



# Local Flood Guide Horsham



# FloodSafe

## Flood information for the Wimmera River and Burnt Creek at Horsham



HORSHAM



FLOOD STORM  
EMERGENCY **132 500**

For more information visit  
[ses.vic.gov.au](http://ses.vic.gov.au)

This aerial photo of Horsham was taken on 18 January 2011 at 2.00pm. This is very close in time to the peak of the flood.



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**Your local emergency broadcasters are:**

- ABC Local 594 AM
- 3WM 1089 AM
- Mixx 101.3 FM
- SKY NEWS Television

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### The Horsham local area

The southern and south eastern areas of Horsham are located on the floodplains of the Wimmera River and Burnt Creek. These areas have a significant history of flooding.

Medium to heavy rain in the upper catchment of the Wimmera River will increase flows into the river and can lead to flooding in Horsham and the surrounding rural areas. High rainfall in the northern Grampians ranges can also influence flood levels in Horsham.

The aerial photo on page 2 indicates areas flooded in January 2011 which measured 4.27 metres on the Walmer Stream Gauge, 3.7 kilometres downstream of the Horsham Weir.

If you live or work close to a river or creek you may be at risk from flooding. Even if your property is not flooded you may be affected indirectly as roads may be closed and power, sewage and telephone services may be disrupted.

In 1987 flood mitigation works were completed which reduced the risk of flooding in Horsham. They include:

- Construction of a levee between Menadue Street and Peppertree Lane.
- Construction of the Wotonga Basin Weir.
- Widening of the Wimmera River upstream of the Western Highway.

These mitigation works help to reduce the impact of flooding but do not eliminate the risk, as demonstrated in 2011 when flooding reached record heights and overtopped the Horsham levee.

While no two floods are the same, floods like January 2011 or worse could happen again.

You can view the latest river height information on the Bureau of Meteorology website at [bom.gov.au](http://bom.gov.au)

### Did you know?

The January 2011 flood was the largest on record measuring 4.27 metres at the Horsham Gauge at Walmer.

During the January 2011 flood event:

- Horsham was split in two by floodwater
- Floodwater was up to one metre deep in Hamilton Street
- More than 250 properties experienced power outages
- 500 properties were isolated by floodwater
- 15 houses were flooded above floor level
- A large area of the southern Central Business District was extensively flooded
- Many houses were saved from over-floor flooding due to extensive sandbagging by the community, emergency services and the Council
- A kindergarten and 31 shops were substantially damaged
- Two aged care facilities, one caravan park and other municipal facilities were evacuated.

### Are you at risk of flood?

Horsham has a history of flooding, with significant flooding occurring more than 15 times since records began in the mid-18th century. The January 2011 flood is the largest in living memory.

Many properties in southern and eastern Horsham are located on a floodplain that is prone to riverine flooding as well as flash flooding during periods of heavy rainfall. It can take up to four days for the peak of the flood to reach Horsham from the upper catchment. This does not mean you will not be affected by flooding prior to the peak arriving.

There are three river level gauge boards in Horsham, located on the river at Southbank, the Riverside Bridge, and on Burnt Creek at Williams Road. These boards provide river height information during a flood, and are used to monitor flood heights. Each flood gauge board has an information sign, allowing passers-by to view the historic peak flood levels at that site.

### Wimmera River flood levels at the Horsham stream flow gauge at Walmer

When the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) issues flood warnings, they include a prediction of the flood height on the Wimmera River at Horsham (Walmer Gauge, number 579000). The following table gives a prediction of what you could experience at certain heights, including when your access may be cut off and when your property may be affected.

4.27 m	<b>January 2011 flood level.</b> During this flood 15 properties were flooded above floor level, 500 properties isolated by floodwater and 31 businesses were affected; the town was spit in two by floodwater. Over 100 houses are at risk of over-floor flooding at this height.
3.87 m	Probable flooding from the Henty Highway to the urban areas of Horsham with water up to one metre deep in places.
3.73 m	<b>September 1916 flood level.</b>
3.71 m	<b>October 1894 flood level.</b>
3.58 m	<b>MAJOR FLOOD LEVEL</b>
3.55 m	<b>August 1981 flood level.</b> This flood affected the Wimmera River and Yarriambiak Creek. At this height, the Wotonga Basin mini-weir is overtopped.
3.45 m	<b>MODERATE FLOOD LEVEL</b>
3.32 m	<b>September 2010 flood level.</b>
3.31 m	<b>MINOR FLOOD LEVEL</b>
3.49 m	<b>October 1996 flood level.</b> The Wimmera River banks overflow upstream of Cameron Road.
3.30 m	<b>October 1992 flood level.</b> Minor flooding experienced upstream of Cameron Road (towards Stawell).

