

This document outlines the requirements for managing a severe weather event relating to storms, floods and other extreme weather events. For the purposes of this plan "**other extreme weather events**" also includes Thunderstorm Asthma which is also known as 'epidemic thunderstorm asthma.

## Storm Information

### Definitions

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) define 'storm management' in a broad context that includes weather events such as windstorms, dust storms, tornados, snowstorms, blizzards, and severe thunderstorms include hailstorms and heavy rain leading to flash flooding.

EMV further divides severe storm-related weather events into two broader categories:

- Thunderstorm Events; and
- Other severe weather events not directly associated with severe thunderstorms, tropical cyclones, or bushfires.

Severe thunderstorms pose a risk to cemetery property, fleet, and land with additional threat of injury or death can occur.

In Victoria, thunderstorms, including Severe Thunderstorms, are most likely to occur [from October through to April](#).

### Thunderstorm Asthma

Department of Health advise the risk of Thunderstorm Asthma also known as epidemic thunderstorm asthma, is during the Victorian grass pollen season which is typically **1 October to 31 December** but is seasonal dependent.

Weather conditions associated with Thunderstorm Asthma include wind changes and strong gusts typically observed with thunderstorms<sup>1</sup>.

Pollen forecasts are dependent on many factors including wind, temperature, rainfall, relative humidity and satellite-estimated grass coverage and condition. Pollen collection during the grass pollen season helps to verify and refine the pollen forecasting model.

The risk forecasting system serves two purposes:

- to enable health and emergency service systems to be suitably prepared on days of increased risk; and
- to raise community awareness of possible events so, where possible, those at increased risk can take action to reduce the health impacts of a potential event.

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<sup>1</sup> [Department of Health Thunderstorm Asthma Risk Forecast](#)

Warnings According to Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), the weather warnings are issued giving the following conditions:

<b><u>Severe Thunderstorm Warning</u></b>	
<i>Warning issued if the severe phenomena is directly caused by a Thunderstorm</i>	
<b>Winds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustained winds of gale force (63 km/h) or more</li> <li>Gusts of 90 km/h or more.</li> </ul>
<b>Tornado</b>	All tornados.
<b>Flash Floods</b>	Heavy rainfall that is conducive to flash flooding or a reported flash flood.
<b>Large Hail</b>	Hail with a diameter of 2cm or greater.
<b>Thunderstorm Asthma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Triggered by an unusual mix of high levels of grass pollen and a certain type of thunderstorm.</li> <li>Risk forecasts are issued <b>twice daily</b> during the grass pollen season (October through December).</li> <li>They cover three consecutive days and use a colour-coded scale: green (low), orange (moderate) and red (high).</li> </ul>
<b>Lightning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential of lightning strikes within a specific area</li> <li>Lightning is an electrical discharge caused by imbalances between storm clouds and the ground, or within the clouds themselves.</li> <li>Most lightning occurs within the clouds.</li> </ul>

Warnings from EMV will usually be updated every six (6) hours, however more frequent warnings may be issued if required.

[VicEmergency](#) are the administrators of centralised information surrounding emergency warnings. Information can also be gathered via local radio, the VicEmergency app or via social media outlets such as Facebook or Twitter.

Example of the BOM warnings

⚠️ Severe Thunderstorm Warning UPDATED. There is now the risk of DAMAGING WIND and LARGE HAIL across parts of the Central, Northern Country, North Central, North East, and West and South Gippsland forecast districts. Full details: [ow.ly/sMJT50MV19E](https://ow.ly/sMJT50MV19E) #VicWeather



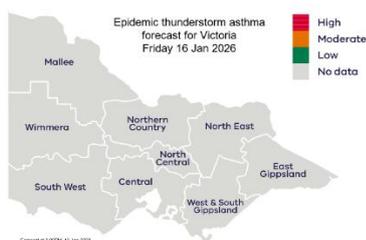
# Warning Levels

The following warning levels are used to categorise and communicate the level of the threat associated with a storm event.

	<p><b>Emergency Warning</b> You are in imminent danger and need to take action now. You will be impacted.</p>
	<p><b>Watch and Act (Warning)</b> An emergency is developing nearby. You need to take action now to protect yourself and others.</p>
	<p><b>Advice</b> An incident is occurring or has occurred in the area. Access information and monitor conditions.  Can also be used as a notification that activity in the area has subsided and is no longer a danger to you.</p>

The following warning levels are used to categorise and communicate the level of the threat associated with a Thunderstorm Asthma warning.

