Beechworth

Community Information Guide - Bushfire

Prepare · Act · Survive

Bushfire rating: VERY HIGH to EXTREME

Fire Authorities have assessed Beechworth interface as having an EXTREME bushfire risk, Beechworth township as having a LOW bushfire risk and Fighting Gully Road as having a VERY HIGH bushfire risk. Local residents and visitors should be prepared for fire and have a plan for when the Fire Danger Rating is SEVERE, EXTREME or CODE RED.

This community information guide includes a map containing key elements of Beechworth's bushfire risk. At the time of publication, there are TWO designated Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort (see page 13) at Beechworth.

Important community bushfire safety information is provided to help you make informed decisions about how to survive a bushfire, whether you're a local resident or a visitor to the area. Planning and preparation can save lives in a bushfire. Use this community information guide to help you and your family to prepare.

INDIGO

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Prepare

It's important if you live, work and travel in this area, to plan what you will do if a bushfire threatens.

Understand your bushfire risk

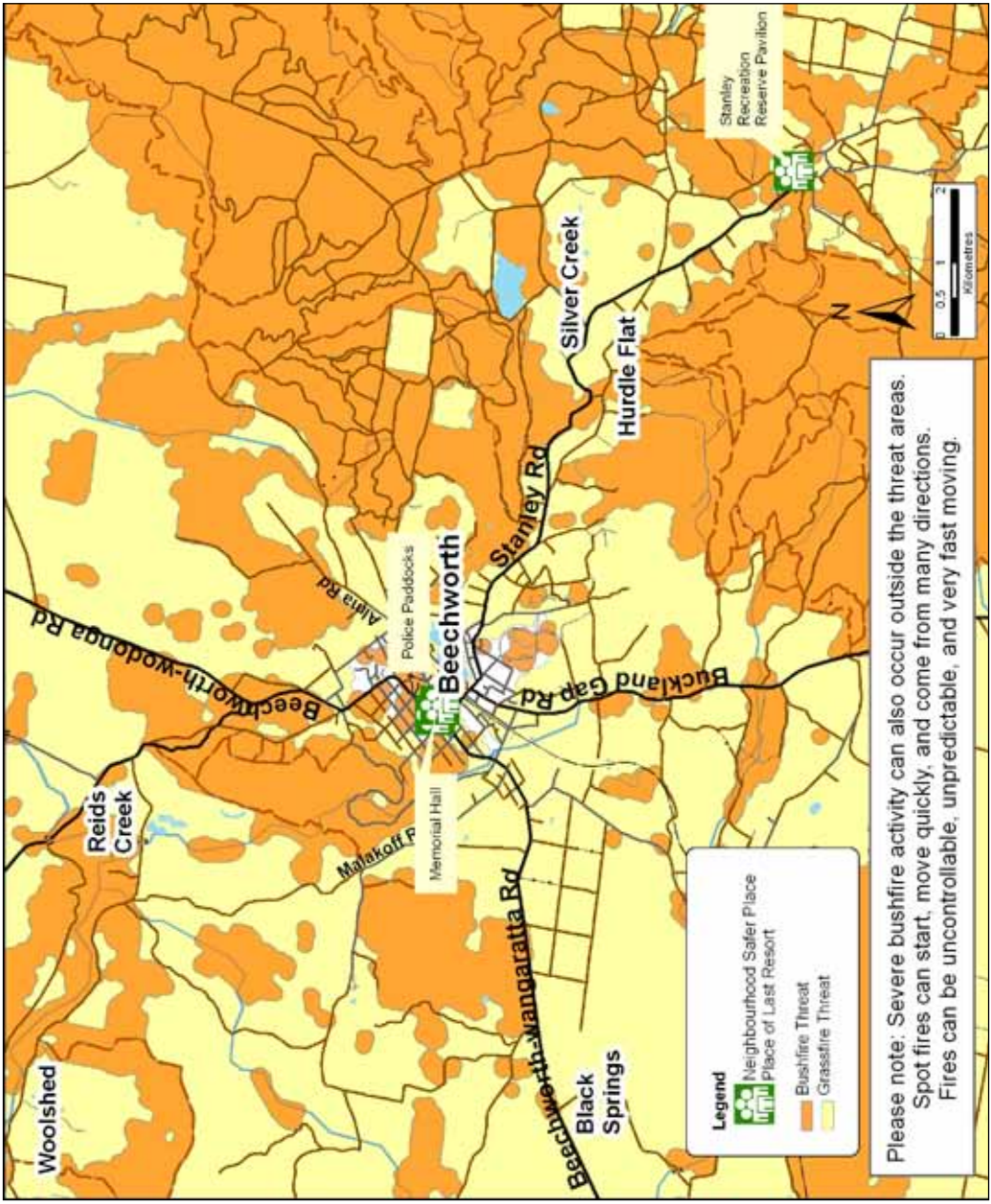
- Beechworth interface has been assessed as having an EXTREME bushfire risk, Beechworth township has been assessed as having a LOW bushfire risk and Fighting Gully Road has been assessed as having a VERY HIGH bushfire risk in accordance with the Victorian Fire Risk Register.
- Beechworth has experienced major fires in the past.
- Bushfires move quickly uphill, so properties situated within the town and on town edges against bushland will be at greater risk.
- It is impossible for emergency services to protect every individual home or property.
- Remember, your usual travel routes may be limited or blocked.
- Know the daily Fire Danger Rating in the district where you live or travel **www.cfa.vic.gov.au**

