

Emergency Planning Information Document: Information to support individual/household resilience & emergency planning

Foster & surrounds



Municipal Emergency
Management Planning

South Gippsland Shire



Emergency Planning Information Document

Foster & surrounds

Local township and area information to help you get prepared for an emergency

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Introduction

About this document

This Emergency Planning Information Document has been developed in partnership with Manna Gum Community House through a collaborative process involving the local community, emergency services and agencies represented on the South Gippsland Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC). It has been designed to support the Foster community and visitors in developing a personal or family emergency plan.

The document combines local knowledge, community experience and emergency management expertise to improve understanding of local risks, encourage personal emergency planning and strengthen community resilience. It supports individuals and families to be self-sufficient for the first 72 hours following an emergency, when access to essential services, utilities and assistance may be disrupted.

The document is reviewed and updated through ongoing collaboration between Manna Gum Community House, South Gippsland Shire Council, community engagement and the MEMPC and is incorporated into the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) review cycle. Feedback on the document can be provided to em@southgippsland.vic.gov.au.

Calling for help



Is someone seriously injured or in need of urgent medical help?

Is your life or property being threatened? If you answered **YES** call Triple Zero (000).

If you need emergency help in a flood or storm because:

- A tree has fallen (tree down) and caused structural damage to your home or vehicle
- There is damage to your roof, or it is leaking significantly
- A tree or large branch has fallen and is preventing you from entering or leaving your home
- Your property is flooded or about to flood

Call VICSES on 132 500. Your request for assistance will be logged by their 24/7 call centre. A local volunteer may then contact you for further details.

If **NO** depending on your situation you should:

- Contact your insurer to make a claim or arrange permanent repairs
- Contact a professional tradesperson to repair damage or remove debris, if required

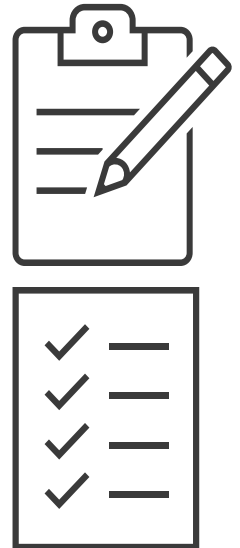
How you can be more prepared for emergencies

Individuals, households and visitors can take action before, during and after an emergency.

Before an emergency – what you can do now

You can handle any emergency better if you are prepared

- Find out about and stay aware of potential bushfire/storm/flood risks in your environment
- Download the VicEmergency App to your smartphone and electronic devices
- Save important contact numbers on your phone such as family and friends and the VicEmergency Hotline 1800 226 226
- Develop and practice your emergency plan with the whole family, pets included
- Consider where you may relocate during an emergency – ideally to family or friends in a location well away from the emergency area. Talk to your friends and family about your emergency plans.
- Ensure your house number is clearly visible, your driveway is accessible for emergency services, and that your address can be easily given to emergency services by people in your house
- Pack an emergency kit and keep it somewhere easily accessible. Have some non-perishable food and water stored at home and some cash if you can.
- Back-up important documents such as ID, insurance, financial and medical info
- Review your insurance – consider household, business and income protection insurance
- Get to know your neighbours and build connections in your local community. Talk to your neighbours about your emergency plans and see if there are ways you can assist each other. Look for local volunteering opportunities or other community groups you can get involved in.



During an emergency

In the event of an emergency, be as self-reliant as possible: in the first instance, agencies will prioritise those most vulnerable. Individuals and families should act on emergency information and warnings and implement plans as needed to protect themselves and their families. Where possible and if safe to do so, consider supporting neighbours and more vulnerable members of your community.

In a large-scale emergency event, Council may open an Emergency Relief Centre (ERC) well away from the emergency area, so the community can access essential support including shelter, food, water, material aid, first aid and emergency information. The opening and location of an ERC will be communicated through Victoria's integrated emergency warning system and other official emergency information channels.

After an emergency

Only return home when it is safe and you have been given clearance. Check on neighbours, take care when cleaning up due to potential hazards, and contact your insurance company if you have one.

Meet your own recovery needs wherever possible. Engage with recovery services through Council or via Emergency Recovery Victoria www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-victoria. Review and improve personal/family emergency plans after an event.

Stay informed

About Foster

Foster is located in the South Gippsland Shire Coastal Promontory Ward. It is 174 km southeast of Melbourne; 39 km southeast of Leongatha; 14 km west of Toora. Foster is the gateway to South Gippsland's spectacular natural attractions.

The town is just 30 minutes from Wilsons Promontory National Park and a short drive to other popular destinations including Shallow Inlet, Corner Inlet, Sandy Point and Waratah Bay. Foster is a destination for international visitors as well as Melbourne residents. In summer, the town's temporary population can increase by as much as two and a half fold due to tourism.

Understand emergency risks

What emergencies have impacted Foster in the past, and what types of emergencies are most likely to impact us in the future?

