Recover assets and check hazards

On this page

It is important to continue to patrol around your home and property buildings for up to 6 hours (and sometimes longer) after the main fire front has passed through, as it is during this time that many buildings burn down due to embers.

There is also the risk of vegetation reigniting from embers or smouldering fuel sources.

Other hazards to monitor include:

- falling branches and trees
- holes in the ground
- fallen powerlines
- sites contaminated with asbestos, heavy metals or farm chemicals.

Power supply

If powerlines have fallen, keep clear and keep others away. The powerlines may still be live. Do not attempt to remove or prune trees which have fallen on powerlines yourself.

You should call your local electricity distributor – on the faults and emergencies number on your most recent electricity bill.

Generators

Care needs to be taken with the use of temporary energy generators. The leads from the generator to electrical appliances must be as short as possible and in good condition.

Temporary generators must not be installed inside buildings because of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning from engine exhausts.

If you have lost power, you should call a licensed electrician to connect an energy generator. If electricity supplies have not been restored to homes for any reason, property owners must not connect permanent generators or perform other electrical work around the home.

Such practice is both illegal and dangerous – this work can only be carried out by licensed electricians.

Energy Safe Victoria also advises people to take the following precautions if using a generator:

- **Correctly connect the generator.** Make sure you have the appropriate power board and leads to fit the generator you are using, and make sure that they are in good working order.
- **Keep your generator outside.** Generators in enclosed areas such as homes, sheds or caravans, even with windows open, can cause carbon monoxide poisoning which can result in death.
- **Do not overload your generator.** This can cause damage to appliances feeding off the generator. If your generator is not big enough to power all appliances, appliances should be rotated.
- **Place your generator in a location where the exhaust fumes do not come into contact with any combustible material.**
- **Always plug appliances into the generator using appropriate power boards and leads.** Never plug the generator into the power outlets as this has a high risk of causing electrocution.
- **Take care when refuelling your generator as it is likely to be hot.** Make sure the generator is off and has cooled before refuelling, as petrol spilled on hot engine parts can ignite.

For further information, contact Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) on (03) 9203 9700.

Protecting farm water

Good water can be a scarce resource during and after a bushfire.

Paddock dams are often heavily contaminated with wind-borne materials such as ash, manure, leaves and soil. Roofs and tanks can become contaminated with similar materials along with firefighting chemicals such as foam and retardant.

Summer thunderstorms and heavy rain in autumn and spring can result in flooding, sheet erosion and the movement of large quantities of ash, manure, branches, leaves and soil into dams, rivers, creeks and streams.

Ash (from natural materials) has little impact on water quality however the remaining materials (manure, branches, leaves and soil) can quickly sink to the bottom of the dam, providing a source of food for algae and bacteria, resulting in the water going rotten and becoming unfit for stock use.

In more severe cases dams can be partly or completely filled with silt, sand, gravel, ash and a mix of plant-based materials.

An ample supply of good quality water is critical for stock health and production. For information on protecting and determining the quality of farm water supplies see:

- Water quality for farm water supplies
- Water supply for stock containment areas
- Maintaining your farm dam
- Organic pollution in farm dams

Good quality water should look and smell okay, be as cool as possible and have a salt level less than 6,000 μ/cm (EC units). Most Agriculture Victoria staff have access to an EC meter. In hot weather sheep can consume up to 10 litres/head/day and cattle 100 litres/head/day.

Protecting remaining water supplies is a high priority for landholders affected by fire.

Recommended strategies include:

- diverting or blocking downpipes to avoid contamination of drinking water
- washing down contaminated roofs and guttering
- dragging chainmesh suspended on floats across dams to remove floating debris and ash
- removing stock if water becomes putrid, looks or smells rotten or shows signs of blue-green algae (bright blue/green paint like scum on water surface)
- trapping ash, debris, organic matter and sediment using wire netting supported with ringlock and closely spaced steel posts

- construction of a straw bale sediment trap. This involves a line of straw bales tightly butted together and held in place with wooden pegs or steel posts
- trapping fine debris and sediment in small catchments using commercial “silt fencing”
- where suitable, excavating a shallow pit upstream of your dam to trap sediment. Excavation of such a pit may require approval by your local council, water authority or catchment management authority (CMA)
- consolidating remaining water supplies into dams or tanks
- fencing off dams to reduce further contamination from wind and stock
- de-silting dams.

Alternatively, landholders may consider reducing stock numbers, carting, installing a bore or setting up a permanent reticulating water.

