

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

Venus Bay & surrounds



VENUS BAY
COMMUNITY CENTRE

**Municipal Emergency
Management Planning**

South Gippsland Shire



Emergency Planning Information Document

Venus Bay & 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 through a collaborative process involving the local community, emergency services and agencies represented on the South Gippsland Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC). This document can be used by the Venus Bay community and visitors to develop a personal or family emergency plan.

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

The document is reviewed and updated through ongoing community engagement 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.

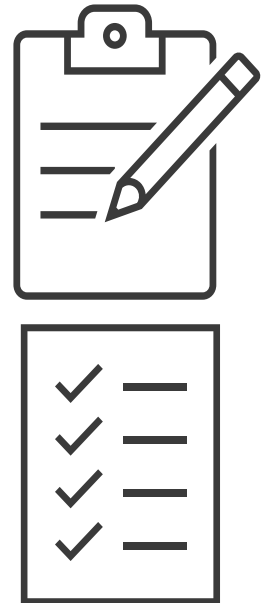
How you can be more prepared for emergencies

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 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 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 Venus Bay

Venus Bay is a small remote residential/coastal hamlet tucked behind some of the largest recorded sand dunes in Australia. It is positioned on a narrow peninsula located in the South Gippsland Shire Coastal Promontory Ward, 40 km south of Leongatha and 174 km southeast of Melbourne.

The Venus Bay Township is in a residential/coastal setting with its boundaries defined by Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, Point Smythe Coastal Reserve, Anderson Inlet and Inverloch Venus Bay Road. A large part of the area is located on coastal dune which is heavily timbered with coastal scrub and open farmland to the east.

The township can be split into three distinct areas: Venus Bay Estates No. 1, 2 and 3. The town is predominantly flat and the separation distance between vegetation and dwellings is typically a lot less than 20m. Access and egress is limited due to one road (Inverloch-Venus Bay Road) in and out of the township and between the first and second estates (Lees Road).

Due to the large number of short-stay properties and unoccupied houses in Venus Bay, some properties may not be well prepared for an emergency. Residents, owners and visitors may also be unaware of the extreme bushfire risk and the importance of Fire Danger Ratings and the 'leave early' message. During busy holiday periods, the population can increase from around 1,200–1,500 to 5,000–8,000 people. Many visitors may be unfamiliar with the area, local risks, limited services and utilities, and the reliance on power for water and communications. They may also not have an emergency plan, making clear and early communication particularly important.

Understand emergency risks

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

Fire history in Venus Bay and South Gippsland

Venus Bay has an Extreme bushfire risk level. For this reason, residents and visitors should plan to leave early on Extreme and Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating days. On these days, you should not be in a bushfire risk area.

In Venus Bay:

- There is no community alerting siren
- There is no Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort
- There is no Community Fire Refuge

Venus Bay is located within the West and South Gippsland Fire District. Check the Fire Danger Rating every day during the fire season through the CFA website, the VicEmergency app or by calling 1800 226 226.

Although Venus Bay and the surrounding area have not experienced a major bushfire in recent history, there have been 24 fire ignitions in the past five years. Under High, Extreme or Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating conditions, any fire has the potential to spread rapidly and threaten homes and other assets.

On 31 December 2021, a grassfire ignited on farmland near the entrance to Venus Bay off Jupiter Boulevard. The fire was successfully contained, but for several hours there was no way in or out of Venus Bay, as both Jupiter Boulevard and Inverloch-Venus Bay Road were closed due to hazardous smoke.

A bushfire starting under north to north-westerly winds has the potential to impact the entire Venus Bay township within a short period of time. A subsequent south-westerly wind change could then threaten the remaining developed areas of the township.

Many fires in the Venus Bay area are caused by human activity, including illegal campfires, fireworks, sparks from machinery and discarded cigarettes. During High, Extreme or Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating conditions, these ignitions can quickly develop into fast-moving bushfires.

High fuel loads within and surrounding the township, combined with homes located close to vegetation, mean that fires can become difficult to control very quickly. There is also a significant risk that the main access road could become blocked, preventing residents and visitors from safely leaving the area. In these circumstances, plans to self-evacuate may no longer be possible, and people may need to shelter in place.

