

Victorians urged to prepare their homes for fire season

As temperatures rise and summer approaches, the state's building regulator is urging Victorians to prepare their homes for the 2020-21 fire season.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) wants Victorians to take the necessary steps now to make sure they are protected from bushfires.

The VBA's State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini said Victoria is one of the most bushfire-prone areas in the world, so it is important to make sure you [prepare your home](#) early.

"Victorians know the impact fire can have all too well, but it's important we don't become complacent. The earlier you prepare your home and update your survival plans the better," he said.

"There are simple steps you can take like clearing leaves from gutters and installing leaf-guards, as well as protecting evaporative coolers with properly sized metal bushfire mesh screens."

After an unprecedented 2019-20 fire season last summer that saw regional communities devastated and most of the state clouded in smoke, it is important to prepare early.

Mr Cialini said homeowners can get in touch with a registered building practitioner to see to what extent they can retrofit their properties with additional safety features, as part of their bushfire survival plan.

"There are [easy and affordable things](#) owners can do to protect their properties from things like ember attack," he said.

"Actions can include sealing gaps in external walls and eaves with silicone, installing silicone weather strips and draught excluders on windows and external doors, covering vents in external walls with metal bushfire mesh and sealing around roofing joints and roof penetrations."

Removing any overhanging tree branches, keeping grass short and cleaning up other debris near your home that could easily catch fire are other useful ways to reduce fire risk.

It is also important to make sure your property is accessible for emergency vehicles and has a water supply for firefighting. If you have a rainwater tank near your home, ensure it is accessible.

While building standards reduce the risk of ignition of homes in the state's bushfire-prone areas, it is important to note that they do not guarantee a building will survive the unpredictable nature of a bushfire.

Mr Cialini said some people may choose to construct [private bushfire shelters](#) on their property but noted that these should only be used as a last resort and require a building permit before construction/installation.

Find more ways to keep your home safe from bushfire on the VBA website and get tips on home protection from the [Country Fire Authority](#).

Homeowners should familiarise themselves with the CFA's [Fire Ready Kit](#), prepare a bushfire plan and keep updated on current fire incidents and warnings on [Vic Emergency](#).