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| 2023 Emergency Preparedness and Engagement Forum |
| Questions and Answers |
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# Question and answers from the forum

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing hosted the Emergency Preparedness and Engagement Forum in October 2023. Attendees requested responses to their questions and the answers are included below.

If you have any follow-up questions on these or other aspects relating to the Social services sector emergency management policy, please [email the policy team](mailto:empolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au) <empolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au>.

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## Requirements for emergency management and bushfire plans

**Why do agencies need an emergency management plan as well as a bushfire survival plan?**

Not all agencies are required by the Social services sector emergency management policy to have both an emergency management plan and a bushfire survival plan.

An emergency management plan is designed to address a wide range of emergency scenarios beyond just bushfires. It encompasses various types of emergencies, such as floods, storms, power outages, and cyber incidents.

This comprehensive approach ensures that agencies are prepared for any emergency that may arise, not solely bushfires.

As stated in the Social services sector emergency management policy, services **funded, owned, operated or regulated by DFFH** located in areas of heightened bushfire or grassfire risk across the state should undertake additional emergency management planning such as developing a bushfire survival/leaving early plan. These are:

* Department-owned specialist disability accommodation and short-term accommodation and assistance properties
* Supported independent living and short-term accommodation and assistance services
* Forensic disability residential services
* In-home and community-based services
* Residential care services including residential out-of-home care and lead tenant services
* Home-based (foster and kinship) care.

The plan will assist these services to be ready and able to respond if they are threatened by a bushfire or grassfire, or if conditions become too dangerous to continue to operate.

A bushfire survival plan includes a tailored response to bushfires and should include triggers, response strategies and location-specific considerations to maintain client and staff safety.

Home-based care services located in an area assessed as at extreme or high bushfire risk are required to have a bushfire leaving early plan.

## Risk factors requiring a plan

**When you look on Vicplan it indicates that almost all of Victoria is at risk, does this mean we should all have a plan?**

If your service falls within the scope of Social services sector emergency management policy and is located in an area with heightened bushfire risk, a bushfire plan needs to be in place.

If you are not funded or regulated by DFFH, or if you are but do not fall within the scope of the policy, and you provide services in an area with heightened bushfire risk we strongly recommend you have a bushfire plan.

A general Emergency Management Plan Template is available on our [Emergency Management webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management> to facilitate planning and preparing for emergencies. Use of this template is optional; agencies do not have to use this template

## Bushfire survival plans

**How do we know which areas need a bushfire survival plan? What LGAs are designated as High-Risk areas?**

The Social services sector emergency management policy outlines specific criteria for determining which areas need a bushfire survival plan.

These criteria are primarily related to the level of bushfire risk in a given area and are as follows:

* Victorian Fire Risk Register – Bushfire (VFRR-B): Areas identified in the Victorian Fire Risk Register – Bushfire (VFRR-B) as having an 'Extreme' bushfire risk require special attention. Service providers within these areas should develop a bushfire survival plan.
* Bushfire Prone Area (BPA): Areas designated as Bushfire Prone Areas (BPA) are at higher risk of bushfires. Therefore, any service provider or agency with services located within a BPA should consider the need for a bushfire survival plan.
* Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO): The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) is another designation that signifies a heightened bushfire risk. Service providers with services operating within a BMO should also assess the need for a bushfire survival plan.

You can search individual address locations on the [VicPlan website](https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan) <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan>. We also encourage you to contact your local CFA or Fire Rescue Victoria station captain to discuss your bushfire risk.

## Relocation due to fire danger rating

**Is relocation required for Extreme or Catastrophic fire danger rating?**

Please refer to the [Social services sector emergency management policy](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/social-services-sector-emergency-management-policy) for service specific relocation requirements <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/social-services-sector-emergency-management-policy>.

## Council involvement in relocation

**What is the Department’s expectation of Councils involvement for service providers for relocation? What funding assistance will be available for Councils?**

Under the DFFH’s Social services sector emergency management policy there are no requirements for council to be involved in the relocation of service providers. Service providers have emergency plans in place and have their responsibilities to their staff and clients. If they fail to evacuate, they need to shelter in place or call emergency services.

