

# Bushfire Management Overlay



## Information for land owners

July 2019

The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) is applied to land with the potential to be affected by extreme bushfires. New development and uses in the BMO may require a planning permit. This ensures that bushfire hazards such as vegetation, slope and site access are assessed, and that bushfire protection measures are in place to manage risk. This information sheet explains what being in the BMO means for you.

### 1. How do I check if my property is affected?

You can check if your land is covered by the BMO using [VicPlan](#), the State Government's online planning maps tool. For information on mapping criteria, planning permit requirements and general enquiries, please visit the Bushfire pages at [planning.vic.gov.au](#).

If you have specific questions about the BMO or other planning controls that aren't answered on the website, please contact your local council.

### 2. What mapping criteria have been used to apply the BMO?

Mapping criteria is developed by the DELWP, CFA and CSIRO based on the best available science and knowledge gained from previous bushfires.

#### Criteria 1: Vegetation type and size

- Forest, woodland, scrub, shrubland, mallee and rainforest vegetation that is 4 hectares or more in size.

#### Criteria 2: Ember buffer

- A 150m buffer is applied from the edge of vegetation identified in Criteria 1.

#### Criteria 3: Extreme risk inclusions

- Areas that fire authorities have advised may be subject to extreme landscape bushfires.



### 3. What if I think land does not meet the criteria for the updated mapping?

The BMO mapping is reviewed, on request, by DELWP in partnership with local councils and fire authorities. This ensures that bushfire hazards are identified and managed appropriately into the future.

If you think your land may not meet the mapping criteria, please contact your local council for advice. More information about requesting a review is in the Bushfire pages at [planning.vic.gov.au](http://planning.vic.gov.au).

### 4. Do I need a planning permit?

If the BMO applies, a planning permit may be needed to subdivide land, build a new house or significantly extend an existing house.

Other types of buildings and new uses may also need a planning permit. Please contact your local council for information and advice on applying for a planning permit.

### 5. What if there is an existing planning or building permit on the land?

Approved planning permits will continue to operate until expiry.

If there is an approved building permit but no planning permit, or you are proposing to extend or amend an existing planning permit you may need to satisfy bushfire protection measures. For more information, please refer to the *Transitional Provisions Fact Sheet* on the Bushfire Planning pages at [planning.vic.gov.au](http://planning.vic.gov.au) or contact your local council to confirm requirements.

### 6. Are there any planning permit exemptions?

There are some exemptions from applying for a planning permit under the BMO, including:

- Extensions to existing homes, less than 50% of the existing floor area
- Construction of outbuildings not used for accommodation, such as a shed or garage, if less than 100m<sup>2</sup>
- Vegetation removal that meets the 10/50 or the 10/30 rule.

Other exemptions may apply for some uses and development. Please check with your local council to confirm if exemptions apply.

### 7. What is the 10/50 rule?

The 10/50 rule allows owners to manage and clear certain vegetation that poses a bushfire hazard without a planning permit. This rule **only** applies in the BMO, and allows the clearing of:

- Any vegetation within 10 metres of an existing dwelling built before 10 September 2009
- Vegetation (excluding trees) within 50 metres of an existing dwelling built before 10 September 2009
- Vegetation within a combined maximum width of 4 metres on either side of an existing boundary fence built before 10 September 2009.

Vegetation removal that does not meet the above exemptions may require a planning permit. Please check with your local council.

For new buildings, clearing of vegetation for bushfire protection will be considered through the planning permit process.

### 8. What will I be required to do?

Although bushfire risk varies across the state, the bushfire protection measures in the BMO require future development and use to:

- Build to current bushfire construction standards
- Locate buildings away from the bushfire hazard
- Manage vegetation and fuel loads
- Install a water tank and provide fire truck access
- Refer the planning permit application to fire authorities, if required.

Vulnerable uses and developments such as schools and childcare facilities, and proposals in areas with significant landscape risk, may require additional protection measures. In these cases, broader landscape issues such as evacuation and availability of safer places must be considered as part of the planning permit process.

### 9. Will these measures increase costs?

Bushfire construction standards already apply under the Building Act and regulations. The bushfire protection measures required under the planning system are unlikely to substantially increase development costs.



## 10. Making a property more fire ready

The BMO does not require any changes to be made to existing homes, but you should consider taking the following steps to make your home safer:

- Move firewood away from your house and clear vegetation and fuel hazards (see 10/50 rule).
- Prepare your [Fire Ready Kit](#).
- Get advice on appropriate building insurance.
- Retrofit your home to make it safer.
- Stay informed on hot, dry, windy days by tuning into a broadcaster or downloading the [VicEmergency app](#).

Visit the [CFA website](#) for information on making your home and property safer.

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ISBN 978-1-76077-693-0 (pdf/online/MS word)

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