

Summer 2017-18 Newsletter

Information for supported residential services

Emergency preparedness

From time to time Victoria experiences emergencies resulting from a range of events, including fires, heat waves, storms, floods and disruptions to essential services. SRS proprietors need to plan for emergencies to ensure the health and safety of SRS residents and staff.

SRS proprietor's responsibilities:

- have emergency plans in place
- make informed decisions in the event of an emergency
- take responsibility to protect the health and safety of residents and staff.

How to access emergency information in Victoria

- **Vic Emergency** <emergency.vic.gov.au> is the single all-emergencies website for Victoria.
- Download the **Vic Emergency** app on your mobile phone to receive warnings and notifications about fires and other emergencies. The app is free.



- Emergency warnings will be broadcast on **ABC local radio** and commercial radio stations across Victoria, for a list of broadcasters: <<http://www.mfb.vic.gov.au/Community-Safety/Campaigns-and-Events/Full-list-of-Victorian-Emergency-broadcasters.html>>

- For up to date weather warnings and forecasts visit the <[Bureau of Meteorology](http://www.bom.gov.au)> website.
- <[Subscribe to heat health alerts](#)>

Plan for all emergencies

- You need to have an effective emergency management plan in place.
- All staff need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency.
- Residents need to be informed of emergency and evacuation procedures.

Code Red fire danger rating

- The **Code Red** fire-danger rating forecasts the worst conditions for bush fires.
- A Code Red day may pose risks to residents, particularly those in high bushfire risk areas.
- You need to have a plan for what you will do on a Code Red day.

Extreme heat can affect residents in your SRS

Heat can cause illnesses including heat cramps, heat exhaustion and life threatening conditions such as heatstroke. Extreme heat can affect anybody, the residents most at risk in your SRS:

- are aged over 65
- have a medical condition such as diabetes, kidney disease or mental illness
- have a disability
- have trouble moving around
- take certain medications that may affect the way the body reacts to heat, see 'medications and heat' below.

Prevent heat related illness

On days above 30 degrees Celsius, encourage residents to:

- drink plenty of water, even if they don't feel thirsty
- spend as much time as possible in cool or air conditioned buildings (shopping centres, libraries or community centres)
- wear light coloured, loose fitting clothing
- stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day
- wear a hat and apply sunscreen
- avoid strenuous activity, cancel or postpone outings
- avoid alcohol and caffeine
- close curtains or blinds to block out the sun
- use wet towels and cold foot baths to cool themselves down
- remember to never leave anyone in a car.

Know the symptoms of heat related illness

If a resident experiences the following symptoms, seek medical assistance:

- muscle cramps
- paleness and sweating
- rapid heart rate
- nausea, vomiting
- dizziness, headache
- **confusion, seizure or collapse, this requires urgent medical attention, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.**

For more information about heat health, including survive the heat brochures and posters:

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heatwave-community-resources>



If you need health advice for a resident phone Nurse-on-call 1300 6060 24

Medication and Heat

Certain medications make it harder for the body to regulate temperature. During heatwaves SRS residents taking the medications listed below are at risk of heat-related illness:

- antidepressants and antipsychotics
- blood pressure or heart medicines
- seizure medicines
- water pills (diuretics)
- allergy medicines.

Before extreme heat days:

- ask your pharmacist about your residents' medication and potential side effects
- talk with the resident's case manager and/or health practitioner.
- develop a plan to manage side effects with the resident, their case manager and/or health practitioner and the residents' person nominated (if applicable).

Visit the [<better health channel>](#) for more information about medications and heat.

Prepare your SRS for extreme heat in advance

- Stock up on food, water and medicines so you don't have to go out in the heat.
- Store medicines safely at the recommended temperature.
- Check that air conditioners and fans work well, have air conditioners serviced if required.
- Make your SRS as cool as possible by installing external blinds, window coverings or shade clothes on the outside of the building.

Serious injuries in SRS

The most commonly occurring serious injuries within SRS are fractured bones resulting from falls. Within the 3 year period ending July 2017, twenty seven SRS residents fractured bones when they fell. Fractures accounted for thirty five per cent of all serious injuries reported to the department.

Fractures of hip and leg bones were the most common type of fracture. Other types of fractures included spinal fractures, upper limb fractures, fractured ribs and facial fractures.

Fractures have a large negative impact on a resident's level of independence and well-being.

Remember, falls can be prevented, if you are worried about a resident talk to a health professional for advice.

For information on fall prevention within SRS:

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/supported-residential-services>



Plan for power failure this summer

Power outages can be caused by extreme weather, such as lightning, floods, heatwaves, bushfires, high winds, and trees falling on powerlines.

Your emergency management plan needs to include a plan for power outages.

In the event of a power outage you need to have:

- access to a phone, such as a charged mobile phone or land line that does not require electricity to operate
- alternative lighting, a torch is best, **do not use candles**
- important contacts, refer to the list on the department of environment, land, water and planning website below
- alternative cooking facilities
- a battery operated radio, stay tuned to local news services to get updates on weather conditions and power outages
- access to fresh water.

To view a video on power outages:

<<https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/safety-and-emergencies/power-outages>>

Keep food safe

It is important to consider the safety of the SRS' food supply and ability to cook in the event of a power outage. Food safety practices need to be followed to avoid food poisoning.

Try to keep cold and frozen food cold, *if it is cold to touch (5 degrees Celsius) it is safe to use:*

- move food from the fridge to the freezer
- if available put bagged ice under food packages in the freezer (if power failure lasts longer than 1 hour)
- place an insulating blanket over cold or frozen food where possible
- only open fridge and freezer doors when absolutely necessary.

For further information about food safety during power outages:

<<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-safety-information-for-consumers/food-safety-during-power-outages>>

Keep medicines safe during power outages

Exposure to high temperatures can make some medicines less effective and harmful to residents, insulin is an example of a medicine that is sensitive to heat.

- Medicines need to be stored at the temperatures indicated by the manufacturer's instructions.
- In preparation for power outages, talk with a pharmacist to make sure you have a plan to store medicines at the appropriate temperature.

