



# Guidelines for Managing Bushfire Risks

December 2023



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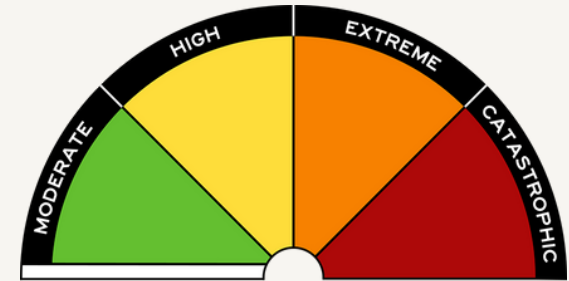
At Geelong Cemeteries Trust (GCT), we are deeply committed to caring for our communities.

It is our duty of care to ensure the health and safety of those working at or visiting our locations, and this encompasses addressing the risk of bushfires.

These Guidelines provide information about how we will conduct operations in our high fire risk locations, as well as instructions in line with the Australian Fire Danger Rating System.



# Australian Fire Danger Rating System



The Australian Fire Danger Rating System was last updated on 1 September 2022.

Fire Danger	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>EXTREME</b>	<b>CATASTROPHIC</b>
<b>Key Message</b>	<b>Plan and prepare.</b>	<b>Be ready to act.</b>	<b>Take action now</b> to protect your life and property.	For your survival, <b>leave bushfire risk areas.</b>
<b>Fire Behaviour</b>	Most fires can be controlled.	Fires can be dangerous.	Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous.	If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost.
<b>Supporting Messages</b>	Stay up to date and be ready to act if there is a fire.	There's a heightened risk. be alert for fires in your area.  Decide what you will do if a fire starts.  If a fire starts, your life and property may be at risk. The safest option is to avoid bushfire risk areas.	These are dangerous fire conditions.  Check your bushfire plan and ensure that your property is fire ready.  If a fire starts, take immediate action. If you and your property are not prepared to the highest level, go to a safer location well before the fire impacts.  Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas.	These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire.  Your life may depend on the decisions you make, even before there is a fire.  Stay safe by going to a safer location early in the morning or the night before.  Homes cannot withstand fires in these conditions. You may not be able to leave, and help may not be available.
<b>Monitor conditions and official sources for warnings. Adhere to local regulations governing fire activity. Ensure any industrial or agricultural activities adhere to relevant industry guidelines. If a fire starts near you, take action immediately to protect your life. Do not wait for a warning.</b>				

# Low, Moderate and High Bushfire Risk Locations

Recognising the varied risk levels across our 22 locations, an overall risk rating assessment has been completed for each site. This assessment categorised each location into one of three risk levels: low, moderate or high.

LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	HIGH RISK
<p>(Consequence Low) Overall Risk Rating of Low</p>	<p>(Consequence Moderate) Overall Risk Rating of Medium</p>	<p>(Consequence Major) Overall Risk Rating of High, Very High or Extreme</p>
<p>Barrabool Hills Cemetery Colac Cemetery Geelong Eastern Cemetery Geelong Western Cemetery Gisborne Cemetery Grovedale Cemetery Leopold Cemetery Portarlington Cemetery</p>	<p>Beeac Cemetery Colac Memorial Park Drysdale Cemetery Flinders Memorial Park Geelong Memorial Park Mount Duneed Cemetery Mount Moriac Cemetery Queenscliff Cemetery Warncoort Cemetery Whoorel Cemetery Winchelsea Cemetery</p>	<p>Bellarine Memorial Park Bellbrae Cemetery* Bambra Cemetery* Lorne Cemetery Yaughar Cemetery</p>

\*Not GCT locations, but gravedigging is performed by GCT.

# Instructions for Low and Moderate Bushfire Risk Locations

**If there is an active bushfire in the local area with an Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message in place, the following will occur:**

- GCT supervisors will monitor weather, Fire Danger Rating information and current bushfire information and provide instructions to funeral directors regarding any restrictions for the day.
- If GCT employees or contractors need to travel through towns with a message in place to access any locations, and cannot travel an alternative route, the service will be postponed. GCT supervisors will brief funeral directors.
- For Moderate Risk locations listed above, the service and associated works will be postponed. GCT supervisors will brief funeral directors.

**If there are no active Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning messages in place, the following will occur for Moderate Risk locations:**

- All people on site are to comply with instructions from GCT employees, including contractors, funeral directors and their staff.
- If an Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message is issued whilst the service is taking place, immediate backfilling will take place and all people present will be instructed to leave immediately via the safest route, as recommended by emergency authorities.
- If an Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message is issued prior to the lowering of the coffin, the coffin is to be placed back into the hearse and all people present will be instructed to leave immediately via the safest route, as recommended by emergency authorities.