Reduce your bushfire risk

- Prepare your home and property against bushfire, burning embers and radiant heat. A well-prepared home has a greater chance of not being destroyed by bushfire.
- Encourage and assist your neighbours to reduce their bushfire risk, as this may help make your property safer.
- **Develop and practise your Bushfire Survival Plan.**
- **You will also need to plan for your pets' safety.**
- You can attend or join:
  - A local Fire Ready Victoria meeting
  - A Bushfire Planning Workshop
  - A neighbourhood Community Fireguard Group
- **The Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool is available to help individuals assess the bushfire risk on their own property.**

You can download the CFA FireReady kit, containing the full Leaving Early Planning Template from **cfa.vic.gov.au**, or call **1800 226 226 (TTY 1800 122 969)**

Beechworth Bushfire Threat Map



Prepare

FACT

It is your responsibility to prepare yourself, your family and your home for the threat of bushfire. You need to act decisively in accordance with your **Bushfire Survival Plan** when fires threaten. Your survival depends on your preparations and the decisions you make.

Leave early

Leaving early is always the safest option.

Leaving early is more important when:

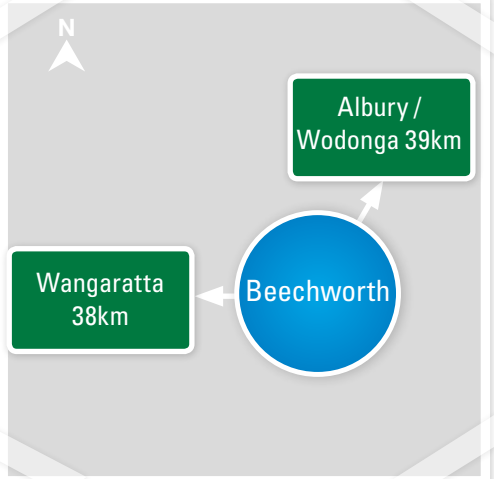
- The Fire Danger Rating is CODE RED. Homes aren't designed to withstand a bushfire during these conditions. Any fire that starts and takes hold will be so intense that you won't be safe to stay and defend your home – no matter how well prepared it is.
- There are children, elderly or disabled people in your home. People who are vulnerable due to age, health or any other reason, should always leave early.
- You have not prepared yourself or your property to give you and your home the best level of protection from a fire.
- Your house is not defendable. Some homes are not safe to defend because of their location or construction.

If you plan to leave, then you should leave well before a fire reaches your area and well before you are under threat. Follow the actions recommended for the Fire Danger Rating of the day (see pages 6 and 7). **Visit CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au**

Where will you go?

- Is it a safe choice? You may choose somewhere that suits your personal needs and circumstances, e.g. a family member's house in an urban area with a backyard for your pet, or shopping centre complex, or central business district of a large regional centre.
- If you don't have any other options, you may wish to consider the following townships: **Albury/Wodonga or Wangaratta.**
- Always tell family, friends or neighbours that you are leaving and where you are planning to go.

