



# Are you prepared to weather the storm?

StormSafe



## Victoria is at risk

Storms can happen anywhere at anytime of the year. In Victoria, storms are more common from October to May, but history shows that storms are unpredictable and it is better to be prepared. Some facts about storms include:

- Storms are the most frequent emergency affecting Victoria.
- Since 1901, over 2,750 people have died as a result of storms.
- In 2011 storms cost Victorians over \$1 billion in insurance claims alone.
- Storms may be accompanied by torrential rain, strong winds, large hailstones and lightning. Lightning is always life-threatening.
- Storms can result in flash flooding and can unroof buildings, damage trees and powerlines as well as pose a significant safety risk to people, animals, households and businesses.
- Floodwater can contain sewage, debris and wash sections of roadways, paths and land away. NEVER drive, ride or walk through floodwater- you don't know what you're getting into.

## Storm Warnings

**Severe Weather Warnings** or **Severe Thunderstorm Warnings** are issued when an intense low-pressure system is expected. Severe weather includes:

- Damaging winds
- Intense rainfall and flash flooding
- Thunderstorms and lightning
- Hailstones
- Tornadoes

Each of these can pose a risk to you, your family and your property. There are some simple things you can do to prepare your home for a storm and save you in the long run, including:

- Clear your gutters of debris so that gutters do not back up in heavy rainfall.
- Tidy your yard so that objects do not fly away in strong winds.
- When you hear a warning, secure items such as outdoor settings and trampolines.
- Trim overhanging branches on trees and shrubs to prevent them causing damage in strong winds.

Flash flooding is a rapid rise in water over a short period of time. It does not usually last more than a few hours.

If you live in an area with a potential for flash flooding, **there will be less time for you to act and protect your family and property.** Being prepared is the only option to help reduce the costs and effects of a storm on you and your family. To prepare for emergencies:

- Put together an Emergency Plan for your home and/or business.
- Put together an Emergency Kit, including a first aid kit, battery operated radio, torch, spare batteries, bottled water, canned food, pet food and necessary medications.
- Place important documents in waterproof containers.
- Information about putting together a Home Emergency Plan and Home Emergency Kit can be found at [www.ses.vic.gov.au/prepare](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au/prepare)



## Before: Preparing for storm

- Check your home and contents insurance.
- Assemble an Emergency Kit and prepare a Home and/or Business Emergency Plan. Visit [www.ses.vic.gov.au](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au).
- Regularly clean your gutters, downpipes and drains to ensure they are in good order and not blocked. Trim overhanging branches in your yard. DO NOT attempt to do this during a storm.
- Tidy your yard, porch and/or veranda to ensure unsecured items such as trampolines do not become potential flying objects that could cause damage or injury during a storm.

## When you hear a Storm or Severe Weather Warning

- Listen to your local radio station or visit the Bureau of Meteorology website [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au) or the SES website [www.ses.vic.gov.au](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au) for further warnings and advice.
- Make sure children and pets are with you indoors.
- Check that neighbours are aware of the situation.
- Double check that all loose items in your yard such as outdoor settings, umbrellas, trampolines and children's toys are safely secured.
- Where possible, park your car under cover and away from trees, powerlines, drains and creeks.
- Boat owners should not go boating during a storm.

## During a storm

- In life-threatening emergencies, call **Triple Zero (000)**. For emergency assistance call **132 500**.
- If driving, pull over clear of traffic, waterways, powerlines and trees and turn on your hazard lights.
- If outdoors, seek shelter away from drains, causeways, gutters, creeks, trees and powerlines. Where possible, seek shelter in a building or vehicle.
- Stay indoors and away from windows.
- NEVER drive, ride or walk through floodwater. This is the main cause of death during storms and floods.

## After a storm

- Check your house and property for damage and check on the wellbeing of neighbours, friends, relatives and pets.
- NEVER allow children to play in floodwater, this is the main cause of death for children and teenagers in storms and floods.
- Stay away from damaged trees, powerlines, damaged structures, drains, culverts and waterways as conditions can change rapidly.
- Be careful as floodwater may contain sewage and debris.
- For information and assistance after a storm contact your local council or visit the Department of Human Services website [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)