

Safer Building Location

Grouped housing



A Safer Building Location (SBL) is a designated building where people can shelter temporarily if they are unable to leave the area during an emergency. It is not a replacement for leaving early when it is safe to do so. If people are sheltering in an SBL, emergency services should be notified by calling 000.

A Safer Building Location is:

- » An enclosed building, not an open structure or outdoor area.
- » Well-sealed to help keep out smoke and embers which are the main causes of injury and building ignition during bushfires.
- » Known to residents and staff.
- » Prepared and ready to use in an emergency.

Before moving to the SBL

(if time allows)

- » Close all windows, doors and internal blinds.
- » Place wet towels or clothing along the bottom of doors.
- » Turn off gas appliances.
- » Take your Emergency Kit and Last-Minute Go Bag, bring drinking water if accessible.
- » Move to the SBL early and calmly when advised.

Clothing and Personal Safety

- » Wear long sleeves and long pants, ideally wool and cotton, as they reduce burn risk from radiant heat, embers and hot debris. Avoid wearing synthetic fabrics.
- » Wear sturdy, enclosed shoes, preferably leather boots.
- » Cover your head and neck if possible.
- » Drink water regularly.
- » Stay low if smoke enters the building

Important Reminders

- » An SBL is a last-resort shelter and does not guarantee safety.
- » Early evacuation remains the safest option, consider what your evacuation trigger would be and include it in your Hazard Ready Plan.
- » Being prepared and practicing your plan can save valuable time in an emergency.

SBL Selection and maintenance

Building & Location

- ☐ Solid construction (preferably brick)
- ☐ Not upslope from surrounding vegetation
- ☐ At least 6m from other buildings where possible
- ☐ Accessible to emergency services

Capacity & Access

- ☐ Can accommodate all residents, staff and visitors
- ☐ Multiple entry/exit points where possible
- ☐ Accessible for people with mobility needs

Surroundings

- ☐ Asset Protection Zone maintained
- ☐ Minimal nearby flammable materials
- ☐ Vegetation and fuel loads managed

Facilities

- ☐ Drinking water available
- ☐ Toilets accessible
- ☐ First aid kit on site

Smoke & Ember Protection (Critical)

- ☐ Door seals fitted
- ☐ Ember screens on vents, weep holes and evaporative air con units
- ☐ Metal window screens (not nylon)
- ☐ Eaves, roof gaps and under-building areas enclosed or screened
- ☐ Roof kept clear of debris (remove alsynite where possible)

This guidance is adapted from DFES safer building advice and is intended to support grouped housing, supported accommodation and community living environments.

A Safer Building Location (SBL) is a last-resort option used only when it is no longer safe to leave.

Bushfires are unpredictable. Even with a plan to evacuate early, plans can fail. A nominated Safer Building Location may save lives when there is no safe alternative.

Disclaimer: This factsheet is provided for general information purposes only. The Shire has taken care in preparing the information but accepts no responsibility for personal decisions made or actions taken.



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