

Get ready for fire season now says regulator

As days get hotter and summer comes closer, the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) is urging homeowners to prepare for the 2021-22 fire season.

The 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.

"Being prepared early is key, don't wait until it's too late, start updating your survival plans now and get your home ready for fire season," he said.

"Steps you can take now include clearing leaves from gutters and installing leaf-guards, as well as protecting evaporative coolers with properly sized metal bushfire mesh screens."

The unprecedented fire season two years ago saw regional communities devastated and most of the state clouded in smoke, highlighting just how dangerous bushfires can be.

Mr Cialini said homeowners can get in contact with a Registered Building Practitioner to see how 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.

"You can seal gaps in the external walls and eaves with silicone, put silicon weather strips and draught excluders on windows and external doors, cover vents in external walls with metal bushfire mesh and seal 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.

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

Leaving early is the safest option to protect yourself and your family. Leaving early means leaving the area before a fire starts – not when you can see flames or smell smoke. This applies even to those who have an appropriately approved bushfire shelter which are considered to be a last resort option in the event that fire has prevented safe egress from the area.

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

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