If you - or someone you care for - will need help to prepare and leave early when there is high fire risk, obtain a Red Cross **Bushfire: Preparing to leave early guide** at **www.cfa.vic.gov.au** or request a copy by phoning the **VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226**



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

PREPARE. You must make important decisions before the fire season starts.

ACT. The higher the Fire Danger Rating, the more dangerous the conditions.

SURVIVE. Fires may threaten without warning, so you need to know what you will do to survive.

- Where the fire danger is Extreme or Code Red, leaving early is the safest option.
- Leaving early can be the night before or early in the day.

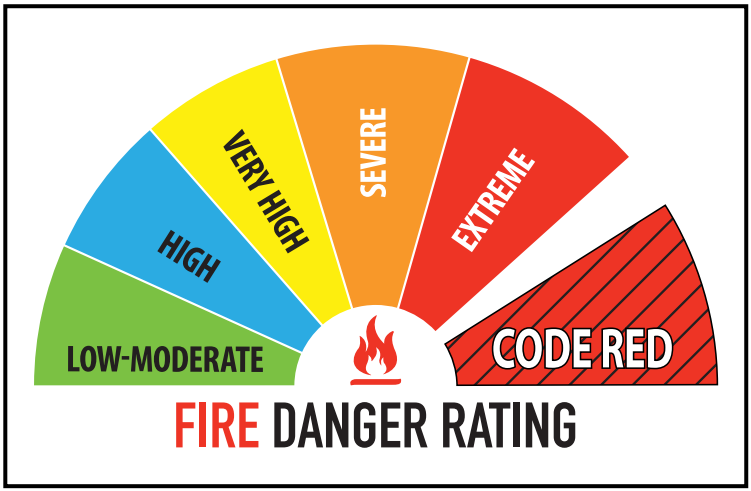
How you can stay in touch

- Bookmark the VicEmergency webpage (www.emergency.vic.gov.au).
- Follow CFA on Twitter (www.twitter.com/cfa_updates).
- Join the CFA Facebook page (www.facebook.com/cfavic).
- Access the CFA mobile website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/mobile
- Download the VicEmergency app if you have a smartphone or tablet Apple (App Store) and Android (Google play).
- Beware, cordless home phones will NOT work if the mains power supply is cut.
- Wireless communications, internet and landlines may vary between service providers.
- Mobile phone coverage in and around Beechworth is generally good, but may not be accessible during times of emergency and may vary between service providers.
- There is no community-alerting siren operating in this township.
- Sirens sounding nearby are a trigger for you to seek information, as they may indicate fire activity in your area. When you hear a siren, further information may be available via ABC local radio, commercial and designated community radio stations, and SKY News TV (see page 16).
- Regularly observe what is happening outside and check all information sources.

A written fire plan may save your life - would you remember a plan that's just in your head if your surrounded by smoke, heat, flame and noise?

Act

Note your district's Fire Danger Rating daily as your trigger to act.



Beechworth is in the North East Fire District

Triggers

Actions

What does it mean?	What should I do?
These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire. Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions. The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas.	Leaving high risk bushfire areas the night before or early in the day is your safest option – do not wait and see. Avoid forested areas, thick bush and long, dry grass. Know your trigger. Make a decision about: –when you will leave –where you will go –how you will get there –when you will return –what you will do if you cannot leave
Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Spot fires will start, move quickly and will come from many directions. Homes that are situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, that are well prepared and actively defended, may provide safety. You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.	Consider staying with your property only if you are prepared to the highest level. This means your home needs to be situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, you are well prepared and you can actively defend your home if a fire starts. If you are not prepared to the highest level, leaving high risk bushfire areas early in the day is your safest option. Be aware of local conditions and get information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV, going to **www.cfa.vic.gov.au** or call the VicEmergency Hotline on **1800 226 226**..
Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable. Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety. You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.	Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety – check your bushfire survival plan. If you are not prepared, leaving bushfire prone areas early in the day is your safest option. Be aware of local conditions and get information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV, going to **www.cfa.vic.gov.au** or call the VicEmergency Hotline on **1800 226 226**..
If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions and homes can provide safety. Be aware of how fires can start and minimise the risk. Controlled burning off may occur in these conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits apply.	Check your bushfire survival plan. Monitor conditions. Action may be needed. Leave if necessary.

