

About...

The Victorian bushfire Standard

On 11 March 2009 the Victorian Government adopted the *Australian Standard AS 3959-2009 Construction of buildings* in bushfire-prone areas into a new residential building Standard to ensure Victorian homes are better protected in the event of a bushfire.

Victoria's implementation of the Standard allows rebuilding after bushfires to be smarter and safer. The Standard was referenced in the Building Code of Australia 2010 and came into effect on 1 May 2010.

While the Standard will improve protection for new homes, as well as alterations and additions, built in Victoria's bushfire-prone areas, it is important to note that it does not guarantee a building will survive the unpredictable and often devastating nature of a bushfire.

ABOUT THE STANDARD

The Standard covers all new buildings, alterations and additions in the State of Victoria and will see new and replacement homes designed, constructed and located with improved bushfire protection. Areas are defined under six Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) categories from low to extreme risk, as follows:

- BAL - LOW
- BAL - 12.5
- BAL - 19
- BAL - 29
- BAL - 40
- BAL - FZ (Flame Zone).

Every new home built or renovated in a bushfire prone area within Victoria must undergo a BAL assessment as part of the application for a building permit. The site BAL assessment determines the construction methods that must be used to better protect properties from the threat of bushfires.

The relevant building surveyor will use the BAL to check compliance with the construction requirements of the Standard.

While the Standard is not regulated under plumbing regulations, the VBA encourages plumbing practitioners to ensure that they are aware of the six BAL categories and that plumbing work meets the specific construction requirements.

Plumbers are encouraged to purchase a copy of the *Australian Standard AS 3959-2009 Construction of buildings* in bushfire-prone areas from SAI Global or downloaded from Building Code of Australia www.bca.sai-global.com.

Note: The Standard does not provide construction requirements for buildings assessed in bushfire-prone areas as BAL-LOW as the risk does not warrant specific bushfire construction requirements. BAL 12.5 minimum if in a bushfire prone area

For further information and assistance contact the VBA on 1300 815 127 or visit www.vba.vic.gov.au