# Instructions for High Bushfire Risk Locations

## On days of High Fire Danger Rating:

- **Locations with a High Risk classification may have services that will be cancelled or postponed; or interrupted if a bushfire occurs.**
- In line with the 'CFA Guidelines for Conducting Small Events and Gatherings in High Fire Risk Locations,' consideration should be given to cancel, defer or relocate the service.
- GCT supervisors will monitor weather, Fire Danger Rating information and current bushfire information and provide instructions to funeral directors regarding any work restrictions for the day.
- If a current Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message is in place for a bushfire in the local area of the location (or for towns employees and contractors need to travel through to access the location), no cemetery works by any employees or contractors will be undertaken. Employees and contractors are not permitted to be on site without approval from GCT management.
- If there is no bushfire threat in the local area, the service may take place but the service is to be completed prior to 12:00PM with all mourners off site by this time. A full graveside service will be booked in no later than 11:00am. A committal service will be booked in no later than 11:30am. Other GCT operations are only to occur with the permission of GCT management.
- All people on site are to comply with instructions from GCT employees, including funeral directors and their staff.
- If an Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message is issued whilst the service is taking place, immediate backfilling is to take place and all people on site are to leave the site immediately via the safest route, as recommended by emergency authorities. The funeral director will stay at the location until all people attending the service have left the site. The funeral director must instruct people attending the service on safety and evacuation procedures, as directed by the GCT employees.
- If an Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message is issued prior to the lowering of the coffin, the coffin is to be placed back into the hearse and all people on site are to leave the site immediately via the safest route, as recommended by emergency authorities.

# Instructions for High Bushfire Risk Locations

## On days of Extreme Fire Danger Rating:

- **Locations with a High Risk classification may have services that will be cancelled or postponed; or interrupted if a bushfire occurs.**
- In line with the 'CFA Guidelines for Conducting Small Events and Gatherings in High Fire Risk Locations,' consideration should be given to cancel, defer or relocate the service.
- GCT supervisors will monitor weather, Fire Danger Rating information and current bushfire information and provide instructions to funeral directors regarding any work restrictions for the day.
- If a current Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message is in place for a bushfire in the local area of the site (or for towns that employees and contractors need to travel through to access the location), no cemetery works by any employees or contractors will be undertaken. Employees and contractors are not permitted to be on site without approval from GCT management.
- If there is no bushfire threat in the local area, the service can take place but the service is to be completed prior to 11:00AM with all mourners off site and backfilling completed. A full graveside service will be booked in no later than 9:30am. A committal service will be booked in no later than 10:00am.
- All people on site are to comply with instructions from GCT employees, including funeral directors and their staff.
- If an Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message is issued whilst the service is taking place, immediate backfilling is to take place and all people on site are to leave the site immediately via the safest route, as recommended by emergency authorities. The funeral director will stay on site until all people attending the service have left the site. The funeral director must instruct people attending the service on safety and evacuation procedures, as directed by the GCT employees.
- If an Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning message is issued prior to the lowering of the coffin, the coffin is to be placed back into the hearse and all people on site are to leave the site immediately via the safest route, as recommended by emergency authorities.



# Instructions for High Bushfire Risk Locations

## On days of Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating:

- **Locations with a High Risk classification will have services that will be cancelled or postponed.**
- In line with the 'CFA Guidelines for Conducting Small Events and Gatherings in High Fire Risk Locations,' on days of Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating, events will be cancelled, deferred or relocated.
- GCT supervisors will monitor weather, Fire Danger Rating information and current bushfire information and provide instructions to funeral directors regarding any work restrictions for the day.
- The locations will be closed to the public and this will be communicated via social media or other appropriate forums.
- No cemetery works by any employees or contractors will be undertaken. Employees and contractors are not permitted to be on site without approval from GCT management.

## Instructions for High Bushfire Risk Locations for days of Total Fire Ban

On any days declared as Total Fire Ban, GCT employees and contractors should follow the same Fire Danger Rating restrictions as listed in all instructions above. However, additional restrictions to what works can or cannot be undertaken apply.

For information on what activities can or cannot be undertaken on days of Total Fire Ban, refer to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) website here:

**[cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au)**



If you have any questions about these Guidelines,  
please contact our friendly team.

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[gct.net.au](http://gct.net.au)