Commercial 'silt fencing' is highly effective in trapping finer debris and sediment however is not normally suitable for areas with a concentrated flow of water such as across a drainage line above a dam.

In the event of a fire (regardless of where it starts) if water is taken from domestic tanks and stock or irrigation dams for firefighting purposes, water needed for essential use will be replaced (quantity taken) when requested by the landholder.

Farm recovery after bushfire

Bushfires may affect crops, water supplies, soils and pastures. Recovery information about them is provided below.

You may also call the Customer Contact Centre on 136 186 if:

- the information you seek is not listed
- you wish to speak to a staff member about your particular fire recovery requirements
- you need other agricultural advice.

Recovery After Fire guide

Recovery After Fire: Practical Steps for Farmers is a step-by-step guide to help anyone affected by fire to start the recovery process.

Download:

- Recovery After Fire: Practical Steps for Farmers [PDF File - 808.3 KB]
- Recovery After Fire: Practical Steps for Farmers [PDF File - 808.3 KB]

Protecting farm water supplies

Livestock need a sufficient and reliable supply of unpolluted water. For information on protecting and determining the quality of farm water supplies, see:

- Water quality for farm water supplies
- Water supply for stock containment areas
- Maintaining your farm dam
- Organic pollution in farm dams

Building a sediment fence

After a fire it's important to protect your water supply from contamination.

The biggest danger is runoff containing debris, manure and soil from burnt paddocks.

If your dam or waterway is at risk, a quick and simple way to help keep your water clean is to build strategically placed sediment fences at the inflow points.

Learn how to protect your farm water by building a sediment fence.

- Factsheet: Building a sediment fence [PDF File - 257.9 KB]
- Factsheet: Building a sediment fence [MS Word Document - 2.2 MB]

How to build sediment fences

View transcript

Protecting soils and pastures

To protect soils and water after a fire, careful management of paddocks and livestock is needed.

Fire changes pastures in different ways depending on the intensity of the fire, the pasture species, the fertility of the soil and the timing of the autumn break and other rain.

To find out more about protecting paddocks where groundcover is limited, see:

- Stock containment area
- Factsheet: Reducing weed risk [PDF File - 521.8 KB]
- Factsheet: Reducing weed risk [MS Word Document - 407.3 KB]

For a quick reference guide to pasture recovery after fire see:

- Pasture recovery after a fire – quick reference guide [PDF File - 1.5 MB]
- Pasture recovery after a fire – quick reference guide [MS Word Document - 574.4 KB]

Helping fire-affected crops recover

Although some crops that are affected by fire and radiant heat at first appear devastated, affected plants may fully or partially recover.

The extent of damage and crop loss depends on the degree of heat generated by the fire passing over the crop, the time of year of the fire and the number of rows actually burnt out or damaged.

For information on particular types of crop, see:

- Recovery from fire damage in blueberry orchards
- Recovery from fire damage in fruit orchards
- Recovery of olive groves after fire
- Recovery from fire damage in rubus crops

Horticulture (fruit and nut trees and vines)

Although some crops that are affected by fire and radiant heat at first appear devastated, affected plants may fully or partially recover.

The extent of damage and crop loss depends on the degree of heat generated by the fire passing over the crop, the time of year of the fire and the number of rows actually burnt out or damaged.

Assess your orchards and vineyards as soon as possible following a fire to assess:

- if each block is worth saving based on the extent of damage and signs of regrowth
- if damaged trees/vines still have a healthy cambium (layer of tissue beneath outer bark)
- if cambium is still alive on fruit trees and trees show signs of life, sunburn protection of trunk and limbs is essential
- if a block is judged viable, repair or replace the irrigation system and irrigate as soon as possible
- remove any remaining fruit to prevent pest and disease build-up and unwanted stress on the trees
- for vines where leaves are partially or totally scorched, remove the crop to eliminate competition for water, carbohydrates and nutrients
- withhold fertiliser until there is sufficient growth to utilise it (do not force growth with extra fertiliser)
- do not prune out damaged limbs until regrowth has been established.

For more information on fire damaged crops, see:

- Recovery from fire damage in blueberry orchards
- Recovery from fire damage in fruit orchards
- Recovery of olive groves after fire
- Recovery from fire damage in rubus crops

Smoke taint in wine grapes

If wine grapes have been exposed to smoke:

- have samples tested for smoke taint compounds at an accredited laboratory to determine best management options for the grapes
- hand harvest the grapes to minimise the risk during the winemaking process of contamination with smoke taint compounds in leaf and woody tissue.