## Documenting evacuation in plans

**Principals of evacuation would be clearly documented to avoid confusion – would staff training then involve referencing the plan in all events?**

Emergency plans must describe responses for different types of emergencies, such as altering or ceasing services, relocation, sheltering, and evacuation. The [Emergency Management Plan Template](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template) includes prompts to document each response <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template>.

Clear triggers for activation and deactivation of plans, communication arrangements, and roles and responsibilities should be included.

Plans should also incorporate a culturally safe, inclusive, and responsive approach to meet the needs of diverse communities and clients.

Emergency management plans should be regularly tested, exercised, and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness and to promote continuous improvement in agency preparedness. Agencies can ensure continuous improvement by conducting regular exercises and simulations to test the effectiveness of their plans and identify areas for improvement.

## Decisions on evacuation

**Flowchart to be included of who is to have the ultimate say on evacuating and option for staff on the ground to feel comfortable to contest directions given?**

An example of an organisation’s Incident Management Team (IMT) structure can be found in the Emergency Management Plan Template, available on the [Emergency Management template webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template>.

We encourage you to discuss any questions about decision making within your organisation with your manager.

## Funded agencies must have an emergency plan

**What happens if the agency doesn’t do a plan/do the process?**

Under DFFH’sSocial services sector emergency management policy, funded agencies in scope of the policy must have an emergency management plan and undertake the emergency preparedness activities stipulated in the policy. This requirement is reinforced through the service agreement that each funded agency holds with DFFH, which outlines the terms and conditions of the funding, including adherence to relevant policies and guidelines. Failing to have an emergency management plan in place or attest to your preparedness can lead to:

* the agency and clients might be more at risk in an actual emergency situation
* to prolonged service disruptions, affecting clients and stakeholders who depend on those services
* liability issues
* reputational damage to the agency
* negative cascading effects on the community and other interconnected services and sectors.

## Are multiple attestations required for each service?

**Our agency has various services across the state. Do we need to attest for each service?**

Agencies providing services in-scope for this policy only need to attest to their agency’s emergency preparedness once annually.

They are not required to attest for each individual service they deliver.

## Attestation notices

**Who is the Emergency Preparedness Attestation notice sent to in an Agency?**

All Emergency Preparedness Attestation communications are sent to Agencies' Primary and Emergency Key Contact/s as listed in the Service Agreement Module (SAM). SAM can be accessed via the ‘Service Agreement Module [External Link]’ under the My Agency tab in the Funded Agency Channel (FAC) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/>. A step-by-step document “[Completing the Emergency Preparedness Attestation in The Service Agreement Module within the Funded Agency Channel](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/completing-emergency-preparedness-attestation-sam-fac)” can be found on the website <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management.>

## Status of Neighbourhood Houses as it relates to the policy

**Are metro Melbourne Neighbourhood Houses covered by the policy, particularly if we receive DFFH funding?**

Neighbourhood houses and community houses funded by the department are not in scope for the Social services sector emergency management policy, and are therefore not required to attest their emergency preparedness to the DFFH. However, all agencies providing social services are encouraged to use this policy and the accompanying resources to guide their emergency management planning.

## Individuals with multiple service providers

Are there guidelines for who is responsible for person-centred emergency planning when a person has multiple service providers? Will there be multiple separate preparedness plans for the same individual?

Person-centred emergency planning revolves around ensuring that emergency preparedness plans are tailored to the individual needs of the person receiving services, especially in a healthcare or social service context. When a person has multiple service providers, coordination and collaboration among all entities involved is crucial to ensure an effective and seamless emergency response.

There are currently no guidelines however here are some points you can take into consideration:

* unified plan: Ideally, all service providers should coordinate to create a unified, comprehensive person-centred emergency plan that addresses all of the individual's needs.
* primary point of contact: A designated service provider or case manager might act as the primary point of contact to ensure consistency and coordination in the implementation of person-centred emergency planning.
* shared responsibilities: Different aspects of the emergency preparedness plan may be addressed by various service providers based on their domain of expertise and service provision.
* establish clear communication channels and protocols among all service providers to ensure a coordinated response during an emergency.
* ensure that preparedness has a person-centred approach. Ensure that the person is centrally involved in the planning process and that their needs, preferences, and values guide the planning. Make sure that plans, communication, and resources are accessible to the individual, considering any disabilities or barriers.

