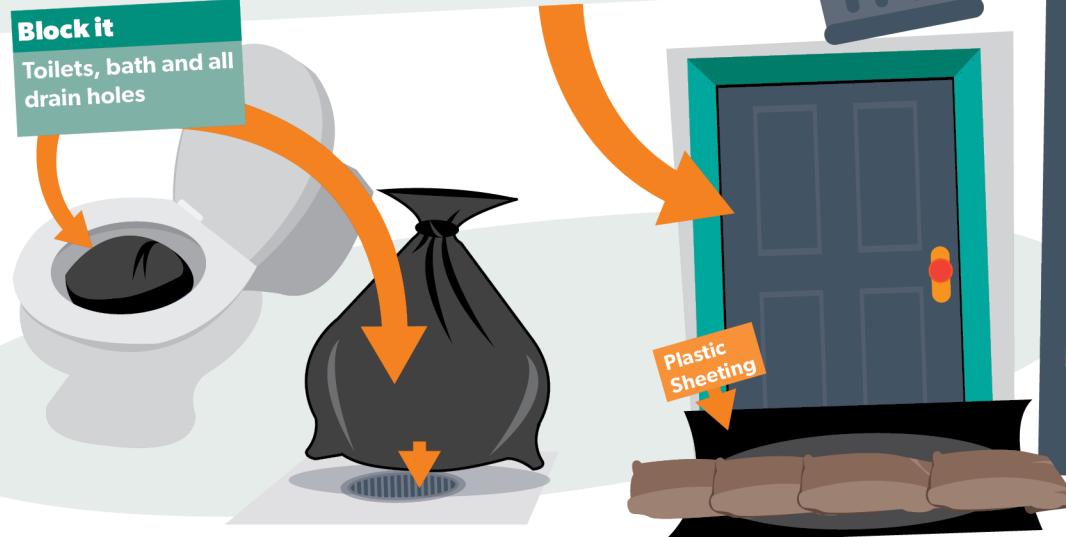
How do I lay sandbags?

- 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.

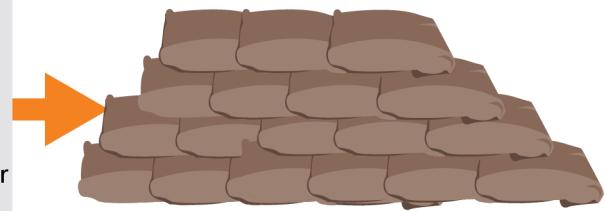


How many sandbags will I need and how much sand?

- 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.