

Severe Weather and Bushfire Weather Warning

Procedure

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Related policies and documents:	Working Off-Site Procedure Student Excursion Risk Management Procedure

Purpose

To ensure that William Angliss Institute (WAI) employees and students are protected, as far as possible, from the risk of severe weather and bushfire when undertaking Institute activities.

Procedure

Managers and supervisors will ensure the following information and issues are taken into account when planning or preparing for rural or regional travel and preparing risk control plans under the Working Off-Site Procedures (for staff) or the Student Excursion Risk Management Procedure (for student excursions).

This procedure also provides some guidance about student and staff issues in relation to bushfires or severe weather.

Communication

Employees will have access to the following information posted to the intranet and maintained by the People & Capability Department:

- Links to relevant websites to enable identification of existing bushfires or severe weather or fire weather warnings i.e. state rural fire services, www.bom.gov.au and www.abc.net.au/radio/.
- The Emergency+ app is a free app developed by Australia's emergency services and their Government and industry partners <https://www.emergencyplus.com.au>
- VicEmergency is a centralised website for Victorians to find emergency information and warnings [Incidents and Warnings - VicEmergency](#)
- CFA Victoria (national fire rating system) <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/total-fire-bans-fire-danger-ratings/about-fire-danger-ratings>
- This procedure.

Staff working in regional areas

Staff undertaking industry visits or working in regional areas (particularly those identified as having a high bushfire risk) and their managers will:

- Consider severe weather and fire risk when planning trips and prior to departure on trips to regional areas including
 - Whether the destination or route to be taken involves an area of high bushfire risk or areas where severe weather is forecast.

- Consult state rural fire service websites for existing fires and www.bom.gov.au for severe weather or fire weather warnings.
- Consider the feasibility of rescheduling the regional travel when bushfires or severe weather such as cyclones, floods, severe thunder storms, dust storms, etc. are forecast.
- If already in regional areas when a bushfire or severe weather warning is announced:
 - Seek information from state rural fire services and/or Bureau of Meteorology and/or ABC local radio station.
 - Stay in contact with their manager and discuss options in response to a bushfire or severe weather warning announcement.
 - Follow advice of state rural fire services or emergency services in relation to action to be taken. It is preferable that staff exercise the 'leave early' option on bushfire weather/severe weather warning days when in identified high risk areas and where it is safe to do so.
 - Consider risks of driving through areas after bushfire or severe weather (increased risk of straying livestock, falling trees, flooding, changed road conditions, etc.).

Student Field Trips, Excursions & Recreational Activities

- Departments will consider scheduling excursions or field trips that may be affected by heightened bushfire risk to times of the year when bushfire risk is low.
- Prior to excursions, excursion organisers will consult the state rural fire service websites and www.bom.gov.au in relation to existing bushfires, fire weather warnings or severe weather warnings.
- In the event of a bushfire weather warning, excursions or field trips to rural areas or areas identified as high risk should be cancelled or postponed.

Student Issues

Advice to International Students

During orientation of International students, International Department will provide new International students with information about understanding the bushfire weather warnings and severe weather warnings, where to get information about existing fires and weather warnings (ABC local radio, state rural fire service and Bureau of Meteorology websites).

Staff issues

Unplanned child care responsibilities due to closure of schools, child care facilities, etc. due to bushfire weather warnings or severe weather

Staff may access carers leave in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment and in consultation with their manager/supervisor.

Volunteering with fire fighting or emergency service agencies

Staff who are members of emergency service agencies may access leave available under their terms and conditions of employment (e.g. National Employment Standards) in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

Definitions

Severe weather – is weather identified as severe in warnings published by the Bureau of Meteorology (www.bom.gov.au) and may include risk of tropical cyclone, tsunami, bushfire, flood, severe thunderstorm, unusually high tides or large waves in coastal areas, widespread blizzards in alpine areas, damaging winds, heavy rainfall which may lead to flash flooding or large hail stones.