## Emergency planning from NDIS clients

**Does DFFH have advice from NDIA regarding emergency planning for clients being supported by NDIS providers? How can we be confident that clients most at risk have an emergency plan?**

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, as the NDIS regulator, holds responsibility for this area and there have been recent Commonwealth legislative changes to increase the responsibility on NDIA service providers to ensure plans are in place.

DFFH wants to acknowledge the strength, courage and resilience of people with disability who engaged with the Disability Royal Commission and will carefully consider the findings and the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

The Social services sector emergency management policy references other legal, regulatory and policy requirements. NDIS service providers are also encouraged to use our resources to undertake emergency management planning if they find them useful, even if they're not formally covered by the policy.

## Requirements for SDA housing plans

**Do we require an emergency management plan for SDA housing in an urban area where fire or flooding can happen?**

Yes, all services in scope of the policy need an emergency management plan. Please refer to the policy and related resources on the [DFFH website](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management>.

## Supported playgroups

**With the recent-ish MOG changes, has the policy considered the requirements of supported playgroups, a program that now sits under DFFH?**

Yes, however, not all supported playgroups fall within the defined scope of the Social services sector emergency management policy. Nevertheless, it is strongly urged that all supported playgroups, even those not explicitly within policy scope, actively create and maintain emergency plans.

Resources and guidelines available on the [DFFH website](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management) (<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management> can be utilised to aid in the development of these emergency plans, ensuring safety and preparedness are prioritised, even if not mandated by the policy.

## Extreme weather response plans

**Has the DFFH given thought to amending the Bushfire Survival plans to become Extreme Weather response plan – this would cover off on all events, storms, floods & Bushfire with the emphasis of leaving early?**

Yes, however, not all agencies are mandated by the Social services sector emergency management policy to prepare and implement a bushfire survival plan, and among those that are, specific legal and client requirements necessitate agencies having a separate plan. Furthermore, merging diverse plans into a single Extreme Weather Response Plan could potentially create a voluminous document. This expansiveness might compromise the speed of access and reference to critical bushfire response procedures during emergent situations, thereby potentially jeopardising the efficiency of response times during crucial moments. The distinctiveness and specificity of separate plans ensure targeted, expedient access to vital information and procedures during respective emergency situations.

## Requirement to plan for climate change impacts

**Does the new Emergency Preparedness Attestation form include requirements to understand and plan for climate change impacts - to begin the drive change to support organisations - to have them better prepare their services for the impacts of climate change?**

The attestation form requires the agency to attest to their preparedness for all hazards and all emergencies which is the scope of the Social services sector emergency management policy.

## Legislative basis for agencies requiring plans

**What is the legislation that states services funded by DFFH must have an emergency management plan? It would be good to have this included in the references of our EM plan.**

As stated in the department’s Social services sector emergency management policy, the Victorian Government’s emergency management responsibilities are outlined in the:

* [Emergency Management Act (1986](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/emergency-management-act-1986/051)) <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/emergency-management-act-1986/051>;
* [Emergency Management Act](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/emergency-management-act-2013/020) (2013 update) <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/emergency-management-act-2013/020*>;* and
* [State Emergency Management Plan](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp) (SEMP) <https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp>.
* [Social Services Regulation Bill](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulation-reform) *<* https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulation-reform> Note: The Social Services Regulatory Scheme will come into effect on 1 July 2024.

Under the SEMP, the department’s role is to reduce the impact emergencies have on the health and wellbeing of Victorian communities and individuals, especially those at greater risk.[[1]](#footnote-2) This includes providing a policy framework that requires the social services sector to plan and prepare for a broad range of emergencies.