For more information, see:

- Smoke taint research
- Australian Wine Research Institute: Smoke taint – practical management options for grapegrowers and winemakers (PDF)

Fencing

The need to contain stock, protect your property and respond to offers of assistance after fires can often result in fences and gateways being re-built in less-than-ideal conditions.

While there may be an urgent need to replace some fencing to manage livestock and other priorities, the replacement of other fencing may best be delayed until you have had time to plan the works appropriately. Given the need to de-stock burnt or partly burnt paddocks, there may be no rush to replace some fencing. In many cases internal fencing can be patched up for the temporary containment of stock.

Prior to the clean-up and replacement of fencing it is recommended you take plenty of photos and carefully mark the location of the original boundary fence. The boundary fence is the only fence that has to go back where it was.

When cleaning up, separating old fencing materials into steel, treated and untreated timber will make recycling and disposal easier and more effective. Fencing wire can be salvaged and recycled but not if it is contaminated with wood.

The loss of internal fencing due to fire or flood provides landholders with an opportunity to review and upgrade the layout of their farm. This might result in minor changes to a fence alignment, changing the location of gateways, construction of a laneway or laying out and fencing your farm according to land classing and whole farm planning principles.

You might also consider offsetting your boundary fence to avoid roadside vegetation. The loss of fencing also gives landholders an opportunity to consider alternative fencing materials such as concrete or steel end assemblies, plain wire, ringlock, electric fencing or other fencing that is better able to exclude pests such as wild dogs.

Private land fences

Landholders are responsible for the repair and replacement of fences that are entirely on private land.

BlazeAid can provide in-kind assistance for re-establishing fences for all types of livestock.

Register at blazeaid.com.au or at facebook.com/blazeaid.

Repair of fences damaged by bushfire on the boundary of private land and National Park, State Park and State Forest

The Victorian Government will pay 50% of the reasonable cost of materials to a maximum of $5000 per kilometre to restore, repair or replace fencing and other fencing assets between private land, including agricultural land and all National Parks, State Parks and State Forests destroyed or damaged by bushfires, whether the bushfire started on private or public land.

Labour and any other costs are to be met by the landholder, and the landholder is responsible for arranging the carrying out of the work.

Landholders may also elect at their own expense to upgrade the fence beyond the standard offered as part of the Government's assistance. This principle only applies to fencing and other fencing assets between private agricultural land and all National Parks, State Parks and State Forests.

Landholders are responsible for the repair, replacement or restoration of internal fences, or fences between private properties, that have been impacted by bushfire.

Does not apply to riparian fences unless they are on a boundary between agricultural private land and National Park, State Park or State forest.

You can read the complete policy on the Repair of Rural Fencing Damaged by Bushfire and Fire Control Line Stabilisation on the Forest Fire Management website.

Farm fencing destroyed by firefighting activities

The Victorian Government will pay 100 per cent of the restoration costs of fences damaged on private land as a result of machinery used by fire agencies to control bushfires, or fire agency staff cutting through fences to allow access for suppression efforts.

This includes damage to fences by machinery such as bulldozers entering the property and/or constructing fire control lines, and other emergency vehicles obtaining access.

The Victorian Government will also assist private landholders with the rehabilitation of fire control lines, established by fire agencies, during the suppression of bushfires.

See Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) fencing information. For assistance, call BRV on 1800 560 760 or the Customer Contact Centre on 136 186.

You can read the complete policy on the Repair of Rural Fencing Damaged by Bushfire and Fire Control Line Stabilisation on the Forest Fire Management.

Stock containment areas

Grazing paddocks after a bushfire can result in significant damage to your pastures, soil and water supplies. Newly emerging pastures can be destroyed, soils exposed to erosion and dams polluted from increased sediment loads.

Confining your stock to a sacrifice paddock or stock containment area can protect the rest of your farm as well as providing an efficient and effective way to feed, water and care for your stock.

A sacrifice paddock, or temporary stock containment area needs to be relatively small, stockproof, close to your house and have suitable feeding and watering facilities.

Permanent stock containment areas are used by many farmers across Victoria to manage stock during droughts, fires and floods. A permanent stock containment area is a carefully selected and designed facility to intensively hold, feed and water livestock for short periods of time.

