

Severe Weather and Bushfire Weather Warning

Procedure

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Related policies and documents:	Working Remotely Policy Student Excursion Procedure

Purpose

To ensure that all William Angliss Institute of TAFE (Angliss) employees, contractors and students are protected, so far as is reasonably practicable, from risks associated with severe weather and bushfire conditions while undertaking Institute-related activities including offsite training and work, regional travel, interstate activities and student excursions.

Procedure

This procedure outlines responsibilities, communication requirements, risk controls and required actions when severe weather or bushfire warnings are issued by official emergency authorities.

This procedure applies to:

- All Angliss employees working on campus, interstate, remotely or in regional locations.
- All student excursions, field trips or off-campus activities.

Communication

The People & Capability Department will maintain up to date links on the Portal to:

- Various state's emergency services.
- Fire danger ratings using the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) and total fire ban information.
- Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) warnings and forecasts.
- State-specific emergency apps and websites.
- Vic Emergency app (Incidents, Warnings and Fire Danger Ratings).
- Emergency+ app information.
- This procedure and related resources.

All managers and employees will ensure they can receive timely emergency warnings via:

- BOM app
- Vic Emergency app (notifications enabled for Victorian activities)
- NSW Rural Fire Services (RFS) Fires Near Me / Hazards Near Me app
- SA Country Fire Services (CFS) and Alert SA
- ABC Local Radio for all states

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees working off-campus, offsite, interstate or in regional areas will:

- Check BOM and respective state-specific emergency information for weather and fire conditions when planning travel and again on the day of travel.

- Discuss high-risk forecasts with their manager/supervisor/program leader.
- Not travel into high-risk areas on days of Catastrophic fire danger or during active warnings.
- Maintain communication with their manager/supervisor/program leader.
- Follow all directives from emergency agencies.

Managers/supervisors/program leaders will:

- Review weather and bushfire risk as part of all remote work, interstate or regional travel approval.
- Ensure risk control plans are developed as per the Working Remotely or Student Excursion Procedure.
- Support employees to postpone or cancel travel when severe weather or warnings exist.
- Maintain contact with employees located in potentially impacted areas.

People and Capability will:

- Maintain intranet/Portal resources and emergency communication links to multiple state emergency agencies. Provide induction and refresher information about severe weather and fire risks.
- Manage workforce support considerations (e.g., leave entitlements during emergencies).

Teachers/Academics will:

- Provide students with orientation information on navigating bushfire and severe weather warnings.
- Ensure all students know where and how to access official emergency information.

Planning Travel or Activities

Before approving or undertaking regional, remote or interstate travel or excursions:

1. Check applicable state-specific emergency apps (refer table below) and the BOM for:
 - Current warnings
 - Active incidents
 - Fire danger ratings (AFDRS)
 2. Assess whether the destination or travel route passes through high-risk locations.
 3. Determine if travel should be postponed based on:
 - “Extreme” or “Catastrophic” Fire Danger Rating days.
 - Issued warnings (e.g. Watch and Act, Emergency Warning and Evacuate Now).
 - Severe weather alerts (e.g. storms, flood watches, heatwaves and strong winds).
- Excursions or field trips will be cancelled or rescheduled if a warning is active or if risk levels are elevated.

If severe weather or bushfire warnings occur during travel or activities:

- Employees and students will:
 - Stop activities immediately if there is an Emergency Warning or Watch & Act.
 - Seek up to date information via applicable state-specific emergency management apps, the BOM or ABC Local Radio.
 - Contact the relevant manager to discuss safest action (leave early, relocate or shelter if required).
 - Follow all directives issued by emergency services, including evacuation orders.
 - Avoid driving through impacted areas due to hazards (for example, falling trees, smoke, flash flooding, livestock or blocked roads).
- Departments will:
 - Plan excursions outside fire season, where practicable.

- Complete a risk assessment including severe weather and bushfire triggers.
- Cancel or postpone high risk activities, when warnings are issued.
- Ensure all supervising employees know emergency procedures and communication methods.

Employee Support Considerations

Unplanned Caring Responsibilities

Where schools or childcare facilities are closed due to severe weather or fire warnings, employees may access:

- Flexible work arrangements (as per applicable Agreements), where feasible.

Emergency Service Volunteers

Employees who are registered members of CFA or other emergency agencies may access emergency response leave in accordance with prevailing employment conditions.

Definitions

Severe weather: Any weather event for which the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) issues an official warning. This may include tropical cyclones, tsunamis, extreme fire weather, floods, severe thunderstorms, heatwaves, high tides or large waves in coastal areas, blizzards in alpine areas, damaging winds, heavy rainfall which may lead to flash flooding or large hail stones.

Bushfire weather: Conditions assessed as high risk under the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) including “extreme” and “catastrophic” fire danger ratings.

Official warning sources (official alerts) issued by for example, state-based emergency authorities such as:

- **National**
 - BOM – severe weather and fire weather warnings
- **Victoria**
 - Vic Emergency (website + app)
 - Country Fire Authority (CFA) - fire danger ratings and total fire bans
 - ABC Local Radio – emergency broadcaster
- **New South Wales**
 - NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) - fire danger ratings and total fire bans
 - NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES)
 - ABC Local Radio – emergency broadcaster
- **South Australia**
 - SA Country Fire Service (SA CFS) - fire danger ratings and total fire bans
 - SA State Emergency Service (SA SES)
 - ABC Local Radio – emergency broadcaster