



David Elliott
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITIES URGED TO PREPARE FOR SUMMER

Prepare a bushfire survival plan, don't drive through floodwater, swim between the flags and make sure your home is fire safe this summer – these are some of the summer safety tips NSW emergency service agencies have shared ahead of the 2021 season.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott today joined emergency services leaders in Balmain to issue these timely reminders ahead of people decorating their homes for Christmas and enjoying hot days by the water.

All communities are urged to follow the following five steps:

1. Know your risk: think about the area you're in and the types of disasters that could affect you;
2. Plan now for what you will do: talk with your family and plan for what you will do if a disaster affects your area or where you plan to holiday this summer;
3. Get your home ready: prepare your home by doing general home maintenance and checking your insurance coverage;
4. Be aware - find out how to prepare, what to do if there is a disaster in your area or where you intend to holiday this summer and connect with emergency services or keep on top of local news reports to stay informed; and
5. Look out for each other - share information with your family, friends and neighbours.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott said Aussie summers are iconic, but they can also be tragic.

"Over the past few years, the NSW community has been hit hard, by fire, flood and even a pandemic, but these aren't the only threats we face," he said.

"I would urge everyone to use the start of summer to start a conversation with your friends and families about being prepared for other seasonal natural disasters, including heatwaves, storms, boating and other water accidents."

NSW Police Force Central Metropolitan Region Commander, Assistant Commissioner Peter Thurtell said summer is a particularly busy time of year for police and emergency services and urged the community to put safety first.

"If you plan to consume alcohol, know your limits and do not drink and drive. The roads will be busier than we have seen for a long time, so factor in extra time and remember that police will be out on the streets, on our roads, in, on and around the water, and even in the air. If we all put safety first, our holidays will be remembered for all the right reasons," he said.

NSW SES Commissioner Carlene York said every year people risk their lives and the lives of others by driving through floodwaters.

“You wouldn’t run into a bushfire, so never drive, walk or ride through floodwater – it’s incredibly dangerous for both you and the volunteers who will need to rescue you. Secure loose outdoor items, cleaning gutters and downpipes and trimming overhanging trees can also make a big difference when severe weather strikes,” she said.

NSW RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers said this bushfire season it is important that we all understand our level of risk and prepare accordingly.

“Now is the time to review your plans, prepare your properties and have the conversation with your family about what you will do during a fire – talk about when you’ll leave, where you’ll go, what you’ll take and what you’ll do with your animals.” he said.

Fire and Rescue NSW Assistant Commissioner Paul McGuiggan said decorative lights and summer barbecues also posed a fire risk around the home.

“Make sure you have a sufficient number of working smoke alarms throughout your home that are tested regularly and are supported by a home escape plan in case of fire,” he said.

Marine Rescue NSW Commissioner Stacey Tannos and Surf Life Saving NSW CEO Steve Pearce spoke about the importance of water safety.

“Boaters should always log on with Marine Rescue when heading out and log off when they return via VHF Channel 16 or the free Marine Rescue App. It’s quick and simple and gives you the reassurance that our volunteers are watching out for your safe return,” Commissioner Tannos said.

“My message to beachgoers this summer is to only swim at patrolled beaches, stay between the red and yellow flags, always check conditions before heading out, wear a life jacket when boating or rock fishing, and be sure to keep an eye on your mates,” Mr Pearce said.

NSW Ambulance Commissioner Dr Dominic Morgan warned the community about the dangers of risk taking behaviour resulting from excessive alcohol consumption and drug taking as the economy opens.

“People have every right to enjoy a drink or two and let their hair down this summer, especially after a trying time during lockdown. But be smart and considerate about it. Make sure you stay safe and keep others safe while enjoying yourself in a responsible way, because there is nothing fun about ending your night in the back of an ambulance.” he said.

Commissioner of Resilience NSW, Shane Fitzsimmons said it was important to be aware of and prepared for emergencies that might happen in and around your home, as well as when you’re away on holidays.

“We want the people of NSW to be prepared, not scared. Our emergency service organisations do an incredible job keeping us safe, but they can only do so much.”

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