

Help protect your tourism business from the impacts of bushfires, floods and other natural disasters by being prepared. Have a thorough plan that you can effectively communicate with your employees, visitors and distributors, so you are ready to act in the event of bushfires or other natural disasters.

Quick Tips

Communicate with your visitors

For bookings scheduled during bushfire season, you can share the NSW Rural Fire Service's tips on [Travelling in a Bushfire Area](#) in your booking confirmation details.

Prepare up-to-date safety and evacuation information that you can share with visitors in the event of a bushfire emergency or natural disaster in hard copy and digitally.



Use online booking software to access and manage your booking details

Using cloud-based online booking software to manage all your bookings online enables you to access customer information quickly and easily from any device, which is important in the event of an emergency. Find out more about online booking software in the [NSW First Guide: Sell Bookable Products Online](#).

When choosing an online booking system, check what functionality is offered in the event of bushfires or natural disasters, such as blocking out availability in an emergency, cancelling or rebooking clients and managing refunds for direct and third-party sales through the software. Review any resources they share ahead of bushfire season.

Ensure you have clear booking terms and conditions

Create or update terms and conditions for your bookings to ensure you have policies and processes in place for cancellations, refunds and postponement or rebooking in the event of a bushfire or other natural disaster.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) provides information for travel and accommodation businesses, outlining responsibilities under Australian Consumer Law. See below for their guide and other resources:

- Read the ACCC guide: [Travel & accommodation - an industry guide to the Australian Consumer Law](#).
- Contact [NSW Fair Trading](#) on 13 32 20 for information.
- Read the [NSW First Program](#) trade terms tips for [accommodation](#), [tours](#) and [visitor attractions](#).

If you sell your tourism products and experiences through a third party, such as an online travel agent (OTA) or inbound tour operator (ITO), ensure you have communicated your terms and conditions with them, and that you are aware of any related terms and conditions of theirs.

Prepare to adapt in an emergency

Tour and activity providers may consider preparing a contingency product offering in the event of a bushfire, such as an amended itinerary or alternative activities with a lower bushfire risk. Being prepared with contingency options ahead of time will enable you to quickly pivot your operations where it's safe to do so – and to update your visitors and distribution partners with full details of these changes.

Ensure that any new or adapted visitor experiences and tourism products have appropriate licenses and permits to operate and are covered by your Public Liability Insurance. For more information, refer to the [NSW First Guide: Develop your Tourism Business](#).

Being prepared with contingency options will enable you to quickly pivot your operations

Check your insurance

Protect your business against unforeseen events such as damage to assets due to bushfires or floods, or legal claims, by having adequate insurance. The Insurance Council of Australia has developed the [Understand Insurance](#) website to help you make decisions about your general insurance needs.

An insurance broker may be able to help if your circumstances are complex.

Prepare emergency details

Make a list of all the key information sources so you can get up-to-date information in the event of a bushfire emergency or other natural disasters. Add key contacts and apps to your phone and make a hard copy of the list for quick access.

- Add the **Bushfire Information Line** to your mobile phone contacts: **1800 679 737**
- Set your **LGA disaster dashboard** as a favourite on your phone or tablet. Contact your local council for details.
- **Phone apps:** [Fires Near Me](#), [Emergency+](#), [Live Traffic NSW](#)
- Make a list of your key tourism contacts in the region, including:
 - » Your distribution partners – to advise of any changes to current or future bookings
 - » Your local tourism manager and Visitor Information Centre, so you can reach out with updates.

If your business has limited mobile phone reception, consider a satellite phone, EPIRB device and analog radio with working batteries so you can keep your clients safe and stay connected to up-to-date safety information in the event of a bushfire emergency or natural disaster.

Understand the Alert Levels

During a bushfire, [Alert Levels](#) are used to give you an indication of the level of threat from a fire. Before a fire starts, understand what the alert levels mean and plan what you will do when you receive an alert.

Remember – don't wait for a warning. Some fires start and spread so quickly there may not be any time for a warning. If you get a Bushfire Emergency Alert, you must take it seriously. Failure to take action can result in death or injury to yourself, your employees or your visitors.



Advice

A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.



Watch And Act

There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect your employees and visitors.



Emergency Warning

An Emergency Warning is the highest level of Bushfire Alert. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. And delay now puts your life at risk.

Use the Get Ready Business guide

Prepare your business with the [Get Ready Business](#) guide. Its five-step plan includes:

- **Step 1: Know your risk**
- **Step 2: Plan now**
- **Step 3: Get your business ready**
- **Step 4: Be aware**
- **Step 5: Look out for each other**

The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) hosts an annual [Get Ready Weekend](#), where you can engage with your local fire brigade.

For more tips, templates and checklists on business continuity planning, read the NSW Small Business Commission's [Prepare for the Unexpected](#) guide.

For more information on planning and preparing for a bushfire, including making a **bushfire survival plan**, visit the NSW RFS's [Plan and Prepare](#) guide.

**Make a list of all the
key information sources
so you can get up-to-date information.**

Resources

You should be aware of the specific risks relating to your area and note where early warning information comes from.

Connect with local Emergency Services or visit the following websites to learn more about preparing for specific hazards:

- [NSW Rural Fire Service \(RFS\)](#) for bushfires.
- [NSW State Emergency Service \(NSW SES\)](#) for floods, storms and tsunamis.
- [Fire and Rescue NSW \(FRNSW\)](#) for structural urban fires and HAZMAT (hazardous materials) incidents.
- [NSW Police Force](#) for crime-related events such as shoplifting, break-ins, fraud and robbery.
- [Bureau of Meteorology \(BOM\)](#) for information on weather forecasts and severe weather warnings.
- [NSW Health](#) for heatwave information and support.
- **Dial Triple Zero (000) for Police, Fire or Ambulance for life-threatening emergencies.** If you are deaf or have a speech or hearing impairment dial 106 for the Text Emergency Relay Service.