Act Planned Emerge

Understanding Warnings

- A warning will be issued when any type of emergency could impact you or your property.
- Warnings aim to provide you with the best advice and information on what is happening to help you make good decisions to protect yourself and others.
- Remember: don't rely on an official warning to leave. Emergencies can start quickly and threaten you within minutes.
- Always use more than one source for your emergency information.

Evacuation

You may be advised to evacuate by police or emergency services. In fast-moving situations, you may not always receive a warning or recommendation to evacuate. Stay informed, aware of local conditions and the Fire Danger Rating, so that you can plan ahead and make the right decision in a bushfire. Leaving early is always the safest option. Refer to 'Community Evacuation Information', available at **www.police.vic.gov.au**

Should a recommendation to evacuate be made, the following advice would apply:

- A fire is rapidly advancing.
- If advised, travel to the evacuation destination as advised by emergency services.
- Strictly follow all instructions and advice.

Community information

- A newsletter containing updates for communities affected by an emergency.
- Can also be used as notification that an incident has occurred but there is no threat to community.

Advice

- 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.

Warning (Watch & Act)

- An emergency is developing nearby. You need to take action now to protect yourself and others.

Emergency Warning

- You are in immanent danger and need to take action immediately.

Prepare to evacuate/evacuate now

- An evacuation is recommended or procedures are in place to evacuate.

ncy Service Actions

Fire Agencies

- Saving life is the highest priority
- Issue advice and warnings
- Control and manage fire fighting activities
- Where safe to do so, protect:
  - Identified community assets
  - Property
  - The environment

Victoria Police

- Keep people safe and property secure
- Control traffic in bushfire areas
- Manage evacuations
- Register people who have evacuated
- Work with other agencies to keep the community informed

Beechworth

- Residents and visitors, know your risk and act in accordance with the Fire Danger Rating triggers on pages 6 and 7
- Water supplies and power cannot always be guaranteed
- Regularly take note of what is happening outside in all directions
- Look and smell for signs of fire

Indigo Shire

- Activate Municipal Emergency Management Plans
- Support and work with Emergency Services and responding Agencies
- Assist with the provision of local information to the Community and Media
- Activate and support Emergency Relief Centres when required.
- Assist and support the Community to recover from the emergency

VicRoads

- Manage road closures on advice from Police and Fire Agencies
- Undertake safety inspections of roads prior to opening
- Provide advice to communities about road closures

Bushfire Survival

WHAT TO DO

Leave Early

- When the Fire Danger Rating is Code Red, leaving early is always the safest option
- Leave early destinations could include homes of families & friends who live outside the risk area, a nearby town or built up area

Always the safest option

Well Prepared

If leaving the high-risk area is no longer an option, there may be options close to where you are that could protect you. These include:

Your safety is

For more information on how to prepare your own

www.cfa.vic.gov.au **VicEmergency Hotline**

Options

- A well prepared home (yours or your neighbours') that you can actively defend on Severe & Extreme Fire Danger Rating days only
- Private Bushfire Shelter (bunker) that meets current regulations
- Designated community fire refuge

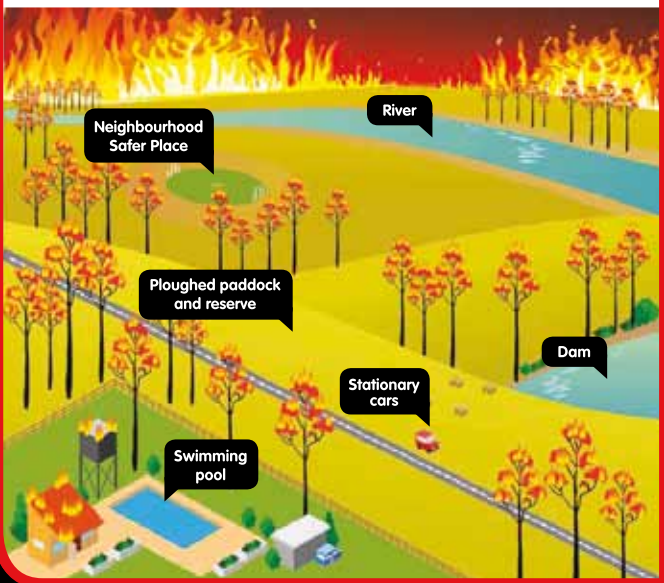
not guaranteed

Last Resort

In situations where no other options are available to you, taking shelter in one of the below may protect from radiant heat:

- Neighbourhood Safer Place (place of last resort)
- Stationary car in a clear area
- Ploughed paddock or reserve
- Body of water (i.e. beach, swimming pool, dam, river, etc.)

