

Bushfires and energy safety

Energy Safe Victoria

Fact sheet

Victoria is one of the most bushfire-prone areas in the world – it's important to know how to be energy safe if a fire is nearby and you have to leave your home.

The following electricity and gas safety information can help to protect you and your property.

Before leaving your home

If time allows, follow the steps below.

Electricity

- Turn off all switches at the main electrical switchboard, including the main switch.
- Unplug your appliances.

Solar

- Turn off your solar system at the inverter and then turn it off at the switchboard. All switches on the switchboard should be in the OFF position. The system will have information on shutdown procedures.
- Turn off solar batteries. Follow the shutdown procedure which will be close to battery system.
- Do not attempt to disassemble the battery or open any of the panels.

Gas

- Turn off your gas supply at your gas meter. To do this, turn the gas supply service valve to the 'OFF' position so the handle is horizontal.

LPG cylinders

- Make sure all LPG cylinders are closed at the valve on top of the cylinder (turn clockwise to close the cylinder valve).
- Do not disconnect any appliance unless the LPG cylinder is being moved away from danger.
- Leave cylinders where they were installed – do not move them inside buildings, sheds, basements or vehicles. A damaged cylinder may leak gas and become dangerous.
- For LPG cylinders stored in cages, ensure the cage gates are locked and securely tie the cage to a fixed structure. LPG cylinders in cages are very stable in high winds.
- Ensure LPG cylinders remain vertical where possible.

Returning home

If there has been considerable damage to your property, make sure a licensed electrician checks that it's safe to turn the power back on.

Safely turning your power back on

If your property is not damaged but the power was disrupted while you were away:

- Check for damage to any electrical cables, wiring or other electrical equipment. If you identify any issues:
 - do not turn on the power
 - do not touch the damaged equipment or cable
 - call a licensed electrician to make it safe.
- Unplug or turn off all electrical appliances and equipment before switching the power back on. This includes circuit breakers, RCDs (or 'safety switches') or other switches on your switchboard.
- Turn on the main power switch.
- Turn on each circuit breaker one at a time.
 - If you have an RCD, press and hold the test button for 5 seconds. This will turn off the power/ The RCD must operate immediately on pressing the test button.
 - Reset the RCD and press the test button a second time. If the RCD operates correctly and turns off the power, reset it and you can begin switching on electrical equipment
 - If the RCD fails the testing, turn it off and get it replaced by a registered electrical contractor.

Solar panel installations

Solar panels can generate electricity during daylight hours. That means they can be a potential risk **even if the power is turned off**.

- Never go near any equipment or cables if you see any damage to your solar system or battery.
- Never go near any equipment or cables if you have any concerns about them.
- Call a licensed electrician to make the system safe.

Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)

- If your property has been affected by fire or heat, do not turn the gas supply back on or attempt to start any appliances. Some damage may not be visible, especially to internal parts of the system. A licensed gasfitter must check the gas installation and appliances are safe before restoring supply.
- If an LPG cylinder has fallen or upturned, do not move it. Contact your local LPG distributor.
- If you can hear or smell LPG:
 - turn cylinders off, if safe to do so
 - call your LPG distributor or a licensed gasfitter
 - stay well clear of the installation and keep any sources of ignition away.

Natural gas

- If your property has been affected by fire or heat, get a licensed gasfitter to check the installation before turning the gas supply back on. Damage to some parts of the system may not be visible.
- If you suspect natural gas is escaping into your home, immediately contact your gas company. Its contact details will be on your last gas bill.

More information

Find more information on our website: esv.vic.gov.au

Energy Safe's technical enquiry line is available to electricians and gasfitters: 1800 652 563.

The phone numbers for electricity distribution companies are as follows:

- Citipower 13 12 80
- Powercor 13 24 12
- AusNet Services 13 17 99
- Jemena 13 16 26
- United Energy 13 20 99