Ideally a stock containment area should meet the following design requirements:

- have pens approximately 50m x 50m in size, each pen holding 500 sheep or 160 cattle
- be located on gently sloping, well drained sites with stable clay-based soils
- be sited downwind of houses, close to stock handling facilities but well away from waterways and dams
- pens should be constructed from permanent, stock proof materials, and be sited across the slope to improve drainage and minimise runoff
- remnant trees should not be incorporated into a stock containment area however some provision of shade and shelter is essential to minimise stress and reduce the consumption of feed and water
- the inclusion of a permanent feeding area and troughs can make feeding more efficient and effective and reduce the incidence of shy feeders
- it is critical that stock have access to an ample supply of fresh clean water.

A good understanding of intensive stock management, feeding and disease control is critical to the success of a stock containment area system.

In some cases, a planning permit may be required; it is recommended you check with Agriculture Victoria staff or local council planning office before commencing construction.

See Stock containment areas and Planning requirements for feedlots for more details.

Different breeds and species adapt differently to containment areas so ongoing observation of the stock is necessary to assess feeding patterns and adaptation to feed rations.

Some sheep and lambs may not adapt well to the containment area so monitoring is essential to ensure they are all getting access to feed and water.

Therefore:

- all livestock must be inspected at least once daily and monitor body weight or condition scores to detect animals not suited to the ration or behavioural stress of the containment area (these stock are to be promptly removed as required)
- any sick or injured livestock must be treated or euthanased immediately
- dead livestock must be immediately removed from the area
- livestock should be handled carefully to minimise stress
- unusual deaths or disease symptoms should be reported immediately to Agriculture Victoria.

Erosion and flooding

Soil erosion

Bushfires destroy vegetation, leaf litter and organic matter. As a result, the soil becomes more vulnerable to both wind and water erosion.

The lack of vegetation in catchment areas also increases the frequency and intensity of flooding. In steeper terrain the movement of water, debris, soil and rocks can be quite dramatic resulting in significant damage to farm assets and the environment.

This movement of material can occur rapidly in the form of a flood, mudslide or debris flow or more slowly as a landslide. Some soil erosion is inevitable following a bushfire.

Controlling much of this erosion can be quite difficult; it is important to focus your efforts on protecting your family and farm.

Wind erosion

Wind erosion commonly occurs on paddocks with lightly textured soils exposed to a moderate or high intensity bushfire.

Paddocks with poor annual pastures, crop stubble or those disturbed by firefighting equipment are the worst affected. The risk of wind erosion can be minimised by removing remaining stock as soon as possible.

Mechanical control methods such as sowing a cover crop, deep ripping or ridging should only be undertaken in high risk areas such as old sheep camps, gateways or other areas of loose sandy soil.

A cover crop of a cereal, preferably oats can be direct drilling or broadcast over the affected areas at a rate 30kg per hectare.

Deep ripping and ridging are quite specialised activities and are only successful on certain soil types. It is recommended you seek advice from Agriculture Victoria staff before proceeding with these treatments.

Sheet and rill erosion

Sheet and rill erosion are common in hilly terrain following more extreme bushfire events. They can cause long term degradation through the loss of organic matter and topsoil, compaction and damage to the soil structure.

Similar to wind erosion, control is best achieved by removing stock as soon as possible. Sheet and rill erosion can be successfully controlled on smaller, high-risk areas by covering the ground with clean organic mulch such as wood shreds and chips, straw or the branches and leaves of small shrubs and trees.

Sowing pasture seed or a cover crop of oats under the mulch will provide longer-term protection.

Care should be taken to ensure mulch and seed is not contaminated with weeds or a fungal disease such as Phytophthora. Deep ripping may be used as a last resort to control surface runoff in non-sodic soils.

Gully erosion

Gully erosion is common in more hilly terrain following bushfires due to the increase in runoff, lack of ground cover and soil disturbance following firefighting activities. It can appear anywhere water concentrates such as on roadsides, along existing drainage lines or in dam spillways.

Erosion control involves diverting or draining water away from affected areas, slowing and spreading the flow and protecting the underlying soil with vegetation, mulch or a range of man-made materials.

While deep active gully erosion can be difficult and expensive to control there are a few techniques that can be used to minimise the damage.

These include:

- Constructing cross drains, humps or bars across roads, tracks and fire lines.
- Constructing extra water run-off drains to shift water away from roadside table drains.
- Diverting water away from vulnerable sites with gently sloping banks made of earth, straw bales or sheets of corrugated iron buried in the ground and supported with steel posts. Gently sloping drains can be used as a last resort.
- Making a grassed chute using straw, old netting and steel pegs.
- Protecting a gully head by making a temporary chute with a used grain tarpaulin or carpet. The top end of the tarpaulin or carpet needs to be buried in a trench with the sides supported on earthen banks or bales of straw. Heavy builders' plastic can also be used as a chute material if nothing else is available.
- Installing a trickle flow pipe or lowering the water level in a dam to protect the bank and spillway.
- Using carefully placed weed free straw bales to form a weir in the floor of a gully.
- Rocks, old bricks and concrete rubble can be used to control gully head erosion however require careful selection of materials, good design and careful construction to be successful.