Funded agencies are required to uphold all terms and conditions outlined in the Service Agreements that agencies have with the department. This includes adherence to all relevant policies and guidelines. In regard to emergency management planning, the department’s Social services sector emergency management policy, and accompanying attestation process, requires agencies whose services are funded, delivered, or regulated by the department to:

* have an appropriate emergency management plan in place
* review this plan at least annually
* report to the department that they are prepared for a range of emergencies.

The reporting of these requirements is undertaken annually through the Social services sector emergency management policy attestation process from October to November each year.

Further information on the department’s policy and attestation process can be found on [Service Providers’ webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au>.

## Voluntary attestation process for agencies out of scope

**Can our agency attest to our emergency preparedness despite not falling within the scope of the Social services sector emergency management policy? If so, how do we do this?**

If your agency does not fall under the scope of the Social services sector emergency management policy, you are not required to formally attest to your emergency preparedness to the DFFH.

If, however, you would like the department to note your agency’s emergency preparedness, you can voluntarily attest your agency’s emergency preparedness by contacting DFFH’s Emergency Management Policy and Programs Team by [email](mailto:empolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au) <[empolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:empolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au)> confirming that your agency:

* has an appropriate emergency management plan in place,
* has reviewed this plan in the past 12 months, and
* is prepared for a range of emergencies.

Please note that DFFH does not need a copy of your plan.

## Using DFFH templates

**Is it a requirement to use the DFFH template for the Emergency Management Plan?**

No, it is not mandatory to use the emergency management plan template. It may, however, be useful to help think about the type of information that can be included.

## Making modifications to templates

**Can agencies make modifications to the Leaving Early Template?**

The template has been specifically designed to capture information to comply with the policy. Please discuss with your Department Child Protection Case Planner or Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice & Support Service (ACSASS) worker if you like to add any additional information.

## Bushfire plan template

**Where is a bushfire plan template we need to use?**

Funded agencies can use the Emergency Management Plan Template available on the DFFH [Service Providers’ webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template>. However, this is template is optional. You can create your own bushfire plan. The Homes Vic Fire Services Team provide a bushfire assessment and plan for properties owned by DFFH.

## Support for at risk communities

**How are more vulnerable communities being supported with regards to emergency management?**

DFFH’s Vulnerable People in Emergencies (VPE) Policy aims to improve the safety of vulnerable people in emergencies.

The VPE policy provides the policy context and requirements for funded agencies and in-scope councils (64 rural, regional and urban fringe municipal councils wholly or partly within CFA districts, as previously defined).

The VPE Policy’s key focus is on the importance of supporting clients in their emergency management preparedness, such as promoting personal emergency management planning and building of their community support networks. There are a range of resources linked to support this.

The VPE Policy also has 3 subset guidelines for its associated processes including the Vulnerable Persons Registers (VPRs).

Only the parties in-scope of the VPE Policy have access to the VPRs housed in the Crisisworks online platform.

The VPRs are a last resort, used only when the VPE Policy advice and guidelines have been fully considered. The priority should be on supporting clients in their emergency preparedness.

IMPORTANT: It is critical for all parties to understand that evacuations of individuals listed in the VPRs cannot be guaranteed in emergencies, and any assistance is dependent on the capacity and ability of emergency services organisations to safely provide.

There are four mandatory criteria that must be met before a client is added and/or kept on a VPR.

Client records in the VPRs can be updated at any time and should be updated if circumstances change and the client no longer meets the mandatory criteria. There is also a formal data revalidation process conducted every six months.

When a funded agency identifies a person that is not receiving services as potentially ‘vulnerable’ as per the policy, Australian Red Cross is able to provide emergency management planning support. If Australian Red Cross identifies the person is not able to develop a personal emergency plan, or does not have supports to help them plan, they will refer them to the relevant Council for screening for potential inclusion on the local VPR.

The policy and its guidelines can be found on the [Emergency Management webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management>.

## Vulnerable Persons Register (VPR) and emergency management planning requirements

**Vulnerable Persons Register – is there any specific requirement in relation to the emergency management plan?**

The Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy involves mechanisms like Vulnerable Persons Registers, tailored communication strategies, and personalised emergency plans. The focus of the policy is on individuals living in the community who might need additional support or specialised services during emergencies due to factors like age, disability, health conditions, or social circumstances.

