

TRAVELLING IN QUEENSLAND

Your traveller guide to being prepared for Queensland emergencies.



As you travel in Queensland, you will be driving through some of the most diverse land in Australia, bringing a range of conditions and the potential for natural disasters.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) personnel respond to emergencies all year, including bushfires, cyclones, floods, and severe storms. It is important to prepare for these dangers when travelling in our state.

The effects of climate change are being felt with traditional storm and bushfire seasons extending well beyond the spring and summer months. Climate science predicts that in the coming years, Queensland will experience higher temperatures with hotter and more frequent hot days, harsher fire weather, and reduced rainfall with more intense storms and cyclones. It is important you are prepared for these dangers when travelling in Queensland.

When is bushfire season?

Fire season in Queensland often begins in July and runs through until October, but can extend through to February. These times can vary each year depending on the condition of local bushland, long-term climate conditions, and short-term weather events.



When is storm season?

Storm and cyclone season in Queensland runs from October through to the end of April. During this time cyclones and severe storms with hail, lightning, damaging winds and flooding are more likely to impact the state.



PLAN AHEAD

It's really important to research the places you plan to visit to understand the types of emergencies that you may face. Listen to local warnings and advice to stay safe as the environments you are travelling through may be very different than at home.

Bushfire

Bushfires move fast, can pose a serious threat to life and can be highly destructive. If bushfires are burning in the places you hope to travel to or are already travelling through, you should work out a new route so you can avoid the affected areas. You may be able to return to your original travel route in a few days if the conditions change.

The Bureau of Meteorology in consultation with QFES publishes the fire danger ratings for Queensland as an early indicator of the potential fire danger. This information is published on the QFES website at www.qfes.qld.gov.au and can help you plan your travel during periods of high fire danger.

Cyclones, Floods, Severe Weather and Storms

Cyclones and severe storms can bring strong winds, heavy rain, lightning, hail, and flooding which may affect your travel plans. When travelling stay aware of weather forecasts for the areas you plan to visit. The Bureau of Meteorology provides up to date forecasts and warnings which can be accessed at www.bom.gov.au or by listening to local radio broadcasts.



BEFORE YOUR TRIP



Plan out the route you will be taking on your trip and download or purchase maps.



Check the weather conditions for the areas you will be travelling in, including the fire danger ratings (available at www.qfes.qld.gov.au) and severe weather predictions. Be prepared to change your plans if conditions change.



Let a friend or family member know where you will be travelling and keep them up to date if your plans change.



Make sure your vehicle is properly maintained and serviced for your trip. Check your lights work and your windscreen is clear.



Pack a vehicle emergency kit.



Check your tyres are appropriately inflated and have good tread. Make sure to check your spare tyre too.



Check fire safety equipment such as smoke alarms, fire blankets, and extinguishers are in good working condition and make sure you know how to use them.



If you are travelling in a caravan or motorhome, test your smoke alarm is working correctly.



Check that all gas cylinders are turned off and secured.



Secure loose items inside your vehicle, caravan and / or motorhome for travelling.



Label any chemicals and securely store them away from access by children.



Check your vehicle insurance policy is current and that it provides suitable cover for your trip. Consider including the belongings you are travelling with.



If you are hiring a vehicle, be aware of what is and is not included in your agreement. Take photos of the vehicle before you leave.



»

Charge your phone and pack your phone charger. Consider travelling with a portable power bank to keep your phone battery charged.



»

If you are travelling during bushfire season, prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan at www.qfes.qld.gov.au so you know what to do and where to go in an emergency.

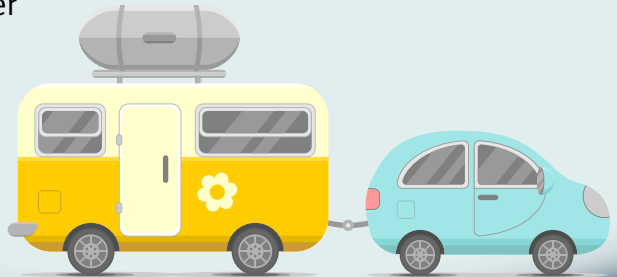


»

Consider if you need roadside assistance coverage.

Your Vehicle Emergency Kit

- wool blankets
- first aid kit
- protective clothing
- drinking water
- torch
- battery operated radio
- spare batteries



ON THE ROAD



Always avoid travelling in areas where bushfires are burning, or storms, flooding and cyclones are predicted.



Stay alert and drive to conditions:

- » Fog and heavy rain can make it difficult to see.
- » Smoke from bushfires often crosses roads and highways and can reduce visibility.



Follow advice given by police and emergency services personnel if roads are closed. Information on road closures and road works is available at qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/.



Do not drive into flood water:

- » Flood water can hide dangers such as washed away sections of road.
- » The unpredictable strength and depth of underwater currents could easily cause your vehicle to float away.



Listen for alerts and warnings. Stay tuned to local radio stations for weather and emergency updates in the area.