Flooding

Significant flooding is a common occurrence in hilly and mountainous terrain following a bushfire.

Floodwaters often contain large volumes of soil, sand, gravel, ash, charcoal, timber and other organic debris. These materials block culverts, bridges, fences and dam spillways.

They also can result in the blockage of existing creeks and drainage lines resulting in the flood water taking a new path potentially damaging houses and other farm infrastructure.

Strategies to reduce the damage can include:

- protecting houses and other farm assets with earthen levee banks or sand bags
- diverting flows away from houses and other farm assets using earthen banks, straw bales or sheets of corrugated iron buried in the ground and supported with steel posts
- placing a row of closely spaced steel posts upstream of culverts and stream crossings to trap woody debris.

Debris flows, mudslides and landslides

While landslides are common in higher rainfall parts of Victoria, debris flows, and mud slides are a more recent phenomena.

Unlike landslides, which are relatively dry and slow moving, debris flows, and mud slides are much more dangerous sweeping up large trees, rocks and boulders as they move rapidly downstream.

They have the potential to do enormous damage to people, the environment, roads, bridges and farm infrastructure. These forms of soil erosion are associated with steep slopes, unconsolidated sediments, lack of vegetation and highly saturated soils.

They are difficult to predict and nearly impossible to prevent or control.

Pasture recovery

Fire impacts pastures in different ways according to a number of different factors:

- intensity of the fire
- pasture species
- fertility of the soil
- time of the autumn break
- follow up rains.

Fire intensity

Three categories of burns can be defined by considering what was burnt and destroyed during a fire and what was left:

- **Cool-moderate burn:** Most dead plant material burnt; some seed and perennial grasses and clovers survive unhurt. There will usually be a small residue (or stubble) of unburnt pasture remaining. Paddocks tend to be a light to medium brown colour.
- **Hot burn:** All dead plant material, many seeds, young and weaker perennial grasses destroyed. The surface usually appears charred, very dark brown to black in colour and often bare of plant residue.
- **Very hot burn:** The soil is virtually sterilised. All plant material and seed is destroyed as the fire burns into the top organic matter layer of the soil. Looks like an ash bed rather than a soil surface.

Generally cool-moderate burns occur where there is little dry grass cover before the fire. Hot burns occur where there is heavy plant cover such as lightly grazed pasture or crop stubble.

Very hot burns occur under hay bales; windrows; on sheep camps; on soils with a thick root mat or where an intense fire emerges from bush areas onto pasture land, including roadsides

Plants that bury their seed or have growing points below the surface are more able to survive the effects of a fire.

How do I know if my pastures will recover?

Look for small tufts or clumps of grasses that have been burnt in the paddock. Gently tug on the clump. If the clump does not pull out, it generally indicates that the plant roots have survived with little damage and should recover when the rains return.

Another option is to select a small area of the paddock that has been burnt (a meter square area) and using a watering can or bucket apply 5L or so of water over that area each day for 2 to 3 weeks. This will give an idea of what may regrow once it rains.

For a quick reference guide to pasture recovery after fire see:

- Pasture recovery after a fire – quick reference guide [PDF File - 1.5 MB]
- Pasture recovery after a fire – quick reference guide [MS Word Document - 95.5 KB]

Pest animal control

There is an increased window of opportunity to control pest animals post fire, as their food source has been disrupted.

Rabbits

Fire removes groundcover, so there is an opportunity to map where burrows exist. A baiting program is appropriate for large numbers and can be used as part of an integrated management system where a warren ripping and fumigation program could follow.

Generally, one activity by itself is insufficient to control rabbits and vacant warrens will eventually be re-inhabited. When using chemicals, always follow label directions carefully.

Foxes and wild dogs

Foxes and Wild Dogs are controlled by baiting, shooting and destruction of dens. The integrated use of several methods will enhance control. Fox control following summer fires is particularly important for autumn lambing.

For spring lambing, control can be left to mid-year. Baiting is undertaken using 1080 and PAPP poison and an agricultural chemical users permit (ACUP) is required with a 1080/PAPP endorsement to undertake this work.