High risk of trauma, injury or death



Bushfire Survival Plan:
1800 226 226

Survive

Fire may threaten without warning, so you need to know what to do to survive.

Community Fire Refuges

- A Community Fire Refuge is a purpose built or modified building that provides short-term protection from radiant heat and embers. Community Fire Refuges are designed to be a last resort option if your personal survival plan has failed during a bushfire event.
- There is **NO** Community Fire Refuge located in Beechworth.

Activate your bushfire survival plan early

- Remember, bushfires can happen when least expected. Planning and preparation are essential.
- A last-minute decision may cost you and your family your lives.
- **You may not receive an official warning about a bushfire.**
- Do NOT expect a fire truck at your property.
- Your survival and safety depend on the decisions you make.
- Always tell family, friends or neighbours what you are planning to do.
- Observe the weather, including the direction the wind is blowing.
- Watch what is happening around you and where a bushfire may be located.

Leaving late is DANGEROUS

- Travel on roads in this area during a fire is dangerous.
- You may be impacted by fire, and visibility may be poor due to smoke.
- The roads may be blocked due to falling trees, collisions or emergency vehicles.
- Usual travel routes may not be accessible.
- Don't assume you can turn back, as the road may have become blocked behind you.
- Lives are more likely to be lost when people make a last-minute decision to flee a bushfire.
- The risk of being overrun by bushfire is very real.
- People caught in the open are likely to face severe and often fatal levels of radiant heat.
- Leaving late is a DEADLY option.

Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort

- SURVIVAL IS NOT GUARANTEED.
- It should only be used if your Bushfire Survival Plan fails and you have nowhere else to go.
- Welfare facilities will not be available.
- It may not provide shelter from smoke and embers.
- The closest Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort (NSP) in the vicinity of Beechworth are located at:

Beechworth Memorial Hall	Ford Street (between Williams Street and Camp Street) Beechworth 3747
Police Paddocks	High Street (between Williams Street and Camp Street - Rear of Police Station) Beechworth 3747

See map on page 15 for Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort locations.

! High risk journeys to Neighbourhood Safer Places during a fire and outside of your immediate area are not recommended.

Relocation checklist

- Protective clothing made from natural fibres ☐
- Woollen blankets ☐
- Water and medications ☐
- Toiletries and sanitary supplies ☐
- Mobile phone and charger ☐
- Important documents ☐
- First aid kit ☐
- Cash, ATM/credit cards ☐
- Valuables and photos ☐
- Battery powered radio ☐

