



Bushfires and your water supply

Wannon Water is prepared for bushfires and enacts a number of plans on days of high risk or total fire ban to help keep the water supply system operational. However, in the event of a bushfire, we can't guarantee your water pressure or your water supply.

How we prepare

Parts of our service region have been identified as high risk fire danger areas by the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

Each year, we get ready for the bushfire season by preparing our facilities and our pipe networks to cope in extreme conditions.

This work includes:

- Clearing land and access tracks within and around our water pumping stations, storage areas and catchments
- Installing back-up generators at critical sites, including major pumping stations and water sources
- Having portable generators available for deployment to water pumping stations if required
- Planning access to groundwater bores to supplement supplies for catchments in the Otways and Southern Grampians. These areas have been identified as high risk in our bushfire plan
- Organising access to water carters to transport emergency water supplies when necessary.

We also work closely with the CFA in the event of a bushfire so that firefighters can quickly locate fire hydrants and they have good access to available water supplies.

Despite these efforts, water supplies can be affected by both loss of power and a drastic drop in water pressure during a bushfire.

Your water supply

We have comprehensive measures in place to maintain drinking water supplies wherever possible in the event of bushfires, however town water systems are only designed to cope with everyday drinking water needs. They can be under extreme load during a bushfire.

Water supplies can be impacted by issues including:

- Electrical failure affecting the pumps that allow us to deliver water
- Fire trucks drawing water from the system
- A burst water main
- Vital infrastructure being damaged by fire.

In addition, road closures or dangerous conditions may prevent our employees from entering a bushfire zone to reach our infrastructure. This means we may not be able to maintain normal drinking water pressure, water quality or an uninterrupted supply to every household during or following a fire.

We recommend you consult the CFA about preparing your family and home for a bushfire. Their advice is that if you are confident, capable and prepared to actively defend your property, you need the following resources and equipment as a minimum:

- 10,000 litres of water (other than mains supply)
- A firefighting pump that is protected from radiant heat and not reliant on mains power supply
- Firefighting hoses that reach all the way around your home
- Personal protective clothing.

Therefore, we urge customers to be prepared ahead of the fire season. Have an alternative source of water available for fire fighting.

We also recommend you keep an extra supply of drinking water available throughout summer. Keeping some jugs in the fridge is a good idea.

Please note that in situations where a bushfire poses an imminent threat to property, any water saving rules or restrictions are automatically waived.

For advice on preparing for a bushfire with an independent water supply, visit cfa.vic.gov.au

Assistance for customers affected by bushfire

Our customer relations team is able to provide support and assistance as part of the relief and recovery stage of a bushfire.

They are trained to help with issues such as difficulties in paying bills and replacement of damaged water meters.

If you have been affected by a bushfire please call us on 1300 926 666.

We're working with the CFA

We work closely with the CFA in the event of a bushfire so that firefighters can locate fire hydrants quickly and they have the best access to available water supplies.

Our crews are on standby to make urgent repairs to water mains and hydrants if necessary. We also work to minimise disruptions or low pressure issues for customers.

It's worth noting that the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* provides powers to fire agencies to take water from any waterway or any other source of water supply on public or private land for fire fighting purposes.

Bushfire warnings and emergencies

- In the event of an emergency or bushfire, call **000**.
- **VicEmergency** publishes fire warnings, incidents and emergency updates via its website, smartphone app, Facebook and Twitter pages.
- You can also tune your radio to **ABC local 774** for emergency information, or call the **Victorian bushfire information line** on **1800 226 226**.