Bushfire/Grassfire

Victoria is one of the most fire-prone areas in the world. Understanding your level of risk is the first step in knowing what to do before and during a fire.

Foster may be impacted by running grass fires or from direct fire impact from burning bush from the north and northwest through to the northeast, this is likely to include ember attack.

Risk is most extreme if you live surrounded by or near forest that is difficult to see through. However, all forest or woodland presents a bushfire risk. If you live in a built-up area on the edge of grassland – whether it's open grassland, parks, paddocks or reserves – you could be impacted by grassfire over summer.

For more information on specific bushfire planning, go to [Am I at Risk? | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](http://Am I at Risk? | CFA (Country Fire Authority) cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare) cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare.



Fire history in Foster and South Gippsland

There is no history of major bushfires for Foster and surrounds, however, there have been numerous grass and bushfire fire ignitions in the last five years.

What can you expect?

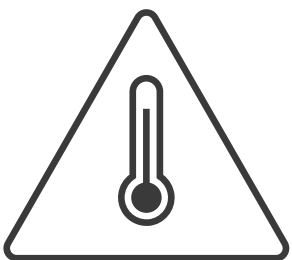
- Intense fire behaviour, including extreme heat, high fire intensity and dangerous levels of radiant heat
- Strong winds carrying embers, burning bark, twigs and other debris over long distances, causing spot fires well ahead of the main fire front
- Ember attack before, during and long after the main fire front has passed, with embers igniting homes, gardens, decks, fences and surrounding vegetation
- Fine fuels (grass, leaves and small twigs) igniting and burning rapidly, while heavier fuels such as logs and large trees burn intensely for extended periods
- Fire spreading quickly through scrub, forest and grassland
- Fire spreading from parks, reserves and surrounding vegetation into gardens, timber fences and buildings
- House-to-house fire spread once one or more homes become involved
- Falling trees and branches due to fire damage and strong winds
- Thick smoke significantly reducing visibility and making travel and evacuation hazardous
- A high risk of ember attack for properties close to dense bushland or coastal vegetation

Smoke can affect people's health. People with heart or lung conditions (including asthma), children, pregnant women and older people are more sensitive to the effects of breathing in smoke. For more information see epa.vic.gov.au.



Severe Weather – storm, high winds, heavy rain, hail, flooding and power outages

Recent emergency events in South Gippsland have included severe storms, damaging winds and flooding, particularly in 2021 and 2024. These events caused significant building damage, widespread power outages lasting several days, significant telecommunications disruptions, fallen trees and road closures, and flooding that impacted hundreds of roads and properties.



Extreme heat

Days of extreme heat and heatwaves are periods of unusually hot weather that can worsen medical conditions or cause potentially fatal health problems, like heatstroke. Extreme heat can affect everyone. Those more at risk are people over the age of 65, babies and young children, pregnant women, people with acute or chronic health problems, and people who are socially isolated.

They can also impact infrastructure like power and transport. More information

to help your planning can be found at <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/extreme-heat>.

Other risks

Emergencies come in many forms. More information on general risks can be found at <https://www.emergencyprepare.com.au/>

Staying updated – Victoria’s warning system

Victoria’s integrated warning system provides emergency information via the VicEmergency App, website, hotline, broadcasters, and, in extreme cases, voice or text alerts. During an emergency, rely on credible sources – accurate information is vital for safety and effective response.



Prevent panic and misinformation

Reliable sources help prevent the spread of rumours and misinformation, which can lead to panic and chaos. Clear and consistent information from credible sources helps maintain calm and ensures that people receive accurate guidance on what actions to take during the emergency.

Recommended Apps:

VicEmergency, ABC Listen, Emergency Plus, BOM weather



VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226 <https://emergency.vic.gov.au/>

Official Emergency Radio Broadcasters

<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/official-emergency-broadcasters-in-victoria>

ABC Local: 774 AM | 828 AM | 100.7 FM
Gippsland FM: 100.7 FM and 104.7





Make a plan

The First 72 Hours planning process focuses on helping individuals and communities be self-reliant in the critical first three days after an emergency, when services may be delayed. It involves identifying risks, making a simple emergency plan, preparing essential supplies, and knowing how to stay informed. The process also encourages people to check on others and connect with local support networks, strengthening overall community resilience.

We recommend using The First 72 Hours emergency workplan to create your own plan. A blank worksheet is provided at the end of this document. Use this worksheet to create your unique emergency plan. Consider whether it needs to differ for fire, flood or storm.

An editable [on-line version](#) is also available on Council's website:

https://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/downloads/file/5389/the_first_72_hour_emergency_plan

Emergency planning resources

The following links contain many helpful tools to assist you in creating an emergency plan:

- **The First 72 Hours** southgippsland.vic.gov.au/72HRS
- **Australian Red Cross** redcross.org.au/prepare/
- **CFA (to prepare for fire)** cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare
- **SES (to prepare for flood and storm)** ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe
- **Are you prepared for an emergency?** emergencyprepare.com.au/

If you need help to get started or know someone who may need extra help:

- If you live with disability or care for someone with disability, see collaborating4inclusion.org/pcep-old/
- Fire safety information in multiple formats and languages: cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/fire-safety-translations

Additionally, an Emergency Contacts & Resources sheet has been prepared by Council to help with the development of your Emergency Plan in the 'before an emergency' section of Council's website – southgippsland.vic.gov.au/emergency_management.