# About Flood Warnings

## What warnings mean

**Warnings** are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) to inform people about possible flooding.

A **Flood Watch** means there is a developing weather pattern that might cause floods in one or two days.

A **Flood Warning** means flooding is about to happen or is already happening. There are minor, moderate and major flood warnings.

### A Minor Flood Warning means floodwater can:

- Reach the top of the river banks.
- Come up through drains in nearby streets.
- Cover low-lying areas including riverside camping areas.
- Affect some low-lying caravan parks.
- Cover minor roads, tracks and low level bridges.
- Flow over land and enter buildings and move across low lying areas

### A Moderate Flood Warning means floodwater can:

- Spill over river banks and spread across low-lying areas.
- Start to threaten buildings, roads, rail, power and homes.
- Require evacuation in some areas.
- Cover main roads.

### A Major Flood Warning means floodwater can:

- Cause widespread flooding.
- Threaten more houses and businesses.
- Cause properties and whole areas to be isolated by water.
- Disrupt major roads and transport routes.
- Require many evacuations.

Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) will provide information about how the floodwater might affect people and properties. This includes safety messages to remind you what to do during a flood.

### Severe Thunderstorm Warnings

Thunderstorms are classified as severe, due to their potential to cause significant localised damage through wind gusts, large hail, tornadoes or flash flooding. Severe Thunderstorm Warnings are issued to the community by BoM.

### Severe Weather Warnings

These warnings are issued to the community by BoM when severe weather is expected that is not directly related to severe thunderstorms or bushfires. Examples of severe weather include damaging winds and flash flooding.

**Flash flooding** happens quickly. Horsham residents should listen for warnings and remember that flash flooding:

- Occurs so fast that it is difficult to provide a detailed warning. Often it arrives without warning.
- Results from heavy rainfall during short severe storms.

**Remember, you may not receive any official warning.**

**Emergency assistance may not be immediately available. Be aware of what is happening around you to stay safe.**

**Never wait for a warning to act.**

## Emergency Alert

SES may provide alerts to the Horsham community through the Emergency Alert telephone warning system. All emergency service providers can use Emergency Alert to warn communities about dangerous situations by voice message to landline telephones or text message to mobile phones.

If you receive a warning, make sure that all family members, people at work and your neighbours are aware of the situation.

**If you receive an Emergency Alert you should pay attention and act. It could mean life or death.**

If you need help to understand a warning, ask a friend, neighbour or family member.

## Warnings for Horsham

For the Wimmera River, Flood Warnings are issued by the BoM. Flood Warnings provide predictions of flood size (minor, moderate or major), time and predicted peaks of the Wimmera River.

It is important to know how the predicted flood levels are likely to impact you as you may be affected before the peak.

*See page 3: Wimmera River flood levels at the Horsham gauge at Walmer.* Use this table to help develop your flood emergency plan. Your plan should include the triggers that will inform when you need to leave.

## Flooding - if you decide to leave

When flooding is likely, if you decide to leave, do so **well before** flooding occurs. Leaving early before flooding occurs is always the safest option. You may decide to shelter with neighbours, family or friends in a safer area.

Evacuating through floodwater is very dangerous and you may be swept away. NEVER drive, ride or walk through floodwater.

If you do not leave early enough and become trapped by rising floodwater inside your home or business, stay inside your building and seek the highest part such as a second storey.

Stay there and call Triple Zero (000) if your emergency is life-threatening. For flood assistance that is not life-threatening, call 132 500.

### Now – before a flood

- Check if your home or business is subject to flooding. For more information, contact Horsham Rural City Council and the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.
- Develop an emergency plan.
- Check if you could be cut off by floodwater.
- Know the safest way to go if you decide to leave your property and plan an alternative route.
- Check your insurance policies to ensure your equipment, property and business are covered for flood damage.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers handy.
- Put together an emergency kit.
- Stay alert for weather warnings and heavy rainfall.