When using chemicals, always follow label directions carefully and follow the Requirements for using 1080 and PAPP animal bait when baiting. A program coordinated with neighbours is likely to be more effective. Agriculture Victoria has coordinated and financed such programs after major fire events.

Learn more about Established invasive animals.

Weed management

Impact on weeds

The risk of weed invasion and the impact on farms and the environment dramatically increases during and after fire.

After the 2003 to 2004 bushfires in eastern Victoria, new weed species were identified and an increase in the number of infestations of existing weeds was observed.

Immediate impacts of weed invasion after fire are not only felt in the areas burnt but also throughout the landscape, where weeds have been dispersed by vehicles, humans, fodder, stock and even water.

Bushfire brings with it two processes that can potentially increase the rate of weed invasion. One relates to the creation of a window of opportunity for competitive exotic plant species after fire.

These species will take advantage of extra light, space, nutrients and moisture caused by the absence of desirable plants such as native vegetation, crops or pasture. Desirable species may also be vulnerable to pest species through selective grazing on new growth.

The other process relates to weed spread as a result of fire suppression, fire recovery and environmental events.

Fire suppression

- fire ground vehicles carrying weed propagules (seeds, stems and bulbs) can spread weeds
- weed propagules can be dislodged or picked up on the fire ground and dispersed by vehicles and machinery such as bulldozers
- humans can accidentally spread weed propagules on socks, boots and clothing.

Fire recovery

Weed propagules can be:

- imported in fodder onto farm
- blown from vehicles transporting fodder
- imported on or in replacement or agisted stock
- brought in by vehicles and equipment of contractors and advisers replenishing water supplies, rehabilitating fire breaks, clearing fence lines and re-establishing vegetation
- spread in seed, mulch, soil and rock used in rehabilitation programs.

Environmental events

Weed seeds can also be easily spread by water flow across bare ground during rain.

Once ground temperature gets above 200°C, the organic matter vaporises and makes the soil resistant to water (hydrophobic). Higher run-off rates not only cause erosion and siltation of waterways but aid the dispersal of weed seeds further down the catchment.

Seeds from desirable species, as well as weed seeds, may be blown from bare ground burnt by moderate intensity fire. This can leave areas more susceptible to new weed invasions with more weed seed deposited by wind.

Weed spread after fire

Natural ecosystems

Bushfires often burn areas of exotic weeds that were posing a significant threat to forests and natural ecosystems. Weeds quickly re-establish after fires often germinating more quickly than native species.

Bushfires can exacerbate the growth of opportunistic weeds such as English Broom, Blackberry and St John's Wort.

Bushfires can present an opportunity to gain access into areas to tackle these weeds. Integrated weed control programs can focus on minimising the threats to key conservation values, infestations impacting on neighbours and eradicating isolated pockets.

Weed management before, during and after fire

There are many strategies to minimise weed establishment and spread before, during and after fire.

Before and during fire

Knowing where weed infestations are or have been (mapping) enables a quick response for surveillance, leading to control and prevention of the spread of weeds.

It may be beneficial to establish strategic vehicle and machinery wash-down areas for fire vehicles and other machinery that need to work in high-risk weed spread areas.

After fire

- Verify your weed mapping and step up surveillance for new weed outbreaks. Perennial weeds with well-established, deep root systems survive fire very well. Weeds such as flat weed, docks, sorrel and onion grass are the first plants to recover and are often prominent after fires.
- Check the origin of your fodder. Has it come from a known weed infested site? Keep records of where fodder is purchased.
- Feed out fodder in a confined area (stock containment areas), away from drainage lines to reduce the likelihood of weeds being spread.
- Monitor the feed areas regularly and be suspicious of unfamiliar plants.
- Identify suspect plants as soon as possible.
- When building up stock numbers or accepting agisted stock, quarantine them for 14 days to allow time for viable seed to pass through the animal.
- Check for weed seeds in fleece and continue to check for weeds in areas with new stock.
- Monitor stock routes and roads for up to 12 months after fire to detect new weeds.
- Ensure vehicles and equipment of agencies, contractors and advisers are clean and free of weeds before entering and leaving your property.
- Seed, mulch, soil and rock to be used for rehabilitation programs should be free of weed seed and propagules.
- Increase integrated weed control treatments - the first two years are critical.
- Re-vegetation work must go hand in hand with treatment.

For more information, see Weed warning after drought, fire and flood.

Page last updated: 30 Sep 2025

We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal Owners of Country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to this land and we pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.