Burning scrub, heath and other coastal vegetation can produce intense and dangerous bushfires. If you live, work or travel in coastal areas, you are at risk. Beaches, foreshores and shallow water are not safe places to shelter from a bushfire, as they may not protect you from radiant heat and the fire may already be burning between you and the beach.

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.

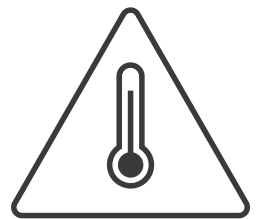
What can you expect?

- Very hot and fast-moving fires
- Gusty ocean winds causing fire to behave erratically
- A lot of embers
- Fire reaching houses quickly
- Busy, congested coastal roads
- Radiant heat (the heat created by a fire)

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>.

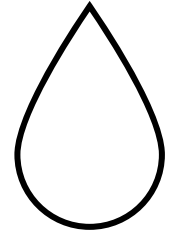


Severe Weather – storm, high winds, heavy rain, hail, flooding and power outages

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 across the Shire.

Flood/Inundation

The Tarwin River can flood following prolonged rainfall, causing river levels to rise and affect low-lying areas around Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay. Flooding may result from riverine flooding, flash flooding, coastal storm surge, or a combination of these events. Low-lying areas around Anderson Inlet are particularly vulnerable to storm surge and coastal inundation, with increasing risks identified for some access roads. Flooding has affected the area on numerous occasions, including in 2001, 2012, 2022 and 2024. River levels are influenced by tides, storm surge and prevailing wind conditions. During heavy rainfall and high tides, sections of Inverloch-Venus Bay Road may be flooded, resulting in road closures, lengthy detours and temporary isolation of Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower.



August 2022

On 16 August 2022, flooding closed Inverloch-Venus Bay Road between Inverloch and Tarwin Lower for several days, requiring a lengthy detour via Meeniyan and Fish Creek. The event highlighted the vulnerability of local communities to transport disruption and isolation during major flood events.

Warnings for the Tarwin River

The Tarwin River and Anderson Inlet do not have a formal flood warning service with Minor, Moderate and Major flood classifications. Residents should monitor Bureau of Meteorology warnings, VicEmergency updates and VICSES advice during severe weather. The Tarwin River at Meeniyan gauge can provide an indication of upstream river conditions.

Other risks

- **Emergency services:** Police and ambulance response times can be extended due to the township's location, and local medical services are limited.
- **Population:** Venus Bay has a diverse community, including permanent residents, retirees, young families and an increasing number of people living in the area for most of the week rather than only on weekends. The ageing population and limited local support services may increase vulnerability during emergencies.
- **Water safety:** Venus Bay's ocean beach extends for more than 20 kilometres and is subject to constantly changing conditions, including strong rips, sandbars, deep channels and powerful currents. To reduce the risk of drowning, always swim between the flags at Beach 1 when the beach is patrolled and check local weather, surf and tide conditions before entering the water.

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 FM



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 Venus Bay

Access issues

- Getting in and out of Venus Bay is in most instances good, however the only road is the Inverloch Venus Bay Road and if this is blocked by an accident or flood waters the town can become isolated. You should seek information from the Vic Emergency App, Hotline 1800 226 226 or emergency.vic.gov.au for provide advice on what to do.
- 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. In prolonged emergencies reported road closure information can be found at <https://traffic.transport.vic.gov.au/>.
- 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 Venus Bay is generally good but during peak times may become unreliable
- Internet and phone coverage can be impacted by strong winds
- There are some telecommunications black spots in the Venus Bay 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) the Venus Bay Community Centre 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 Venus Bay, there's an activity or interest group for everyone who wants to be involved – go to the Venus Bay Community Centre website www.vbcc.org.au for further information.

Community communication channels

Communication channels and media commonly used by the Venus Bay community to share news and updates include:

- South Gippsland Sentinel Times
- Tarwin Lower/Venus Bay Community Voice (Facebook group)
- Venus Bay Community Centre Facebook page
- Venus Bay Matter of Fact newsletter



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?