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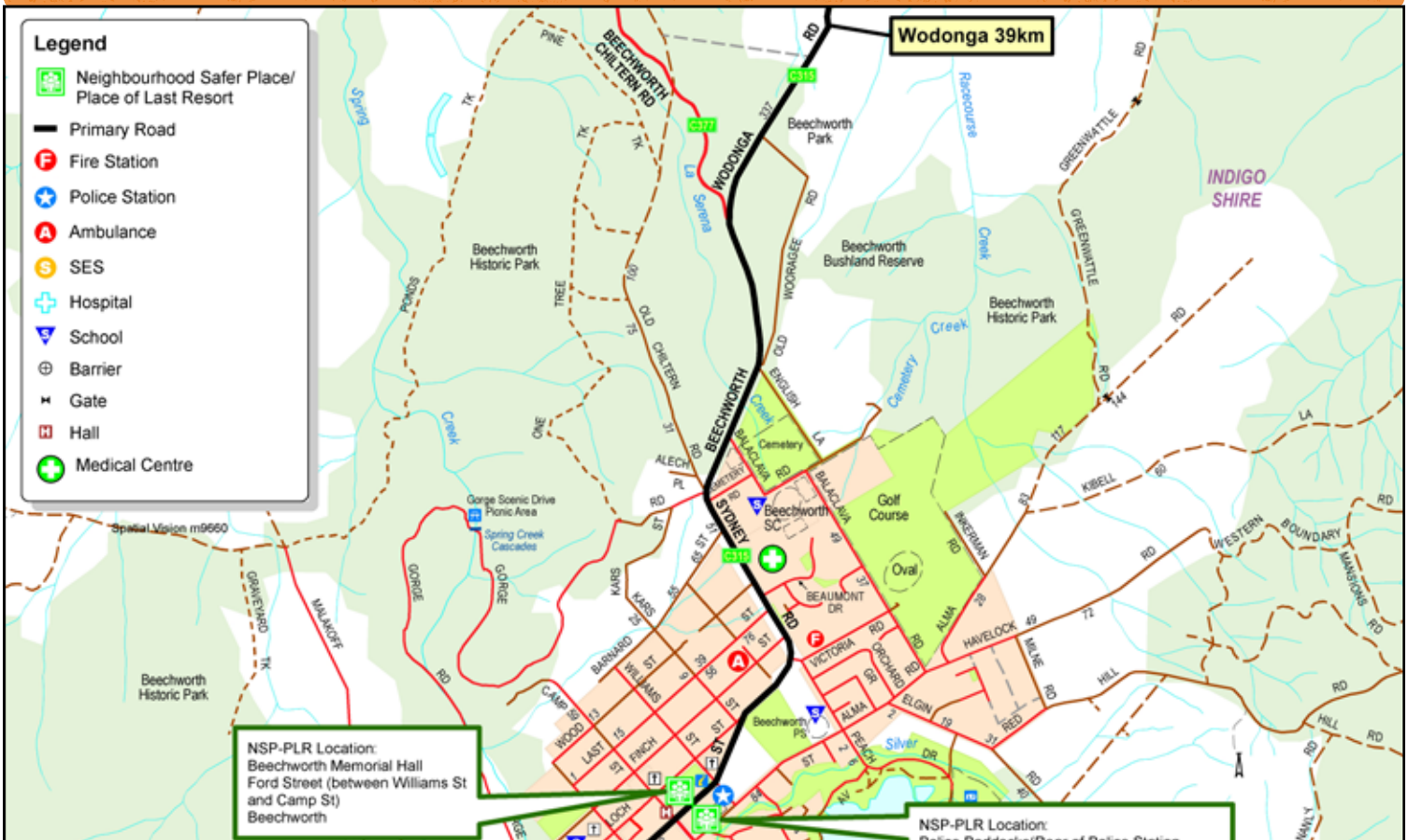
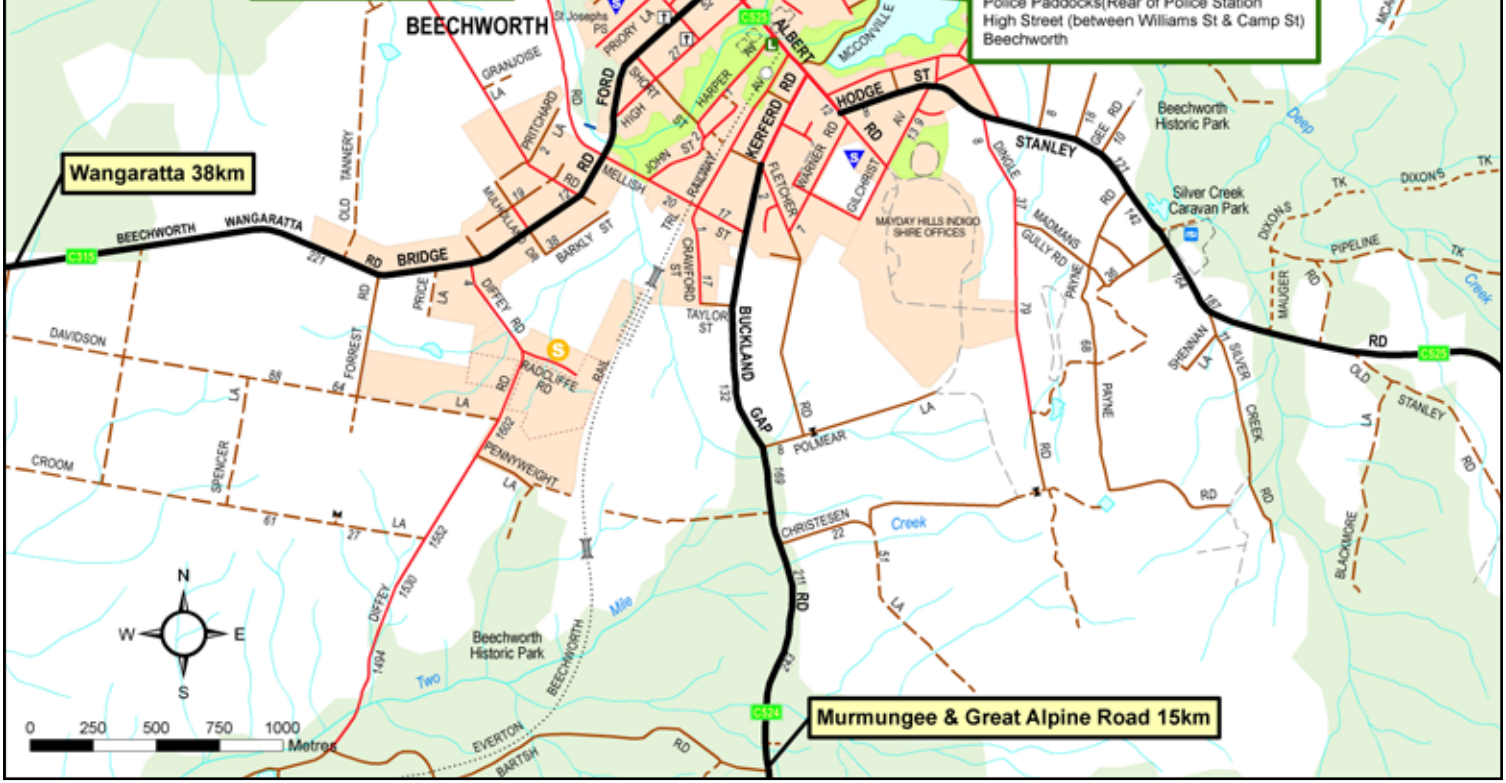
Beechworth Community Map