### When a flood is likely

- Take action. Follow your emergency plan.
- Listen to your radio for information and advice.
- Check your neighbours are safe and know about the flood.
- Stack possessions on benches and tables with electrical goods out of reach of potential floodwater.
- Anchor objects that are likely to float and cause damage.
- Move rubbish bins, chemicals and poisons to the highest place.
- Be prepared to plug shower and sink drains and toilets to prevent sewerage back up.
- Put important papers, valuables, photos and other special personal items into your emergency kit.
- Business owners should raise stock, business records and equipment onto benches and tables.
- Rural property owners should move livestock, pumps and machinery to higher ground.
- If you are likely to be isolated, have enough food, drinking water, medicine, fuel and other needs to last at least three days.
- Do not forget pet food and stock feed.

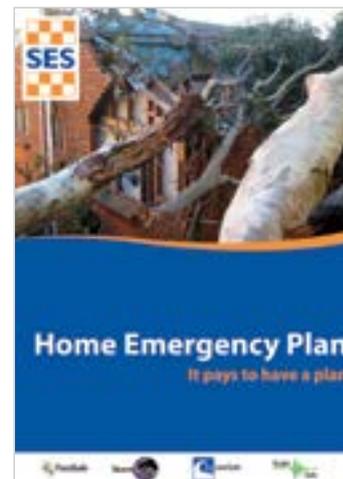
### Your emergency plan

Emergencies can happen at any time, with little warning. People who plan and prepare for emergencies reduce the impact and recover faster.

Taking the time to think about emergencies and make your own plan helps you think clearly and have more control to make better decisions when an emergency occurs.

Your emergency plan should identify:

- The types of emergencies that might affect you.
- How those emergencies might affect you.
- What you will do before, during and after an emergency.
- Where to get more information.
- Where you will go if you evacuate and the best way to go in different circumstances.
- A list of phone numbers you will need, including emergency service providers, your insurance company, friends and family.



Visit [ses.vic.gov.au](http://ses.vic.gov.au) to obtain a copy of your Home Emergency Plan workbook

### Evacuation

During a flood, Police, SES and other emergency service providers may advise you to evacuate to keep you safe.

There are two types of evacuation notices that may be issued via your emergency broadcaster during a flood:

- **Prepare to evacuate** – means you should act quickly and take immediate action to protect your life and property. Be ready to leave your property.
- **Evacuate immediately** – you are encouraged to leave immediately as there is a risk to lives. You may only have minutes to evacuate in a flash flooding situation.

Do not return to your home until you are sure it is safe to do so. You do not need to wait to be told to evacuate.

# Emergency Kit

Every home and business should have a basic emergency kit:



Check your kit often. Make sure things work. Replace out of date items.

When a warning is issued, have ready for use or pack into your kit:



## I need to add:

Write your list here. Tick items as you pack them into your kit.

- Special needs \_\_\_\_\_
- Photos \_\_\_\_\_
- Family keepsakes \_\_\_\_\_
- Valuables \_\_\_\_\_
- Documents \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

# During and After a Flood

## During a flood

When flooding has begun:

- **Never drive, ride, swim or walk through floodwater.**
- Remember that floodwater can be deeper than you think and can hide damaged roads and bridges.
- Never let your children play or swim in floodwater. It is dirty, dangerous and deadly.
- Tune in to your emergency broadcasters: ABC Local Radio, Commercial Radio, designated Community Radio Stations and SKY NEWS Television.
- In life-threatening emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).
- For SES emergency assistance during floods and storms call 132 500.
- Stay away from all waterways including drains and culverts.
- Stay away from fallen powerlines as electricity travels easily through water.
- Be aware that animals such as snakes, rats, spiders and other pests may be on the move during a flood. These animals can come into houses and other buildings or hide around sandbags.
- Keep in contact with neighbours.
- Be prepared to act quickly.

## After a flood

Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to fall. To make sure you stay safe:

- Keep listening to local emergency broadcasters.
- Do not return home until you are sure that it is safe.

Once you return to your home:

- Investigate the structural safety of your building.
- Drink bottled water or boil all drinking water until advised that the water supply is safe.
- Throw away any food or medicines that may have been in contact with floodwater or affected by power outages.
- When entering a building, use a torch to light your way. Never use matches or cigarette lighters as there may be gas inside.
- Keep the electricity and gas off until checked and tested by a professional.
- Take photographs of all damage for insurance.
- Clean your home straight away to prevent disease.

