

# CFS FACT SHEET

## EMERGENCY KITS



Emergency kits consist of all the things you will need to perform the actions in your Bushfire Survival Plan. You won't know exactly what should be in your kit until your preparation work is done and your plan is written.

**Emergency kits should be prepared before the fire season.**

The best emergency kit is one that can be used for all hazards – not just bushfires.

### If you need a simple Emergency Kit, consider the following items.

- What you need to help survive the day of a bushfire;
- What to take with you to safety;
- What you need for up to four days following a fire.

#### General Items:

- Battery powered AM/FM radio plus spare batteries
- Waterproof torch
- 100% Woollen blankets
- Clothing to protect you during a bushfire (see below)
- First aid kit with manual
- A can opener
- Emergency contact numbers

#### Before you leave, add:

- Money, key cards and credit cards
- Medications, toiletries and sanitary supplies
- Special requirements for infants, elderly, injured, or those with disabilities
- Important documents (eg Insurance papers, wills, passports), valuables and photos
- drinking water (three litres per person per day) and food for at least 48 hours
- A change of clothes for everyone
- Mobile phone & charger Blankets
- Children's toys

#### For your pets

- Basket/cage/leash
- Medications, food, drinking water and bowls
- Familiar item (toy, bed, treats) to help reduce stress

**You should keep your Emergency Kit/s in waterproof storage containers in a location that is easy to get to and that the whole family knows about.**

### For greater preparation, think about creating a survival kit, a relocation kit and a recovery kit.

- **A survival kit** contains everything you need around your home, for example, the clothes you will wear and the tools needed to prepare your home. This kit is needed if you are going to stay and defend your property, and most of its contents could also be used if you plan to leave your home early.
- **A relocation kit** contains all the things of personal and practical value that you want to relocate to a safe place.
- **A recovery kit** contains the things you will need to survive in reasonable comfort in the 24 to 48 hours after a bushfire, until normal community services start again.



## Survival kit

Practising your Bushfire Survival Plan will help you identify the things you need for your survival kit. For example, to fill your gutters with water you will need gutter bungs, a ladder and a hose.

Suggested kit contents are outlined below, but you need to refine this list for your own purposes.

Your survival kit should be prepared well before the fire season and stored in a safe and accessible location. Any important documents or precious items should be put into fireproof containers.

The survival kit should include:

- protective clothing for the whole family (more details in following section)
- buckets and mops
- drinking water
- mobile phone charger
- 100% woollen blanket for each person
- torch
- fire extinguishers
- battery-operated radio
- first-aid kit
- spare batteries for torch and radio
- hoses and spare hose fittings
- knapsack sprayer / weed sprayer / large water gun
- shovel
- ladder
- towels
- medications
- gutter bungs or other equipment for blocking downpipes.



Examples of survival kit items

## Protective clothing

Whether you are leaving early or staying to defend your property, wearing protective clothing will increase your chance of survival against radiant heat.

Ensure that each family member knows where their personal protective clothing is located in the home.



### Each person will need:

- long trousers or overalls made of natural fibre such as cotton, denim or wool
- a long-sleeved shirt or jumper (cotton or wool, but not too heavy)
- a broad-brimmed hat (protects from dropping embers)
- sturdy leather boots or shoes
- 100% woollen socks (to prevent burns)
- goggles
- strong gloves
- a face mask or handkerchief to cover the nose and mouth (protects from inhaling smoke and embers).

**Remember, synthetic fibres will melt or burn and things do not offer any protection.**

### Additional points

- It is not recommended to wet your clothing. If a flash of radiant heat boils the water, your body and face can be scalded.
- Wear clothing that is strong enough to protect against radiant heat, but loose enough to allow for sweating and cooling.
- Trousers should be worn over gumboots.
- If wearing shoes, have socks pulled out over trousers.
- Don't wear boots with nails or studs.
- Wear neck-hugging clothing.

### Extra accessories

Other accessories to include in your survival kit include:

- an indoor plant sprayer, which can be used to extinguish embers
- a bottle of artificial tears, to help flush ash from eyes
- sunscreen

## Firefighting equipment

The more firefighting equipment and protective features a property has, the better its chances of surviving a bushfire. Homes have been successfully defended, however, with such simple equipment as mops, buckets and wet bags.

