



Guide to Disaster Management

How prepared are you for a disaster?

There are many reasons why you may need to leave your home quickly. The trigger could be a bushfire, storm, flood, earthquake, home fire, violence, or a vehicle crashing into your home. No matter the cause, the result is the same. You need to get out fast – but how prepared are you? How prepared is your household and community?

One in three Australians will experience a disaster in their lifetime. Many emergency services agencies and not for profit organisations like the [Australian Red Cross](#) have a range of resources to help you before, during and after a disaster.

Before a disaster

- **Make sure you can receive emergency warnings** and information using your local emergency warning apps. Understand what your local risks are.
- **Create your own preparedness plan**, like the Red Cross [Rediplan](#). Use the interactive template to list your emergency information including important numbers, medications, insurance details, neighbours and where you will go in an emergency. Print this out and store it somewhere where everyone in your house can see it – and if your phone is flat or there is no power, you can access the information quickly.
- **Download** the [Get Prepared app](#). This will keep your emergency plan close at hand .
- **Think about what is important to you** and build your [survival kit](#). What will you put in your 'go bag'? If you live in a high-risk fire zone, you may consider storing valuables off-site for the bushfire season.
- Think about what you will do with your pets and other animals.

- **Get to know your neighbours**. Neighbours may be the first people you call upon for help. Use the [Connecting to the Social Grid](#) cards (on page 35) to introduce yourself.
- **Get [Psychological First Aid](#) or [emergency volunteer training](#)** so you can help yourself and others work through the disaster process.

During a disaster

- **Keep up to date** with information broadcast from authorised agencies and follow instructions about evacuation and returning home.
- **Connect** with your support networks and community.
- **Let others know you are safe**. Use your mobile phone to send out a message on Facebook or email. Be aware of the [Register.Find.Reunite](#) program managed through the Australian Red Cross that lets family, friends and emergency services know that you are safe.

After a disaster

- **Be guided** by the [Recovery Basics](#). This focuses on your mental health and how you can help others.
- **Clean up**. The [Cleaning up after an emergency](#) booklet has many tips to clean up, dry out and repair your home after wind or water damage.
- **Provide help**. Too often donations of clothes or goods end up in landfill so the best way to help is by donating money. Information about donations is made available during disasters.

How prepared is Australia for a disaster?

In Australia we have a shared responsibility approach to disaster management.

There are a number of emergency, government and not for profit agencies involved in disaster management in Australia, at local, state and national level. They all have an important role to play, alongside communities and households.

Internationally, Australia adopted the [United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) in 2015. This outlines targets and priorities to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks and informs the Australian National [Strategy](#) for Disaster Resilience and the National Disaster Risk Reduction [Framework](#).

Australia's latest Sendai progress [report](#) showed that the increased frequency and duration of extreme weather events means there is no longer an 'off-season' for disasters. Governments at all levels are working to better harmonise their actions and share resources to meet the increasing challenges ahead.

Government preparedness

At the Federal level, the [National Emergency Management Agency](#) – oversees disaster coordination and funding and has two valuable tools:

- [Disaster Assist](#) provides access to recovery services and support agencies wherever you are in Australia. Simply select the type of disaster (flood, bushfire etc), the type of assistance required (financial, emotional, health, business, disaster recovery centre etc) and your address – to show a full range of service providers near you and their contact details.
- [Interactive map](#) showing declared disaster-affected Local Government Areas, and recovery and resilience projects underway.

State/Territory governments implement their emergency management plans through coordinated programs on disaster prevention preparedness, response, and recovery. Most emergency management agencies have useful resources and maps of local warnings and incidents. Some also have apps and the facility to sign up for emergency alerts and notifications.

Check out your local agency:

- Australian Capital Territory: <https://esa.act.gov.au/>
- New South Wales: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/emergency>
- Northern Territory: <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/emergency-service>
- Queensland: <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/>
- South Australia: <https://www.safecom.sa.gov.au/>
- Tasmania: <https://www.alert.tas.gov.au/>
- Victoria: <https://emergency.vic.gov.au/>
- Western Australia: <https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/>

Every State and Territory also has an urban and rural fire service and a [State Emergency Service](#).

- In a flood or storm, SES-trained volunteers can provide non-life-threatening emergency relief. Most frequently this can include temporarily fixing damaged, walls, windows, or roofs, removing fallen trees blocking access and halting rising floodwaters.
- Call 132 500 to access the local SES from anywhere in Australia.
- For life-threatening emergencies call 000.

Local Governments have emergency management plans that identify hazards, assess risks, and include arrangements to protect their communities.

- Check with your [local government](#) to see what arrangements are in place to evacuate the community safely and where the nearest evacuation centres would be for people and animals.

Other key agencies

- [Gender and Disaster Australia](#) has guidelines, videos and other resources to promote the prevention and control of violence, abuse and discrimination against women, children and LGBTIQ+ people and men's self-harm and suicide, before, during, and after emergency and disaster situations.
- The [Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience](#) has an impressive Knowledge Hub and provides networking, professional development, and volunteer leadership training to strengthen disaster resilience. It also has an annual photography award.
- The [Bureau of Meteorology](#) provides weather warning notifications, enables you to track storms on its radar maps, and has information about long-range weather and climate impacts.

Useful tools

- [Emergency Alert](#) is a national emergency warning system where emergency services send voice messages to landlines and text messages to mobile phones in a geographical area impacted by an emergency. **Don't block messages that come from +61 444 444 444.**
- [Emergency Plus](#) uses a smartphone's GPS functionality to help a triple zero (000) caller provide the critical location details needed to mobilise emergency services.

The app was developed by Australia's emergency services and their government and industry partners. It includes a [What 3 Words](#) address to make it easier to describe your location.

- The [Australia Post Digital ID app](#) helps you to confirm your identity in an emergency by validating key documents such as your drivers licence, passport, birth certificate and Australian citizenship.