

Media Release

For general release

21 November 2014

Private bushfire shelters require building permits - VBA

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) is reminding Victorians considering building a private bushfire shelter for their home that they must obtain a building permit prior to installation.

The VBA's Director of Technical and Regulation, Jarrod Edwards, said that in some instances, councils may also require a planning permit.

"Private bushfire shelters must comply with the performance requirements in the [National Construction Code \(NCC\)](#). Two private bushfire shelters have been accredited and are recognised as meeting this performance requirement. All non-accredited bushfire shelters must be thoroughly assessed for compliance with the NCC as part of the building permit process," Mr Edwards said.

"Remember, a private bushfire shelter should only be an option of last resort as part of a bushfire survival plan."

The VBA recommends homeowners seek professional advice on any recommended upgrades or retrofits to their existing home. For additional tips on protecting your home from bushfire, visit the [Bushfire Information](#) section of the Victorian Building Authority website at www.vba.vic.gov.au or refer to [A guide to retrofit your home for better protection from a bushfire](#), which is also available from the VBA website.

Protecting buildings from ember attack

Mr Edwards also said that research shows ember attack is one the key factors in more than 85 per cent of houses destroyed by bushfire in Australia. Many of the measures to prevent ember attack are low-to-moderate cost and easy to act upon.

The VBA has produced a simple, printable checklist providing easy steps to improving fire readiness (attached).

You can also download the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Fire Ready Kit from www.cfa.vic.gov.au or phone the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 for more information.

ENDS

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Protecting against ember attack - checklist

Ember attack is a key factor in more than 85 per cent of houses destroyed by bushfire in Australia. Many of the measures to prevent ember attack are low-to-moderate cost and easy to act upon.

ACTION	COMPLETED
Seal gaps in cladding, such as where weatherboards meet at corners, in eaves linings and around roofing and roof penetrations where gaps are greater than 2mm.	
Install draught excluders around door and window frames.	
Screen weep holes (vertical gaps between bricks at the base of walls and below windows) and vents in external walls with corrosion-resistant mesh, such as steel, bronze or aluminium.	
Have roofing checked to ensure it is securely fixed and won't blow off or allow embers into the roof space.	
Clear leaves from gutters. Consider installing a non-combustible leaf-guard type product	
Consider applying fire-resistant paint to external timber.	
Enclose the home's subfloor with a non-combustible material or corrosion-resistant mesh (steel, bronze or aluminium).	
Install shutters or metal flyscreens to glazed doors and windows.	