



VICTORIAN HIGH COUNTRY HUTS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Registered Number A0043804Y

ABN 90 874 369 153

www.hutsvictoria.org.au

FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY adopted 17 March 2007

The VHCHA has a clear obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our members, and to this end the following processes have been formulated to address the issue of fire risk management. It is also important to remember that you may not be able to rely on local water sources.

Prior to HMOs conducting activities in the areas of the Alpine National Park & State Forests or any VHCHA members venturing into these areas on behalf of the VHCHA the following must be adhered to:

- ♦ On the declaration of a Total Fire Ban in any HMO area where activities are to be undertaken, the activities are to be cancelled. This is not negotiable.
- ♦ Any issuing of a Fire Weather Warning by the Bureau of Meteorology for any part of the State, the activity in that area is cancelled. This is not negotiable.

During days of High to Very High Fire Danger, the following must be considered:

1. Ensure you have a **means of communication** with Park Victoria/DSE or someone at home, should the fire danger unexpectedly escalate.
2. Make a final check for **dry lightning strikes** into the area of activity in the 24 hours prior to conducting the activity.
3. **Access and egress routes** to the activity site - if there is only one route in/out of the site, give serious consideration to postponing the activity.
4. If the HMO considers that it is safe to continue with the activity, then on arrival at the site, a **fire action plan must be developed** and communicated to all participants. The fire action plan of the work party is such that the entire work party must be contained within the structure (i.e. hut) as to provide a suitable fire refuge and that the numbers entering the site shall be as small as practicable to complete works in a timely manner. If these cannot be achieved the activity is cancelled.
5. If proceeding with the activity, **check that your Parks Victoria or DSE contact agrees** with your assessment of the situation.
6. The work party shall immediately **cancel and enact their fire action plan** if any indication of fire is determined within their observable vicinity; evacuation is to be considered as the first option.
7. Above all, **if in doubt, don't go!** If out there and in doubt, go home!
8. After any fire activity there are many obvious and hidden dangers such as damaged infrastructure and falling trees so check with DSE and Parks Victoria for road closures in the parks and forests.

Before entering Alpine areas check the official websites or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 (free call).

Road closures - VicRoads website: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Fire on public land & road closures – Dept. of Sustainability & Environment - www.dse.vic.gov.au/fires

Fires on private land – Country Fire Authority - www.cfa.org.au

Parks related matters – Parks Victoria - www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Travellers in the fire-affected areas are also advised to listen to **ABC local radio**, ensure that family and friends know your whereabouts and be aware of increased traffic on roads and tracks.

Wildlife - In fire affected areas, surviving wildlife will be disorientated, smoke affected, very likely suffering burns to some degree, hungry and severely dehydrated. If you encounter injured wildlife please contact Wildline on 0417 380 687 or 0500 540 000. Experienced operators can offer advice and arrange assistance. For further information please go to the Wildlife Victoria website at www.wildlifevictoria.org.au.