Things to consider when planning for emergencies in Foster

Access issues

- Getting into and out of Foster in most instances is good, however access can be impacted by emergency events. Updates relating to access may be provided through the VicEmergency App and road closure information at traffic.transport.vic.gov.au/.
- If you are relocating during an emergency, you are encouraged to go to family and friends in a location well away from the emergency area, a nearby town or other built-up area
- There is very limited public transport and therefore very limited connectivity without access to a private vehicle
- In significant storm events, it may take some time for roads to be cleared by services. Consider being prepared to assist yourself.

Communication issues

- Mobile phone communication around Foster is generally good but can be impacted by location and provider
- Internet and phone coverage can be impacted by strong winds
- There are some telecommunications black spots in the Foster area
- Commercial and ABC radio provide good emergency broadcast coverage across the area, although reception may be patchy in some locations

Loss of power

- During significant, widespread power outages, priority is given to restoring power to the greatest number of properties as quickly as possible. If you live at the end of a road or in a more remote area, your power may take longer to be restored.
- In extended power outages (24+ hours) Manna Gum Community House may be open as a Resilient Energy Centre where mobile devices can be charged and Wi-Fi accessed.
- Stay informed by checking the [AusNet Outage Tracker](https://www.outagetracker.com.au/) <https://www.outagetracker.com.au/> for outage updates and estimated restoration times and ensure your electricity retailer has your current mobile phone number so you can receive SMS updates from AusNet.

Water issues

- Power outages can disrupt your water supply, particularly if you rely on electric pumps. Use water wisely and prioritise essential needs such as drinking, hand washing and toilet flushing.
- Before a forecast emergency, fill a couple of buckets with water to use for toilet flushing or other essential tasks if the power goes out.
- If you rely on tank water and a septic system, remember that unless your water supply is gravity-fed, a power outage may mean you have no running water or toilet flushing. Plan ahead.

- If you have livestock, plan for how you will provide water if pumps stop working during a power outage.

Pets

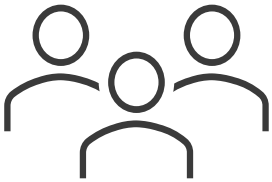
- Your pets are your responsibility. Failing to plan ahead for your pets' safety during an emergency puts everyone's lives at risk.
- Information relating to planning for your animals in emergencies can be found at agriculture.vic.gov.au.



Get connected

Connected communities are more resilient. By building strong local connections before an emergency, people are better able to support one another during an event and throughout the recovery process.

Community groups and networks



Take the time to get to know your neighbours and local community, identify your support networks, and consider who may need extra assistance during an emergency.

With many clubs and organisations in Foster, there's an activity or interest group for everyone who wants to be involved – go to the Foster Community online website foster.vic.au for further information.

Community communication channels

Communication channels and media that are commonly used by the community to share news and updates include:

- Community Noticeboard on [Foster Community Online](https://foster.vic.au)
- Community Noticeboards – outside supermarket (no keys), two southern side of main street
- Foster Community Noticeboard (Facebook)
- Prom Coast News
- Library (Myli)
- Manna Gum Community House
- Manna Gum Community House (Facebook)
- Manna Gum manage the Community Noticeboards for the Hospital, located in various locations across Corner Inlet – updated quarterly
- Sporting groups or interest group social media pages i.e. football, cricket, schools
- Visitor Information Centre





Back up information

Important things to save:

- Your emergency plan
- Identification (to prove who you are)

Home inventory:

- Photos of possessions
- Photos of house assets
- Receipts, warranties etc.

Documents:

- Insurance policies
- Property documents
- Medical information and prescriptions
- Financial records

Contact list:

- Family / close friends
- Utility providers
- Other



Prepare your emergency kit

Have your own food, water, medication and other essential supplies to be able to look after yourself, your family and pet/s for at least 72 hours. An emergency kit must be prepared to suit your family's needs.

 WATER	 MEDICATION	 RADIO & BATTERIES	 TORCH	 DOCUMENTS
 FOOD	 FIRST AID	 CLOTHES	 TOILETRIES	 MONEY
 PHONE & CHARGER	 PET'S NEEDS	 CHILDREN'S NEEDS	 GLASSES	 WHAT ELSE?

Notes

The First 72 Hours emergency workplan



1. Make an emergency plan

What are you going to do?



What is this plan for:

WHO ...

do I need to consider?
do I need to tell?

Who am I going to tell if I am evacuating:

WHAT ...

do I need to know?
do I need to do?

WHERE ...

will I go?
do I get information?
do I keep my plan?

HOW ...

will I get there?
will I get there – plan B?

WHY ...

do I need to make a plan?