STAY TUNED:



Find the local ABC Radio Station
www.abc.net.au/radio/newsradio



QFES Facebook
[@QldFireandEmergencyServices](https://www.facebook.com/QldFireandEmergencyServices)



QFES Twitter
[@QldFES](https://twitter.com/QldFES)



Find the local commercial radio
www.commercialradio.com.au



QFES website
www.qfes.qld.gov.au

INFORMATION AND WARNINGS

The Australian warning system has three warning levels - Advice, Watch and Act, and Emergency Warning. Official warnings are issued when community members need to take proactive action to keep themselves safe. It is up to you to take notice, seek information, make decisions and act.

Warnings are published widely on response agency websites, social media platforms and often shared by media outlets. Each warning level will include a set of actions for the particular threat. You need to be prepared to take the recommend actions.

ADVICE

There is no immediate danger but you need to stay informed in case the situation changes.



WATCH AND ACT

There's a heightened level of threat and conditions are changing. Act now to protect yourself and your family.



EMERGENCY WARNING

You're in danger and need to take life-saving action immediately.



CAMPSITE TIPS



If you are camping in a national park, check to see if you need a permit to camp or light fires. Park alerts, including fire bans, for national parks in Queensland can be accessed at www.parks.des.qld.gov.au.



Pick a cleared space with good access and escape routes.



Avoid camping in dry riverbeds, under large trees that may drop branches and areas prone to flooding, high winds, or bushfires.



Check the area for any hazards before setting up. Look for previous campfires covered with sand or dirt, and rubbish (broken glass or cans) left by previous campers.



Check the weather forecast for your location and tune into local radio stations to stay up to date with conditions.



If there are strong winds in the area, make sure to tie down your tent, caravan, or mobile home and secure any loose items around your campsite.



Don't cook or smoke in tents. Never leave your cooking unattended.



Make sure tea towels and other flammable items are kept away from cooking appliances and heat sources such as gas stoves, heaters, and campfires.



CAMPFIRE TIPS

Before lighting a fire, check for fire bans or restrictions in your area. Call the Fire Ban Information Line on 1800 020 440 (free call) or visit www.qfes.qld.gov.au. In Queensland, during a fire ban, you cannot use an open fire for cooking or warmth. You can however use a gas or electric barbecue for cooking.



Make sure your campfire is a safe distance from tents and other camping equipment, especially flammable items such as gas cylinders and fuel cans.



Light your campfire in a cleared area, free of long grass, scrub and overhanging branches.



Use an existing barbecue pit or build a surround out of large rocks where possible.



Never use any kind of flammable liquid on a fire; even when you are trying to get it started.



Monitor the campfire at all times. Do not leave a fire burning overnight.



Have a water source ready to extinguish the fire. Always use water to extinguish your fire, never sand or dirt.

First Aid for Burns

- Stop, drop and roll if clothes are on fire.
- Smother the flames with water or a coat/blanket made of natural fibres.
- Call Triple Zero (000) and stay on the phone with the emergency operator until they hang up.
- Cool the burnt area as soon as possible by applying cool running water to the affected area for at least 20 minutes.



WHERE TO GO IF THERE ARE BUSHFIRES

The safest option for your survival is to avoid travelling in areas where bushfires are burning. Adjust your travel plans. You may be able to return to the area once the threat has passed.

If you are travelling during Queensland's bushfire season, you need to be prepared to change your plans at short notice to avoid any dangers.

If you are unable to leave an area, as a last resort, you may be able to seek shelter at a neighbourhood safer place. Some areas in Queensland have identified a neighbourhood safer place - an open space or building where people may gather, as a last resort, to seek shelter from a bushfire. Your safety is not guaranteed in all circumstances and there are some limitations:

- Firefighters may not be present, if they are involved in the operational response at other locations.
- Neighbourhood safer places do not cater for animals or pets.
- Neighbourhood safer places do not provide meals or amenities.
- Neighbourhood safer places may not provide shelter from the elements, particularly flying embers.
- If you have special needs, you should consider what assistance you may require.

A list of neighbourhood safer places sorted by local government area can be found at www.qfes.qld.gov.au.



IF YOU'RE CAUGHT IN THE PATH OF A BUSHFIRE

Bushfires can occur without warning and can quickly affect your travel plans. Plan for the unexpected by considering alternatives, like different travel routes. If you find yourself caught in the path of a bushfire, perform a U-turn and drive to safety. If time permits, notify the fire brigade of your location by phoning Triple Zero (000).

If you can't escape the path of the fire:



Pull over to the side of the road and park in a clear area away from trees with the vehicle facing the fire front.



Stay with your vehicle - do not get out and run.



Leave the engine running and turn on your vehicle headlights and hazards.



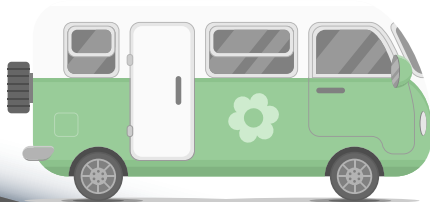
Close all vents and windows, cover yourself with a woollen blanket and shelter below the window level.



