

Repair of fences damaged by bushfire or construction of fire control lines

The Victorian Government's [Fencing and Fire Control Line Rehabilitation Policy](#) provides assistance to people whose property has been damaged by bushfires and by fire agency machinery during the construction of fire control lines.

General safety after fires

People and visitors to fire affected areas need to be vigilant about hazards not only on their property but also along public and private roads, in parks and forests, and around public places such as sporting and camping grounds.

Do not enter your property until you are advised that it is safe to do so by officers from emergency services, utilities or your local council.

When entering your property be aware of dangers including:

- Live powerlines
- Unstable buildings or structures
- Smouldering coals
- Household, garden, or farm chemicals
- **Dangerous trees or limbs**

The bushfire clean up operation

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have established a demolition program that is expected to run for approximately six months. The key steps of the program are:

- The Coroner and Victoria Police must first approve access to your property.
- Your property will be assessed for risks such as burnt gas bottles, dangerous trees, and unstable chimneys, which will then be removed.
- You will then be given an opportunity for a final recovery of any possessions.
- Your property will then be cleared by licensed contractors.

If you need assistance to remove trees or for clean up operations, please contact your local council or community service hub.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Parks Victoria (PV), and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) ask residents to please be patient as many of the staff who undertake rehabilitation assessments and works, and the machinery required, are still deployed to the ongoing fires.

www.dse.vic.gov.au

Native vegetation and bushfire-affected fences

Can I remove native vegetation to rebuild a fence damaged by bushfire?

Yes, without a permit you can remove a maximum width of four metres of native vegetation to rebuild either a boundary or internal fence. You will need the permission of the adjoining landowner if you intend to remove native vegetation from their land. For example, if you want to remove native vegetation on a roadside you will need the permission of the responsible road authority such as your local council or VicRoads.

Will the government provide financial assistance for removing trees on private land?

Yes, the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority will decide who receives financial assistance and the nature of activities supported.

Assistance available for fence repair

The Victorian Government is providing assistance to residents whose fences have been damaged by bushfire or by fire agencies constructing fire control lines on private land.

Government assistance is only available for repair or replacement of fences deemed to have been in working order prior to the damage / fire occurring.

My fence was burnt during the bushfires. Will the government pay for repairs?

- For a Crown Land Boundary fence – Yes, the government will reimburse reasonable insurance excess to a maximum of four hundred dollars (\$400) on all insured crown land boundary fences destroyed or damaged by bushfires (includes bushfire or fire suppression back burning), regardless of whether the fire originated on public or private land.
- For an internal fence on private land – No, internal fences on private land are excluded from government funding assistance because they are considered to be insurable for damage from bushfire.
- Back burning does not include burning undertaken as part of the yearly scheduled fuel reduction program usually undertaken in autumn and spring.

My fence was damaged by fire agency machinery during fire suppression works. Will the government pay for repairs?

Yes, the government will pay 100 per cent of the restoration costs if fences are damaged on private land by fire agency machinery used in the bushfire suppression (includes fences damaged to provide emergency vehicles access).

Rehabilitation of fire control lines includes the pushing back of top soil and the undertaking of sediment control works but not the re-establishment of lawn, pasture, trees, or tree crops.

My property was damaged by the owner of a neighbouring property during the bushfires. Will the government pay for repairs?

No, damage caused by individuals or corporations to their own or another's property as part of their own fire suppression activities is not covered under the government assistance scheme.

Responsibilities of private landholders following bushfires

- Make sure that you have adequate insurance on all insurable assets, including fences.
- Notify your local CFA or DSE office if you believe that your property has been damaged by bushfire or during construction of fire control lines.
- If possible, please contact fire agencies about damaged fences within 48 hours of the damage occurring. That way fire-agency machinery still in the area can start on rehabilitation works as soon as possible.

If in doubt, please check with your local Council or DSE office *prior to* clearing native vegetation.

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