

Bushfire Emergency Procedures

Wadambuk St Andrews Community Centre

35 Caledonia Street, St Andrews.

&

St Andrews Community Hall

1 Proctor Street, St Andrews.

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STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

These are procedures for **bushfire**. Building fires and other emergencies are covered in another document.

These procedures implement the Bushfire Emergency Management Plan developed by the Shire. The CFA has produced the Wadambuk St Andrews Community Information Guide. That guide should be read in conjunction with this document.

BACKGROUND

Location

St Andrews is located in an Extreme bushfire risk environment according to the Victorian Fire Risk Register.

St Andrews has no Community Fire Refuge – ie no building constructed to resist fire. There is a Bushfire Neighbourhood Safer Place – ie a place that may be safer but no more than that. The nearest Safer Place is the Hurstbridge Hub, Graysharps Road on the western side of the railway station. There is another at Diamond Creek Community Centre and a third at Eltham Reception Centre.

The local road network can quickly be compromised in conditions of high winds because of the proximity of trees to the roads.

Users of Wadambuk or the Hall may not be familiar with the area or its hazards – even if they are “locals”.

How fire risk is rated on a given day

Fire danger ratings are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology for each weather district. St Andrews is in Central district. The standard classification for fire danger ratings on any particular day is shown below,

*Note: The well-known Total Fire Ban Day is **not** a fire rating but an additional set of rules about certain things that cannot be done because of fire risk. It is the **fire ratings** that trigger procedures for our buildings.*

RATING	DESCRIPTION	ACTION
Code Red	These are the worst conditions for bush or grass fire. Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fire in these conditions. The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas.	Centre and Hall are closed to all personnel and all activities.
Extreme	Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast-moving. Spot fires will start and move quickly and may come from many directions.	Centre and Hall are closed to all personnel and all activities.
Severe	Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable.	Centre and Hall are closed to all personnel and all activities.
Very High	If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions and homes can provide safety.	Centre and Hall may be open and activities proceed as scheduled – <i>but see details below..</i>
High		
Low/ Moderate		

THIS PLAN'S BASIC PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED:

- **Regardless of fire rating**, it is possible that a bushfire may break out on a day when the Centre and/or Hall are open and operating. This scenario is covered in the instructions on page 11.
- **The CFA (and other services) may not be able to come to your rescue.** The scale of fire may prevent them. The roads may be blocked. They may have been called away to another area.
- **Communicate with authorities – listen and tell.** Victoria has a multi-level advice system.. Use it as detailed below.

- **Communicate with people in the building.** It is very important for you to be
 - very calm
 - very clear and firm
 - early to communicate.

In a perceived emergency, people do not necessarily behave rationally and may need more time than usual to take in your instructions.

- **The new part of the Centre is relatively fire resistant** if you are forced into a shelter in place.
- **The Hall and the old Principal's Residence are NOT very resistant to fire at all.** Stay and defend is not an option for them.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW:

CODE RED DAYS

EXTREME DAYS

SEVERE DAYS

CENTRE AND HALL ARE CLOSED

Both facilities must be closed. This directive is clearly stated in all tenancy leases, hiring agreements and activity booking sheets. Rationale: Locals should activate their personal Fire Plans and closure keeps away people less familiar with the district.

Action:

Booking documentation makes it clear that the Hall and Wadambuk will be closed and also that users must monitor fire ratings. Nonetheless, as soon as the rating is officially predicted or announced, the Centre Administrator on duty (or in their absence the SACC Chair) shall:

- Attempt to notify all tenants, rostered staff and volunteers, permanent and casual hirers with a booking that the Centre and Hall will be closed and they must cancel or reschedule.
- Ensure that the buildings are locked.
- Post a sign (“Building Closed due to Code Red Fire Rating”/ “Building Closed due to Extreme Fire Rating”/ “Building Closed due to Severe Fire Rating” as appropriate) on the entry doors.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW:

VERY HIGH DAYS	Strict and intensive monitoring and managing as detailed below
HIGH DAYS	Monitoring and managing as detailed below.
LAW/MODERATE DAYS	Managing in the unlikely event of fire.

Monitoring and managing is appropriate for all days of these lower fire ratings. Obviously the more likely time for fire to arise is during a Very High fire rating. However, the same general procedures apply to the other lower ratings:

ON VERY HIGH RATING DAYS:

A bushfire is still entirely possible. It is the responsibility of the Administrator, and the nominated leader of each group in occupation to **monitor actively:**

- Ensure that you know exactly which and how many people are in the facility.**
NB: The Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator will need to do this for both Centre and Hall. If staff are not present the event leader must do it for the building they occupy.
NB: It is particularly important to know about children and/or people with limited mobility or other impairments.
NB: There is a second entrance to the Old Residence section of the Centre. Check that no-one is in occupation unknown to you.
- Have your mobile phone loaded with the VicEmergency app and a 10 km zone around Wadambuk set. Ensure that the phone is on (not silent) and in a place where you will hear it if a warning is issued.**
- Survey conditions and the general situation outside before your activity starts** and again during it if the activity lasts for more than two hours.
- If there seems cause for concern**, whether from your own observation or from the Fire App, **consult the VicEmergency Hotline 1800 226 226.**

IF THERE IS A WATCH AND ACT FOR ST ANDREWS or

IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY WARNING FOR ST ANDREWS

Plainly the situation is dangerous, even if that is not evident from where you are. Unless otherwise instructed by Incident Control, **you should evacuate the building:**

- Stop the activity. Get everyone together and give your clear, calm instruction that everyone should evacuate.
- Turn off all appliances and air conditioning, close all windows and doors, lock the building and leave.

If the fire is within 5 km or you are instructed by the Incident Controller that it is too late to leave, you must shelter-in place:

- Stop the activity.
- If you are in the Hall move immediately to Wadambuk. Stay in a group, walk fast but don't run.
- If you are in the Old Principal's Residence move immediately to the new part.
- If you are in Wadambuk,
 - check that no-one is in the Old Principal's Residence.
 - Fill the sinks and handbasins with water and fill as many jugs of drinking water as possible. (If/when the power goes off, there will be no water pressure.)
 - Collect and wet the cleaner's mops, suitable towels etc.
 - Close windows and doors and draw all blinds.
 - Turn off all appliances and air conditioning.

LEAVING

When the threat has subsided, or you are directed to leave, evacuate and lock the building.

SACC RESPONSIBILITIES

As provided for in the Shire's Fire Emergency Management Plan, the SACC Committee of Management must:

- generally comply with that Plan
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that all members and users of the Centre and the Hall are aware of and understand this Plan.
- have a system in place for ensuring that all users are aware of these procedures and commit to complying with them as a condition of use. This will normally be done through the leader/organiser/teacher of any given group.
- make it a condition of use of either facility that each group will have a nominated person who is responsible for monitoring bushfire activity in a 10 km radius using the VicEmergency app and/or an accredited emergency services broadcaster.
- have a system in place to notify users of a predicted fire danger rating of severe or above.
- review these procedures annually and also after any fire event.

END OF DOCUMENT.