<p><b>High Risk</b></p>	<p>A high risk (red) forecast means that there is a high pollen forecast and severe thunderstorm(s) with strong winds are likely to be present increasing the risk of an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event occurring.</p>
<p><b>Moderate Risk</b></p>	<p>A moderate risk (orange) forecast means that one of the elements necessary for an event may be present (i.e. a high pollen forecast or a severe thunderstorm with strong winds) and there is a moderate chance of an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event occurring.</p>
<p><b>Low Risk</b></p>	<p>A low risk (green) forecast means that the elements necessary for an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event are not expected and an event is unlikely.</p>



[Department of Health Thunderstorm Asthma Risk Forecast](#)

## Storm Risk and Required Actions

Storm Risk / Hazard	Required Actions	Actioned By
<b>Road Closures and Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check travel routes to work locations for road closures caused by flooding or landslides.</li> <li>• Monitor river and creek levels and identify safe alternative return routes.</li> <li>• Inspect for fallen trees or hanging branches.</li> <li>• Inspect fencing that protects local livestock if damage is suspected.</li> <li>• Alert all workers to identified risks.</li> <li>• Inspect flood-affected areas only when safe to do so.</li> </ul>	Trust Members Staff and/or Volunteers
<b>Site Flooding – Roads and Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue monitoring site conditions, noting potential flooding from upstream rainfall.</li> <li>• Ensure barricades remain in place to restrict access to affected areas.</li> <li>• Consider partial or full site closures where safe access or egress cannot be maintained.</li> <li>• Increase inspection frequency in areas at risk of grave slumping.</li> </ul>	Trust Members and/or Staff
<b>Grave Slumping and Burial Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure appropriate equipment is available if burial services are scheduled.</li> <li>• Exercise additional caution when operating plant and equipment due to unstable ground conditions.</li> </ul>	Trust Members and/or Staff Grave Digging Contractors
<b>Site Conditions – Services and Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with funeral directors, family contacts, or event organisers to ensure they are informed of site conditions and that contingency arrangements are in place.</li> </ul>	Trust Members and/or Staff
<b>Strong Winds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware that wind speeds averaging 48–61 km/h may trigger Strong Wind Warnings.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure or store loose items that could become airborne.</li> <li>• Park vehicles away from trees and structures where possible.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do not commence tasks that cannot be stopped immediately.</li> <li>• If thunder is audible, lightning is close enough to strike.</li> </ul>	Trust Members Staff and/or Volunteers
<b>Lightning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop what you are doing, seek shelter in a substantial building or a hard-topped metal vehicle.</li> <li>• Suspend burial services until conditions are safe.</li> <li>• Move to a safe area.</li> </ul>	All Trust Members, Staff, Contractors, and Volunteers

## After a Storm and Severe Weather Event

Action / Control	Responsibility	Commentary
Check on all staff for safety and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and /or Staff</li> </ul>	Confirm all staff, contractors and volunteers are safe. Identify any injuries or wellbeing concerns and provide access to support services if required.
Inspect facilities and infrastructure for damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and / or Staff</li> </ul>	Conduct an initial damage assessment of buildings, structures, utilities, and assets as soon as it is safe to do so.
Arrange repairs for identified damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and / or Staff</li> </ul>	Prioritise critical repairs that affect safety, access, or essential operations. Engage contractors as required.
Reinstate equipment and systems only when safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and /or Staff</li> </ul>	Equipment and systems must not be recommissioned until inspected and deemed safe for use.
Isolate damaged electrical or mechanical equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and / or Staff</li> </ul>	Affected equipment must be tagged <b>"Out of Service"</b> and isolated for repair, reconditioning, or replacement.
Restore power only after inspection by a competent person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and /or Staff</li> </ul>	Electrical systems must be inspected and cleared by a suitably qualified person before power is restored.
Inspect paths and roadways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and /or Staff</li> </ul>	Identify hazards such as subsidence, erosion, debris, or flooding that may restrict safe access or egress.
Inspect grounds and work areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and / or Staff</li> </ul>	Assess for instability, waterlogging, erosion, or other hazards impacting staff and public safety.
Inspect for tree damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust / and or staff</li> <li>• Qualified Arborist</li> </ul>	Identify fallen trees, hanging branches (tree hangers), or unstable trees requiring immediate attention.