The Social service sector emergency management policy involves comprehensive emergency management planning that includes risk assessments, resource management, staff training, service continuity planning, and partnership coordination among organisations within the sector.

Some agencies are required to comply with both policies, and both policies’ contexts are imperative and often intersect in practice, to ensure that the social services sector is prepared to navigate emergencies while also safeguarding and prioritising the needs of vulnerable individuals within the community.

## Contacts for assistance with emergency planning

**Are Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPC) able to receive a list and contacts for Department or Service sector facilities to assist in awareness and planning, especially for VICPOL and Councils?**

As per the guidelines laid out in Guideline 1 of the Vulnerable people in emergencies (VPE) policy, municipal councils bear the responsibility of developing a comprehensive list of facilities where vulnerable residents are likely to be found.

This is a proactive step to ensure that individuals living in these facilities are cared for and planned for at the local level.

For clarity, when we speak of 'facilities' in the context of the VPE policy, we refer to buildings such as aged care facilities, hospitals, schools, Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), child-care centres and any other facility identified locally as housing vulnerable individuals.

The DFFH will actively provide relevant information about their facilities through their regional emergency management teams.

It's imperative to acknowledge that some facilities are of a sensitive nature. While their information is vital for emergency planning, it's crucial that we handle these details with the utmost discretion.

Such information should not be widely disseminated within the MEMPC. Instead, it should be accessible only to those entities that may require it - specifically the MEMPC Secretariat, Victoria Police, and control agencies.

Departments will offer guidance regarding which facilities are classified as sensitive, ensuring that we maintain confidentiality while still being prepared.

## Agencies’ responsibility for individuals most at risk

**Can you please go through an agency's responsibilities for vulnerable people living in their own home in emergency planning? Does it vary based on services delivered to the client?**

Emergency planning for vulnerable individuals, especially those living in their own homes, encompasses a range of considerations. Some general responsibilities an agency may hold which may vary based on services delivered:

* Conduct thorough risk assessments considering the various vulnerabilities and needs of individuals.
* Identify potential emergencies relevant to the geographical area and assess how they may impact clients.
* Encourage and, where necessary, support clients (who meet the definition of a vulnerable person) to undertake personal emergency planning, including seeking feedback from the individual and support workers.
* Implement clear and accessible communication channels suitable for each individual (taking into account any disabilities or language barriers).
* Ensure individuals know how to access help and have key emergency contact information.
* Regularly review, update and practice emergency plans with the involved individuals.
* Facilitate contact with local emergency services, ensuring they are aware of the presence and needs of vulnerable individuals.
* Where possible, engage with other local services and networks to ensure comprehensive support during emergencies.

Variation Based on Services Delivered:

Physical Care Needs - Agencies providing physical care may need to prioritise aspects like medical equipment, accessible transport for evacuation, and maintaining care continuity during emergencies.

Home Support Services - For services primarily delivered in the home (like meal delivery or domestic assistance), agencies might focus on ensuring that individuals have sufficient supplies and understand how to access help if regular services are disrupted.

Mental Health Support - Mental health services might emphasise ensuring that clients have access to crisis support during emergencies and that staff are aware of potential triggers or stressors related to crises.

Social and Recreational Services - If the agency provides social or recreational services, they might prioritise maintaining social connections during emergencies, utilising remote communication tools if in-person activities are disrupted.

Disability Services - Disability services may need to prioritise accessible communication, mobility support, and ensuring that any assistive technologies are considered in emergency plans.

Legal and Ethical Considerations - Ensure that all emergency plans and interventions respect the autonomy, preferences, and rights of each individual.

Always comply with relevant laws and standards regarding care provision, data protection, and emergency management.

For more information on emergency management planning, view or download the [Preparing for emergencies: a reference guide for the social services sector](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/preparing-emergencies-reference-guide-social-services-sector)(Word) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/preparing-emergencies-reference-guide-social-services-sector> and [Emergency management plan template](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template) (Word) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template>.

