



Local Flood Guide

Gippsland Lakes

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



**FLOOD STORM
EMERGENCY 132 500**



If life threatening
call triple zero 000

Contents



■ Local flood information	<u>Page 3</u>
Why do the Gippsland Lakes flood?	<u>Page 3</u>
How do floods impact communities?	<u>Page 3</u>
What might happen in a flood in your area?	<u>Page 4</u>
Gippsland Lakes Flood Warning System	<u>Page 5</u>
Minor, Moderate and Major Flood Class Levels	<u>Page 5</u>
June 2007 Flood Event	<u>Page 6</u>
East Gippsland Shire Area Services	<u>Page 7</u>
Wellington Shire Area Services	<u>Page 8</u>
■ Plan and prepare for floods	<u>Page 9</u>
■ What to do in a flood emergency	<u>Page 10</u>
■ Sandbag Guide	<u>Page 11</u>



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.

Cover: Raymond Island, Paynesville and Eagle Point. 2007.

Content reviewed: May 2025



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

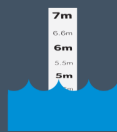


This material/publication was produced with funding provided by the Australian Government in partnership with the States and Territories under the National Partnership Agreement for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Local flood information



Flooding exits the Gippsland Lakes system to the Bass Strait through a 150 metre wide channel at Lakes Entrance.



The largest flood on record was in 2007 when the floodwater reached Major level at most Gippsland Lakes gauge locations.



Flooding can happen within hours, giving people little to no time to prepare and take action.

Why do the Gippsland Lakes flood?

The areas and towns built surrounding the Gippsland Lakes are 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

This happens when the Gippsland Lakes rise and overflow their banks, and spill water onto land.

- The Latrobe, Thomson, Macalister, Avon, Mitchell, and Tambo rivers all flow into the Gippsland Lakes. Flooding occurring on these river systems can lead to flooding of the Gippsland Lakes.
- Low-lying coastal areas 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.

- Stormwater drainage may not be able to drain the amount of rainfall, causing to overflow.
- The ground may be unable to absorb the amount of rainfall naturally causing the water to pool. More buildings and less green spaces can impact this.

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

What might happen during flooding in the Gippsland Lakes?

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.

Flooding on the rivers that flow into the Gippsland Lakes can impact the condition of the water.



Water condition

- Debris including trees and objects can be a risk to water-based activities.
- Wildlife such as snakes and rodents can be transport by floodwater.
- There is an increased risk in hazardous material and contaminants affecting the quality of water and wildlife.
- Muddied water and sediment can impact the lake environment including water visibility.



Minor impacts

- Water spilling over river banks and nearby low lying areas.
- Water coming up through drains in nearby streets.
- Boat ramps, jetties and lake side areas can be unusable.
- Water can cover minor paths, tracks, and low level bridges.
- Some backyards and buildings impacted below floor level
- Waterside camp areas and some low lying caravan parks impacted.
- Relocation of stock required in some cases.



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 (water, power, sewerage)



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.

Gippsland Lakes Flood Warning System

The Gippsland Lakes Flood Warning System provides a warning about predicted flooding in the Gippsland Lakes that results from a combination of rainfall, lake and river level heights, wind and tidal changes.

The Gippsland Lakes Flood Warning System relies on information from the following gauges:

- Hollands Landing
- Loch Sport Marina
- McMillan Strait at Paynesville
- Cunningham Arm at Bullock Island
- Lake King at Metung



Monitor the water levels of these gauges at the Bureau of Meteorology website:
[Latest River Heights Gippsland Lakes](#)

Flooding of the Gippsland Lakes usually occurs 1-3 days after the flooding has occurred on the Latrobe, Thomson, Macalister, Avon, Mitchell, Nicholson or Tambo rivers.

Minor, Moderate and Major Flood Class Levels

The Minor, Moderate and Major flood class level categories are standards set across Australia by the Bureau of Meteorology to provide consistent understanding about the consequences and impacts of flooding in different communities.

Floodwater Height (metres)*	Hollands Landing	Loch Sport Marina	McMillan Strait at Paynesville	Cunningham Arm at Bullock Island	Lake King at Metung
1.90m					Major Flood
1.50m		2007 Event	2007 Event		2007 Event
1.40m		Major Flood			
1.30m			Major Flood	Major Flood	
				2007 Event	
1.20m	2007 Event				
0.90m	Major Flood	Minor Flood		Minor Flood	
0.80m					Minor Flood
0.70m	Minor Flood		Minor Flood		
0.20m					
Average Tidal Range					
0.00m					



June 2007 Flood Event

While no two floods are the same, understanding the impacts of past floods can help you anticipate impacts of future flood events.