## How SES helps the community

Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) is a volunteer based emergency service provider. Although SES volunteers attempt to reach everyone prior to or during an emergency, at times this is not possible, especially during flash flooding which occurs so quickly. Therefore it is advisable for you to be prepared for emergencies so that you can share responsibility for your own wellbeing during those times. In a flood, SES assistance may include:

- Giving flood advice
- Protecting essential services
- Helping to protect infrastructure
- Rescuing people from floodwater
- Advising of an evacuation

To assist your preparation, it is recommended that you obtain a copy of the SES Home Emergency Plan by visiting [ses.vic.gov.au](http://ses.vic.gov.au).



# Emergency Checklist

## Now: Flood preparation

- Check if your insurance policy covers flooding.
- Keep this list of emergency numbers 'and replace with 'Keep emergency numbers in a handy location; keep numbers saved in your mobile phone
- Put together an emergency kit and prepare a home or business emergency plan, see [ses.vic.gov.au](http://ses.vic.gov.au).

## When you hear a Flood Watch or weather warning

- Listen to Severe Weather Warnings for flash flood.
- Listen to the radio and check the SES website for more information and advice.
- Go over your emergency plan. Pack clothing and other extra items into your emergency kit and take this with you if you evacuate.
- Leave early if you intend to evacuate.

## When flooding may happen soon (heavy rainfall)

- Make sure your family members and neighbours are aware of what is happening.
- Conditions change rapidly, roads and escape routes can be covered or blocked. Don't forget to take pets and your medicine with you.
- Put household valuables and electrical items as high as possible.
- Turn off water, gas and electricity at the mains.
- Secure objects likely to float and cause damage.
- If you are staying in a caravan or temporary dwelling, move to higher ground before flooding begins.

## During the flood

- For SES emergency assistance, call 132 500.
- Do not drive, ride, swim or walk through floodwater. This is the main cause of death during floods.
- Never allow children to play in floodwater. This is the main cause of death during floods for children and young people.
- Stay away from drains, culverts and waterways as water can flow quickly and have strong currents.
- Stay well clear of fallen trees, powerlines and damaged buildings.

## After the flood: recovery

- If your property has been flooded, check with Horsham Rural City Council for information and advice.
- Have all electrical and gas equipment professionally tested before use.

For more information visit:

-  [ses.vic.gov.au](http://ses.vic.gov.au)
-  [facebook.com/vicses](https://facebook.com/vicses)
-  [twitter.com/vicseswarnings](https://twitter.com/vicseswarnings)

# Emergency Contacts

**Life-threatening emergency**  
Police Fire Ambulance  
National Relay Service

**000** Triple Zero  
TTY106

**Victoria State Emergency Service (SES)**  
For SES emergency assistance

**132 500**

**SES information line**  
Operates during major floods or storms

**1300 842 737**  
**1300 VIC SES**

**VicEmergency**  
Victorian emergency warnings

emergency.vic.gov.au

**Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)**  
Weather information, forecasts, warnings

**1300 659 217**  
bom.gov.au

**National Relay Service (NRS)**  
The deaf, hearing or speech impaired can call SES or Triple Zero (000) using NRS:

	DIAL	THEN ASK FOR
■ <b>Speak and Listen (SSR)</b> users phone	<b>1300 555 727</b>	<b>132 500</b>
■ <b>TTY / Voice</b> users phone	<b>13 36 77</b>	<b>132 500</b>

**VicRoads**  
Road closures and hazard reporting service

**13 11 70**  
vicroads.vic.gov.au

### Horsham Rural City Council contact details

Phone: **(03) 5382 9777**  
Email: [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au)  
Web: [hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://hrcc.vic.gov.au)

**Weather District:** Wimmera

**Catchment Management Authority:** Wimmera  
[wcma.vic.gov.au](http://wcma.vic.gov.au)

**Emergency Broadcasters**  
Emergency broadcasters include ABC Local Radio, designated commercial radio stations across Victoria and SKY NEWS Television.

-  ABC Local 594 AM
-  3WM 1089 AM
-  Mixx 101.3 FM
-  SKY NEWS Television

**Complete the following and keep this information handy close to the phone:**

Your electricity supplier: \_\_\_\_\_

Your gas supplier: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Vet: \_\_\_\_\_

### Insurance

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_