If you live in a high-risk bushfire area, it is important you know when to leave early.

Do not wait for warnings to leave. You must decide when to leave.

How do you know when is the right time to leave?

The CFA frequently advise us to monitor conditions, but what does this mean exactly?

Monitoring conditions means you watch and identify when there is a high risk of bushfire.

When you identify your trigger to leave, you leave that morning or the night before.

If you delay your decision to leave early, and there is a bushfire or ember attack in your area, it will be too late to leave and you may be stuck on the road in dangerous conditions. If you leave too late, you may be at risk from falling trees and embers during your drive. It is important that you know how to monitor conditions.

There are a few different ways you can monitor conditions.

Keep a close eye on your local weather. If temperatures increase quickly, there could be a risk of bushfire. If it becomes very windy, especially if there have been several days of high temperatures,

these weather conditions increase the risk of bushfire.

Check if there is a Total Fire Ban for your area every day, as well as the Fire Danger Rating for your area. More information about the Fire Danger Rating is available in another video.

You can check the FireReady app on your smart phone. It is worthwhile to download this app onto your phone, because it will show you the colour-coded Fire Danger Rating for each region in Victoria.

For example, if the region where I live is coloured yellow, this means there is a Very High Fire Danger Rating for my area that day.

It is important you do not just rely on one method to monitor conditions.

Use several different methods at the same time, including watching for news announcements on television, such as ABC 24 and Sky News. You can also check the CFA YouTube channel and social media for updated information, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Use several methods to monitor conditions.

It is important you also develop your situational awareness.

For example, when you get up in the morning and go outside, what does it feel like?

Is the air hot and dry?

Do the trees look dry and thirsty?

When you turn your taps, does it take a long time for the water to run cold?

When you peg your laundry on the line, does it dry before you are done?

Can you smell or see smoke in the distance?

Does the bitumen on the road look hot and hazy?

Or if there is a forecasted storm overnight, will lightning increase the risk of bushfire?

These conditions suggest there is a high risk of bushfire, and that the safest option is to leave early.

Know your area, know your neighbouring towns.

Understand how bushfire may behave in your area.

If your area is mostly flat, the fire may spread slowly.

If your area is sloped, it may be more dangerous because fire will travel very quickly up a slope.

For example, my home is in a high-risk bushfire area.

My house is at the bottom of a valley, amongst dense bush.

I use several different methods to monitor conditions.

I keep an eye on updates broadcast on the television, internet and smart phone.

On hot days, I place everything I need in my hallway ready to go.

If the Fire Danger Rating hits Severe or Extreme with strong wind, this is my trigger to leave early that morning. Or if I see on the Fire Danger Rating that tomorrow will be a Code Red day, I leave the night before.

Monitor conditions wherever you are, at home, at work, travelling or on holidays.

Understand the risk of bushfire wherever you are. You decide your trigger to leave.

Consider the other people you live with and how you will leave early.

If you live with children under 16 years of age or people with a disability, your best option is to leave even earlier. For example, if there is a high-risk day forecast, leave the night before rather than first thing in the morning. If you leave too late and there is a bushfire, you may get stuck in a dangerous situation with children or people with a disability.

Emergency services may not be able to reach you even if you call Triple Zero (000).

It is also a good idea to leave even earlier if you live in an area with only one road in and out. If there is only one exit, this increases your risk of injury or death during a bushfire.

You need to know your trigger to leave early. It is important that you leave early. Leaving early means you will arrive safely far away from the high-risk area, and your children will not suffer fear or trauma from a bushfire situation.

The next video will explain how to leave early.