In June 2007 record rainfall amounts occurred across Gippsland during a series of four intense low pressure systems that arrived within days of each other. The weather systems included gale force winds and storm surges, and arrived during a king tide.

The rainfall resulted major flooding of the Latrobe, Thomson, Mitchell, Tambo and Snowy River and the Macalister River recorded its largest flood on record, and increased the Gippsland Lakes water level by 1.3 metres.

48 hour rain totals:



Areas including Paynesville, Loch Sport, Paradise Beach, Burrabogie Island and Raymond Island received a warning to evacuate, some towns residents required rescue by boat or helicopter.

The flooding caused towns and properties to become isolated after more than 400 roads and highways were damaged by flood water or tree hazards. Most of the area endured power outages that affected schools, businesses and homes.

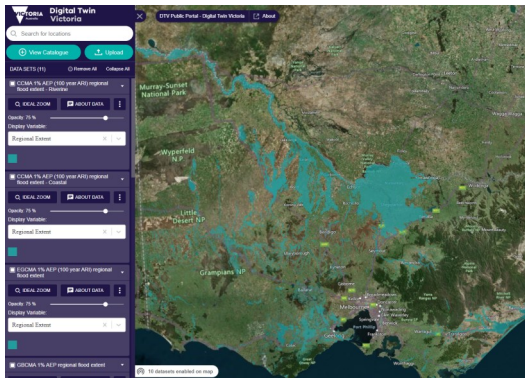
More than 1000 emergency services personnel aided in sandbagging, evacuating and rescued isolated people by boat and helicopter



Lakes Entrance, 2007. Debris from the 2006-2007 Gippsland bushfires flowed into the flooded rivers and caused the Gippsland Lakes to accumulate logs, tree waste, foreign objects and muddy sediment.

East Gippsland Shire Council Area

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 9](#) for more information.

Other Local Flood Guides

The following East Gippsland townships that are in the Gippsland Lakes area have a Local Flood Guide that provides more detail on flooding impacts.

- Eagle Point
- Lakes Entrance
- Metung
- Raymond Island

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:

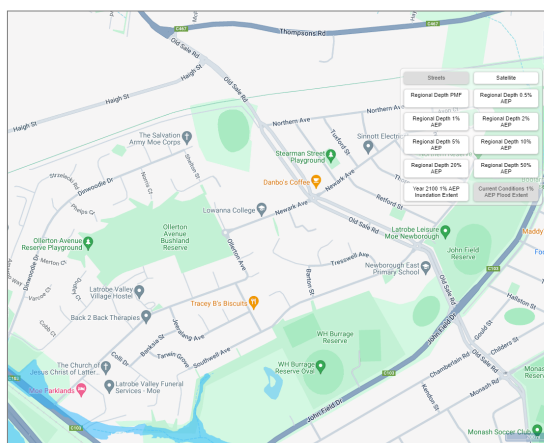
- Local Flood Guides, via the Victoria State Emergency Service website, and
- Community Emergency Management Plans and Local Incident Management Plans on the 'Your Community' page.

Go to emergencydashboard.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au



Wellington Shire Council Area

Download your free Property Flood Report



The [Community Flood Portal](#), developed by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, is a tool for residents and businesses to assess their flood risk.

- Use the portal to zoom in on your property and see if it's likely to be affected in a large flood event.
- Download a free Property Flood Report for your address.

Go to flood.wgcma.vic.gov.au.



In a flood emergency, stay informed through [VicEmergency](#), see [page 9](#) for more information.

Other Local Flood Guides

The following East Gippsland townships that are in the Gippsland Lakes area have a Local Flood Guide that provides more detail on flooding impacts.

- Hollands Landing
- Loch Sport

Your local services

Catchment Management Authority

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

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

Local Council

For relief and recovery support after a flood event.

- **Wellington Shire Council**
wellington.vic.gov.au | 1300 366 244



Floodwater can be very deep, rise quickly and move fast.
Stay safe by avoiding flooded areas.

Image: Victoria Street, Loch Sport, 2007.

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



Power bank



Radio



Drinking water



Spare batteries



Documents & records



First aid kit



Long life food



Torch



Gloves

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.

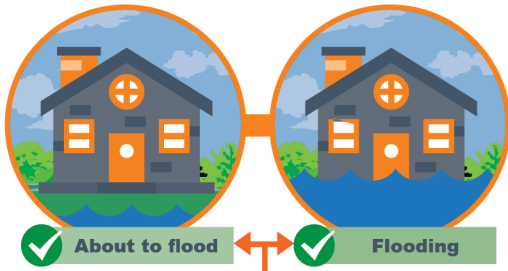


For more details and other tips, visit:
ses.vic.gov.au/flood



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.

[Latest River Heights Gippsland Lakes](#)

Emergency broadcasters



Radio | ABC Local 828 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.

