

## 10 important decisions to make with your family

Here are ten things you should discuss and decide with your family before the fire season starts.

1. Which Fire Danger Rating is your trigger to leave?
2. Will you leave early that morning or the night before?
3. Where will you go?
4. What route will you take - and what is your backup route if a fire is already in the area?
5. What will you take with you?
6. What are you going to do with your pets or livestock?
7. Who else do you need to talk to about where you are going?
8. Is there anyone outside your neighbourhood that you need to help or check up on?
9. How will you stay informed about warnings and updates?
10. What will you do if there is a fire in the area and you cannot leave?

### Leaving early - what does it mean?

'Leaving early' means being away from high-risk areas before there are any signs of fire. It does not mean waiting for a warning or a siren. It does not mean waiting to see or smell smoke. And it certainly does not mean waiting for a knock on the door.

Fires can start and spread very quickly. Leaving early is the safest option for anyone in a high-risk bushfire area. Many people have died trying to leave at the last minute.

When you decide to leave is the most important decision you will make.

Driving in a bushfire is extremely dangerous and can be fatal. A drive that would normally take five minutes could take two hours with road closures, traffic jams, crashes, smoke, fallen trees and embers getting in the way.



### Plan ahead

Plan ahead so you know how you will leave. Know different routes to get out of the area - some may be closed if a fire is already burning nearby.

It's up to you to decide where you will go on a high-risk day. Don't wait and see.

*We're always here to help!*

**For more information:**

[www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

[www.sassafrascfa.org.au](http://www.sassafrascfa.org.au)

## What the heck's going on? (and how to find out ...)

During the fire season, it's up to you to stay informed. Make it your habit to:

- check the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) every day during the fire season
- know if it is a Total Fire Ban day
- check for warnings, especially on hot, dry windy days

Check the **FireReady App**, visit the **VicEmergency website** [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) or **CFA Twitter** account, or call the **Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667** for up-to-date information about current fires and warnings, as well as FDR and Total Fire Ban information. CFA's website [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) is also a great resource.

Warnings are issued when a fire has started and you need to take action. It's your responsibility to understand the different types of warnings and how to access them. You should never wait to receive an official warning before you

leave. Bushfires can start, spread and become uncontrollable quickly.

Warnings give information about fires that have already started.

There are three different levels of warnings - **Advice**, **Watch and Act** and **Emergency Warning**. Don't expect warnings to be issued in any particular order. The first warning issued could be an Emergency Warning.

- **Advice:** There is a fire in your local area. You need to get information and monitor conditions.
- **Watch and act:** Fire is heading toward you. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect yourself.
- **Emergency warning:** You are in immediate danger and need to act now. You will be impacted by fire.

## Come along and learn some more!

Again, there is a range of community events and other ways to learn more about bushfire survival in this part of the world.

### Information and Family Fun Day 2014

The Sassafras-Ferny Creek, Kalorama-Mt Dandenong and Olinda fire brigades are again combining to hold an *Information and Family Fun Day* at the Olinda Community Hall, cnr Olinda-Monbulk Rd and The Georgian on Sunday 23 November 2014 from 10am to 3pm. Representatives from other emergency agencies will also be in attendance. Lots of free stuff for the kids!

### Community Meetings

There will be two *Fire Ready community meetings* in the brigade area this summer:

- Wednesday, 14 January 2015 at 7.30pm  
Fire Station, Clarkmont Rd, Sassafras
- Saturday, 17 January 2015 at 2pm  
Fire Station, Clarkmont Rd, Sassafras

### CFG Network meetings

There will be two Community Fireguard Network meetings

- Tuesday, 2 December 2014 at 7.30pm  
Fire Station, Clarkmont Rd, Sassafras
- Saturday, 10 January 2015 at 2pm  
Fire Station, Clarkmont Rd, Sassafras

## Brigade & CFA contacts

John Schurink, Captain 9755 1872

Sarah Krumins, Secretary 9755 1981

Fire Station (answering service): 9755 1078

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CFA Region 13 HQ: 8739 1300

CFA Website: [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

Brigade website: [www.sassafrascfa.org.au](http://www.sassafrascfa.org.au)

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/SassafrasFernyCreekFireBrigade>



## Briefly ... Briefly ... Briefly ...

### The Ferny Creek Community Fire Refuge

The Ferny Creek Primary School is one of three sites in Victoria that doubles as a Community Fire Refuge. The provision of community fire refuges is one of the bushfire shelter options recommended by the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

Here are some things you must know:

- The refuge is a place of last resort. It should never be your primary plan to go there.
- It will best serve residents in the School Rd and One Tree Hill areas. Travelling to the refuge from further away will be risky during a fire.
- The refuge may not provide a greater level of safety than the location you are leaving.
- The refuge has a limited capacity.
- It is not a "drop in" centre. There will be no capacity for people to hang around the refuge on high-risk days. It will only be opened during an emergency.

For more information about refuges, [www.emv.vic.gov.au](http://www.emv.vic.gov.au)

### Changes at the top!

The Sassafras-Ferny Creek fire brigade has a new Captain. John Schurink has taken over the reins from John Schauble, who stepped down at the end of June after eight years in the role. John Schurink (yes, we know it's confusing) is a 30-year CFA veteran. He was previously Captain at two other brigades and brings loads of other emergency management experience to the role. John was also recently appointed to the Country Fire Authority Board. For a more detailed profile, visit the "News" link on our website [www.sassafrascfa.org.au](http://www.sassafrascfa.org.au) John Schauble still remains an active brigade member and has taken on the role of brigade President.

## I hear sirens ... what do they mean?

Fire sirens have long been part of life in the Hills. These days, the sirens are a back up alert for members, who also rely on pager messaging. But sirens play a very important role in alerting the community that "something's going on".

Our brigade sirens are normally tested on Wednesday nights between 7.20pm and 7.30pm.

Sirens are used all year round whenever the brigade is called out to a fire or incident. In those circumstances, the sound will last for no longer than 90 seconds.

When the sirens sound continuously for 5 minutes, it means there is a Watch and Act message or Emergency Warning in effect for this area. You need to find out more information and act upon it. In addition to the CFA sirens in Clarkmont Rd, Birds Rd and Hethersett Rd, there are three additional sirens in the One Tree Hill area that are activated only during the summer months as part of the Ferny Creek Bushfire Alert System. You may also hear sirens from neighbouring communities, such as Belgrave, Upwey, Kallista, Upper Ferntree Gully, Olinda and beyond.

Especially in summer, when you hear sirens, it's a signal to seek more information (see p.1)