To assist in developing emergency management preparedness plans for people with disability, please visit [Collaborating 4 Inclusion](https://collaborating4inclusion.org/home/pcep/) <https://collaborating4inclusion.org/home/pcep/> for information about Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (PCEP) and a workbook and toolkit to develop an individual PCEP Plan.

## Engaging with at risk communities

**Can I have a link to the communicating and engaging with those most at risk during emergencies?**

All resources can be found on <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management>

For more information about the University of Sydney’s Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) framework, model and toolkit visit <https://collaborating4inclusion.org/>. .

## Options for deaf people to communicate with emergency services

**Hi, I’m deaf. Some team members are also deaf. Our residents are deaf with additional disabilities. If we live in bush or country with fire/flooding warning, I was wondering how we can communicate with VicSES and VicPol for help.**

Effective communication during emergencies is crucial, especially for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and those with additional disabilities. Some strategies are, but not limited to:

* Pre-engagement: Engage with VicSES, VicPol, and local emergency planning agencies in advance to discuss and develop a tailored emergency communication and response plan for your community or residence.
* Reach out to your local VicSES unit or VicPol station and offer to work together to organise training sessions and workshops with emergency services to enhance familiarity and preparedness among all stakeholders.
* Community Alerts: collaborate with local community groups or neighbourhood associations to develop a network where neighbours can help alert each other of dangers, especially if they receive auditory warnings.
* Emergency Plans: Create a robust community emergency plan that considers the unique communication and safety needs of residents. Make sure all members are familiar with the plan. Share these plans with VicPol and VicSES.
* Emergency Apps: Download and set up emergency apps that are designed to communicate alerts and information (such as VicEmergency in Victoria).
* Video relay services: In some regions, video relay services might be available, allowing you to communicate with emergency services using sign language via a relay interpreter.
* SMS Relay Services: Australia's National Relay Service (NRS) offers an SMS relay service. https://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs. You can send an SMS to 0423 677 767 with your emergency and location. The relay officer will communicate with emergency services on your behalf.

Please read the ‘*Preparing for emergencies: a reference guide for the social services sector*’ which accompanies the Social services sector emergency management policy on our [website](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management> for more information.

## Refugee assistance

**Victoria welcomes refugees to unfamiliar environments. They often have a little English and digital literacy. BCHS has developed an Emergency Management Program in 3 languages for Bendigo’s new arrivals. Please link us to the right person in the department to discuss. This community is at high risk re fire, flood and heat events.**

Please email [empolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:empolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au) so we can direct you to the right person

## Bushfire information line

**Is the bushfire Information Line (1800 240 667) still available?**

The bushfire information contact centre has been incorporated into the VicEmergency Hotline [1800 226 226](tel:1800%20226%20226). The VicEmergency Hotline is open between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday (except public holidays). During and after significant bushfires, hotline availability extends. Recorded information on specific topics can be accessed 24 hours a day.

## Heat health information

**Will the Department be providing organisations with a standard communication pack around heat health so we all provide the same messaging?**

Yes, the Department of Health will be sending out stakeholder packs and key messages once the package is ready.

## Consultation and support

**Does DFFH offer consultation and support services to providers, on emergency management planning?**

A variety of resources and support for emergency management planning can be found on [our](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au) website, such as:

[Preparing for emergencies: a reference guide for the social services sector](file:///\\internal.vic.gov.au\DHHS\HomeDirs7\vidk5g7\Desktop\Preparing%20for%20emergencies:%20a%20reference%20guide%20for%20the%20social%20services%20sector ) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/preparing-emergencies-reference-guide-social-services-sector>

[Emergency management plan template](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management-plan-template>

[Emergency preparedness forums](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-preparedness-forums) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-preparedness-forums>

For agencies that are funded, your Agency Performance and System Support Officer can provide clarification regarding the Social services sector emergency management policy and attestation process.

## Recording of the forum

**How do we access the recording?**

The recording is posted to the DFFH [Emergency Preparedness and Engagement Forum webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-preparedness-forums) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-preparedness-forums>.

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1. Emergency Management Victoria, n.d. *Role statement - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing*, <https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp/roles-and-responsibilities/role-statements/dffh>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)