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In EMERGENCY dial 000 (TTY 106)

Do not call Triple Zero for information or advice. Calling Triple Zero unnecessarily may put others who are in a genuine emergency situation at risk.

VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226

Emergency Contact Information

Download the VicEmergency app, the official Victorian Government App for access to community information and warnings.

Monitor the VicEmergency App and tune into your emergency broadcaster and VicEmergency website (www.emergency.vic.gov.au) on days of high fire danger ratings is the most reliable way of staying informed. Mains power may be unavailable, or fail, during fire and emergencies – keep a battery powered radio available.

Emergency Broadcasters: Sky News TV, ABC 106.5 FM, 1494 AM 2AY, HIT 104.9 FM & MMM 105.7 FM, 102.1 Edge FM, 3NE 1566 AM.

Road closures:	13 11 70 www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
National Park, State Forest and Park closures:	13 19 63 www.parkweb.vic.gov.au
School, early childhood services and bus route closures:	www.education.vic.gov.au
24 Hour Wildlife Emergency:	13 000 WILDLIFE or 1300 094 535
24 Hour NURSE-ON-CALL:	1300 60 60 24

Bushfire Information:

VicEmergency website:	www.emergency.vic.gov.au
CFA website:	www.cfa.vic.gov.au
Follow CFA on Twitter:	www.twitter.com/cfa_updates
Join the CFA Facebook page:	www.facebook.com/cfavic
FFMVic website (Planned burning):	www.ffm.vic.gov.au

Further Information

Dept of Human Services:	www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency
Forest Fire Management Victoria:	13 61 86 www.ffm.vic.gov.au
Weather:	www.bom.gov.au
CFA District Office:	(02) 6043 4400 **(non emergency calls only)**
Indigo Shire:	1300 365 003 www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au

Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired? **Contact the National Relay Service on 1800 555 677** if you use a **TTY, 1800 555 727** if you use Speak and Listen, and then ask for: **1800 226 226**

Community Information Guides are dynamic documents which are updated regularly, please visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au/guides to confirm the most up to date version.