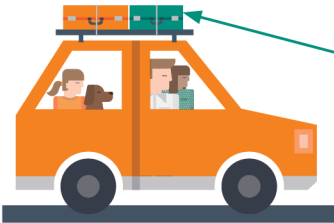
3



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



Prescriptions & medication



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

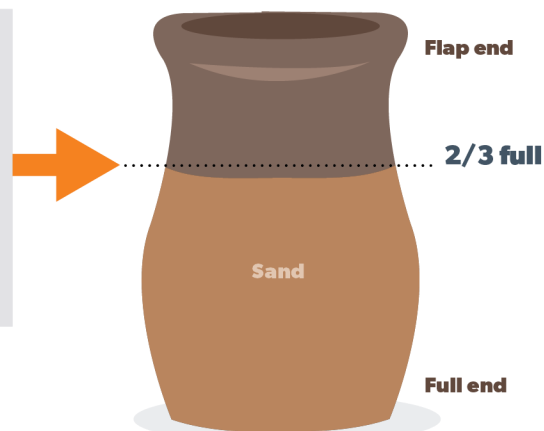


Sandbagging

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

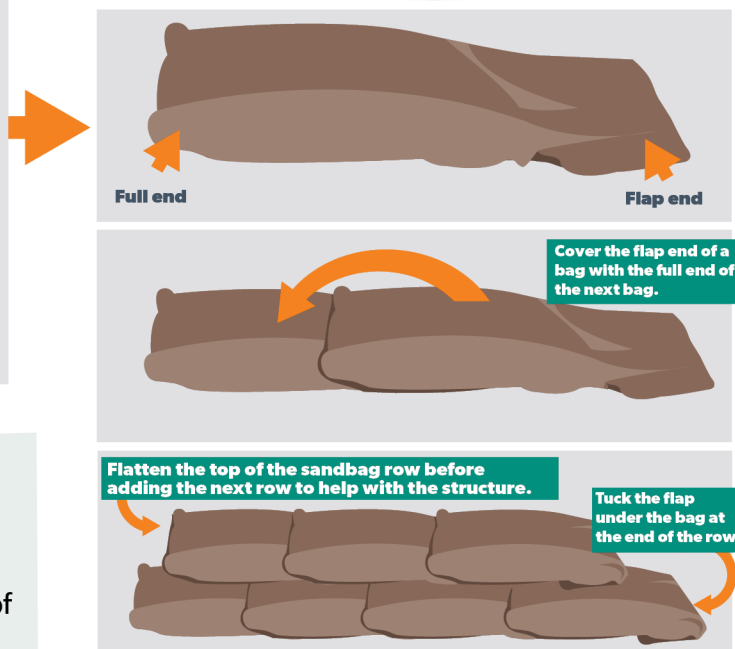
How do I fill a sandbag?

- 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?

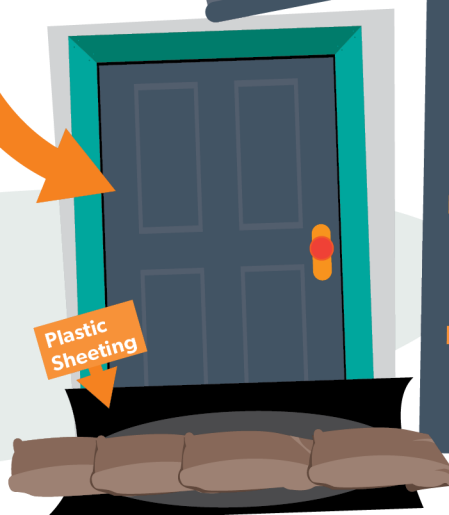
- Place sandbags in plastic bags to cover drainage holes in home (e.g. showers, toilets, sinks) to stop back flow of water.
- Place a small wall across doorways, at least the height of the expected water level. Be careful not to trap yourself inside.
- If available, plastic sheeting may be used under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

Block it

Toilets, bath and all drain holes



Plastic Sheetting



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.

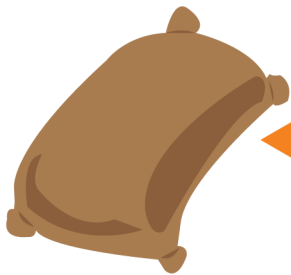


What supplies do I need to sandbag my home?

- 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.

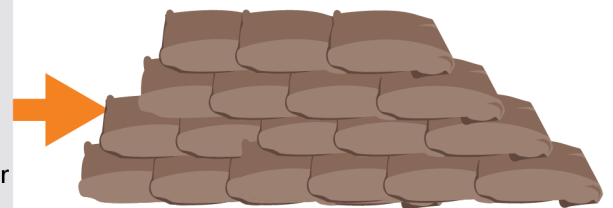


How many sandbags will I need and how much sand?

- 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.