Drink water to stay hydrated.



Once the fire front passes, get out of the vehicle and check for burning fires. Don't attempt to move the vehicle until it is safe to do so.



**TO REPORT A FIRE
PHONE TRIPLE ZERO (000)**



WHEN SEVERE WEATHER THREATENS

The weather in Queensland varies significantly. Cyclones and severe storms can bring strong winds, heavy rain, lightning, hail, and flooding.



Tune into local radio stations for storm warnings and updates.



Tie down your caravan, motorhome or tent securely.



Park vehicles under a solid shelter, or cover with firmly tied tarps or blankets. Apply the brake and chock your wheels. Avoid parking under trees.



Shelter and secure pets and animals.



Put all of your equipment inside including annexes, bikes, chairs and any loose items that could blow around in strong winds.



»

Put valuables, medications and spare warm clothing in plastic bags with your vehicle emergency kit.



»

Seek shelter under a established structure or in a hard top vehicle. Avoid small open structures or fabric tents. Never shelter in an open space or under trees.



»

If driving, don't drive into water flowing over roads. There may be strong undercurrents that could sweep your vehicle away or hazards hidden under the water.

IF YOU'RE CAUGHT OUTDOORS IN SEVERE WEATHER



Don't drive, walk, ride or swim through flood waters. Remember, if it's flooded, forget it.



If driving, stop clear of trees, powerlines, and creeks.



Seek shelter immediately in an established structure or a hard top vehicle. If sheltering in a vehicle, keep hands away from the doors and turn off electrical equipment.



In case of lightning strike, stay well clear of metal poles, fences, clotheslines. Don't handle items such as fishing rods, umbrellas, and golf clubs.



If you are caught far from shelter, move away from higher ground and crouch alone with your feet together and your head low. Remove metal objects from your person.



Stay sheltered until 30 minutes after the last thunder clap is heard.



Avoid travelling in open vehicles, riding horses or bicycles.



If you are in the water swimming, surfing, canoeing, immediately head to land and seek shelter.



Keep well away from fallen power lines. Report fallen power lines to Energex (for south east Queensland) by calling 13 19 62 or Ergon Energy by calling 13 16 70.

**To report life threatening emergencies
including shocks or tingles from lightning strikes
call Triple Zero (000).**

BUSHWALKING SAFETY



Know your limits and be realistic about your physical abilities and skills. Choose walking tracks based upon the abilities of your groups slowest walker.



Before you leave, know what to do in case of extreme weather events such as storms, cyclones, bushfires and floods.



Avoid bushwalking on days with a high to catastrophic fire danger ratings or when storms, heatwaves, and severe weather are predicted.



Tell someone where you plan to go and who is going with you. Let them know when you return safely.



Note features on your map that may be a safe place to seek shelter from severe weather or fire. Maintain your navigation so you always know where you are.



Consider carrying a global positioning system (GPS) device and personal locator beacon to assist emergency services in locating you if necessary.



Walk in pairs or small groups. If someone is injured, the others can provide assistance.



Carry sufficient water, food and first aid supplies.



Stay on marked tracks and follow directional signs carefully. Obey all signage. Do not climb under or over barriers to “get a good photo”. These are in place for your safety.



Take a fully charged mobile phone.





Wear clothing appropriate to the climate including sturdy shoes and a hat. Consider wearing clothing that will protect you in radiant heat if you are caught during a bushfire.

Visit www.parks.des.qld.gov.au for more information on safety outdoors.

If you become lost while bushwalking:

- Stop. Don't panic and don't rush to make a decision.
- Stay where you are and do not move.
- Call Triple Zero (000) and ask for the police. Provide your location in latitude and longitude if possible or describe landmarks. Give details if you are injured or hurt.
- If you have limited phone reception, send a message to a friend and ask them to call Triple Zero (000).
- If there's no phone reception, activate your Personal Locator Beacon and keep it active.
- Once you've called for help, stay put. Don't move from your location.
- Make yourself visible from the air by laying out brightly coloured clothing, tents or reflective material.

If you are caught in the path of a bushfire:

- Call Triple Zero (000).
- Don't panic and try to outrun the fire. If you see smoke, turn back or find an alternate route.
- Head for natural fire breaks such as clearings, rocky areas, streams or roads.
- Keep away from high ground in the fire path and shelter behind a solid object such as a rock to protect yourself from radiant heat.
- Drink water and cover your mouth with a damp cloth.
- Move to burnt ground when the fire has passed.
- Stay in contact with someone and let them know what is happening.



@QldFES

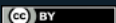


@QldFireandEmergencyServices



www.qfes.qld.gov.au

Scan code to complete feedback form and help us better understand our state travellers.



© State of Queensland (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services) 2022
All Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) material in this document – except the QFES logos, graphics, any material protected by a trademark, and unless otherwise noted – is licensed under a creative commons licence.

QFE000144 06/21B