### Buckets

- Buckets are light, easily portable and an effective way to move water.
- Metal is best as it is less likely to melt.
- Mops



Old-fashioned cotton mops hold a lot of water.  
Extinguish embers around your home using mops and buckets.

### Woollen blankets and cotton towels

- Use 100% woollen blankets as a shield from radiant heat. People have survived bushfires by wrapping themselves in a woollen blanket, lying on cleared ground and sipping water. Remember, however, that blankets have limitations.
- Wet towels are used to seal gaps under doors to prevent embers and smoke from entering the house.

### Radio – battery powered

- Tune in to your local AM ABC radio station or FiveAA for updates on the progress of a fire.
- The CFS will provide regular media updates.
- Ensure you have spare batteries as power cuts may be prolonged.



### Shovels and rakes

- Use for breaking up piles of burning material.
- To extinguish burning material, cover it with dirt.

### Firefighting knapsacks

- Half fill the knapsack if it is too heavy when full.
- Weed sprayers, sold in hardware stores, are also suitable.



### Ladders

- A ladder inside will give access to the ceiling space via the inspection hole.
- A ladder outside will provide access to the gutters to fill them with water or extinguish any fires that start on the roof.



### Torches – battery powered

- Leave a torch in the ceiling space to check for embers.
- Have another in the house in case the power goes off.
- Check the batteries before each fire season.



### Hoses

- Hoses need to be able to reach all parts of your home.
- Metal hose fittings for taps are not likely to melt.
- Put a hose fitting connection on to your washing machine tap so that you can use your hose inside if needed.

## Relocation kit

Prepare your relocation kit before the start of the fire season and store it in an easily accessible place. Or consider storing it with family or friends who do not live in a fire-prone area. The kit could include:

- protective clothing for each member of the family
- business records
- first-aid kit
- infant supplies
- 100% woollen blanket for each person
- packaged foods, drinks, dried fruits
- photos, videos and personal treasures
- documents such as diaries and address books
- computer software and backup
- pet food, leash, drink bowls
- medications for family and pets
- mobile phone charger
- list of essential phone contacts
- drinking water
- battery-operated radio
- torch
- insurance documents, passports, licence, banking details and other certificates.



Examples of relocation kit items



A relocation kit



Wear protective clothing, pack car and leave early

When packing your car, as part of your leave early plan, along with the relocation kit you could also include:

- your computer
- masks
- a bag of clothing for each family member
- gloves
- toiletries
- a pet box with pet
- a favourite item for each child
- a shovel.



Include all members of the family in your Bushfire Survival Plan

## Recovery kit

After the bushfire has passed you may not be able to access facilities that you normally take for granted. For example, your access road may be blocked by fallen trees. The recovery kit contains everything to keep you going for at least 24 hours and up to 48 hours. Prepare your recovery kit ahead of time. I

It may include:

- food, especially high energy foods
- medication
- pet food
- first-aid items
- toiletries
- candles and matches
- drinking water
- torch and radio batteries
- change of clothing
- cash.

## Kit location

All three kits need to be assembled early in the fire season. Store them in an easily accessible place and let every member of the family know where they are. Clothes should be put in individually labelled bags. Large equipment will be placed outside or in a shed. The relocation kit needs to be in a handy spot for picking up as you leave. The recovery kit will probably be stored in a cupboard at home.

## For your car

A car is a very dangerous place to be during a bushfire, and it will almost always be safer to shelter in a solid structure over trying to outrun a bushfire in a vehicle. We have a full brochure on our website - Bushfire Safety for Travellers – with information on what to do to stay safe while travelling and recommend you read it. During the Fire Danger Season, you should consider keeping your kit in the back seat of the car in case you come across fire too late to get out of car and retrieve it from the boot.

Things you should keep in your car to help keep you safe include:

- 100% woollen blankets to shelter under (no synthetic materials)
- a first aid kit
- battery powered radio
- waterproof torch
- spare torch and radio batteries
- at least 2 litres of drinking water
- protective clothing and footwear

## Different plans

Whether you plan to leave early or stay and defend your property, your kits will be much the same. This allows for a change of plan if required.

A well-planned Bushfire Survival Plan considers all issues and contingencies. The plan needs to be flexible enough to cope with varying circumstances. Ensure that all members of the household know the plan and their roles and responsibilities.



Government  
of South Australia

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