

Alpine Resort Management Board Guidance

Travel Exemption Scheme for Fire

Introduction

Under Victoria's current COVID-19 Directions and the Roadmap for Reopening, restrictions to travel within some parts of Victoria still apply.

With the summer fire season imminent, there is a need for lease holders and owners of properties in alpine resorts to prepare for the fire season. While there are provisions to allow travel beyond the current travel restrictions that apply in some areas of Victoria, for example if the property owner has been issued with a Fire Prevention Notice, a process has been developed that will allow Alpine Resort Management Boards to issue a travel exemption for lease holders to attend their property to undertake fire preparedness work if a property resides within public land managed by Alpine Resort Management Boards.

Exemption Process

Under an exemption to the current Chief Health Officer (CHO) Directions, a lease holder or owner of a property in an alpine resort, or a nominated representative, will be allowed to travel to their property to undertake fire preparedness work.

To request an exemption to travel to their property, a leaseholder or owner must contact their relevant Alpine Resort Management Board to request a letter. The Alpine Resort Management Board will determine if the leaseholder or owner meets the eligibility criteria and issue a letter accordingly.

Key Dates

Under the scheme lease holders of properties will be able to apply to their relevant Alpine Resort Management Board for a travel exemption starting from 6 October 2021.

Travel under the scheme may be undertaken from 11 October 2021 until advice from Government that the scheme is no longer required.

Alpine Resort Management Board Role

Alpine Resort Management Boards are best placed to issue a travel exemption to enable property lease holders and owners to travel to undertake preparedness activities if a property is within an Alpine Resort Crown land reserve.

Upon request from a property lease holder or owner, the Alpine Resort Management Board should confirm the following:

1. The person leases or owns the property, or represents the leaseholder or owner
2. The property is either
 - a. located in the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).
 - b. determined to require fire preparedness
3. The intended works to be undertaken.
4. The period of intended travel including the dates of travel and the duration of their stay.

Upon approval of the request, the Alpine Resort Management Board should undertake the following:

1. Provide a letter to the leaseholder, owner, or nominated representative on an Alpine Resort Management Board letter head allowing travel.

2. Provide a copy of the letter from the Chief Health Officer (CHO) and the Chief Commissioner of Police (CCP) to the leaseholder, owner, or nominate representative which sets out the responsibilities and penalties for failing to abide by the conditions of the travel exemption.
3. Inform the owner of the checklist on the letter to travel and inform the owner that by traveling they agree to these conditions.

Alpine Resort Management Board Process Guidance

Each Alpine Resort Management Board is requested to determine eligibility for applications, determine the appropriate representative for each property, and issue letters accordingly. To ensure consistency throughout the State, Alpine Resort Management Boards are requested to use the letter template provided in Appendix B. The template includes fields which must be completed by the Alpine Resort Management Board.

Alpine Resort Management Boards can choose to integrate the letter into their current processes and use it to create a proforma that can generate the letter once the required details are entered.

Confirming ownership or lease

All applicants for the exemption letter must be named as a leaseholder, owner, or representative of the property within the Alpine Resort Management Boards database. Letters can only be granted to a listed owner, leaseholder, or if the owner is unable to attend the property, a nominated representative. If several lease holders, owners or representatives want to go to the property, they can only do so if they live in the same household.

Nominated Representative/s

If a property leaseholder or owner cannot undertake this work the preferred option is for them to engage a local service provider to undertake this work on their behalf.

If hiring a local contractor is not an option, a nominated representative/s is anyone who a property leaseholder or owner nominates to conduct fire preparedness activities on the property leaseholder or owner's behalf.

Confirming property location

There are two reasons that leaseholders or owners could be eligible for an exemption letter.

1. If the property is partially or wholly situated in the Bushfire Management Overlay or other hazard overlay.
2. Under Alpine Resort Management Board discretion that fire preparedness work is required to be undertaken at the property

Confirming the reason for travel

Works conducted before an emergency may include but are not limited to: reducing bushfire fuel loads on the property (e.g. cutting grass, removing vegetation), slashing, clearing gutters, removing items from around dwellings and out-buildings.

Confirming period of travel

In most cases, leaseholders and owners have a maximum of 72 hours from the time they leave their primary residence to the time they return. At the Alpine Resort Management Boards discretion, property leaseholders and owners that must travel long distances will be allowed an additional 24 hours.

Travel under the Scheme may only commence from 11 October 2021.

Provide a letter to the owner as a travel exemption

Alpine Resort Management Boards are required to complete the attached template letter and provide it to the leaseholder or owner of the property. The letter must include the leaseholder's or owner's name, and that of their nominated representative if they cannot travel themselves, the address of the property, the timeframe for travel and an indicative list of the works being undertaken.

The Alpine Resort Management Board should inform the leaseholder, owner or nominated representative that they need to complete the attached checklist and sign the letter for the exemption to travel to be valid.

Where appropriate Alpine Resort Management Board's are able to delegate sign off of letters to an employee who they have formally authorised to undertake this work.

Attach a copy of the letter from the Chief Health Officer and Chief Commissioner of Police

The Chief Health Officer and Chief Commissioner of Police have provided a letter to leaseholders or owners outlining their responsibilities and the penalties for failing to abide by the conditions of exemption to travel. Alpine Resort Management Boards are asked to attach this letter to all exemptions.

Appendix A - Frequently Asked Questions

Does the Alpine Resort Management Board have to contact all leaseholders or owners to determine whether they require this letter?

No, Alpine Resort Management Boards are asked to advertise this service so that Victorians can request a letter if needed.

Can Alpine Resort Management Boards continue to undertake their normal fire prevention program?

Yes, Alpine Resort Management Boards must continue to undertake their responsibilities for fire prevention and can issue Fire Prevention Notices if required.

Can Alpine Resort Management Boards email the travel exemption letter?

Alpine Resort Management Boards can ask the applicant how they wish to receive the letter. Email is the most expedient and should be sent in PDF format.

Who can travel within Victoria to undertake works on a property before or after an emergency?

The leaseholder or owner of the property and their immediate household members, or if the leaseholder or owner is unable to travel, a nominated representative.

Do property leaseholders or owners need to undertake the preparedness works themselves?

No, it is at the discretion of the owner whether they do the works themselves, request a nominated representative to do the work, or engage a contractor. The use of local contractors is strongly encouraged.

Can leaseholders, owners or the nominated representatives attend shops for supplies to undertake the preparation (e.g. tools)?

When traveling any person must comply with the restrictions in the place of their primary residence.

Any person from regional Victoria travelling to an additional property in metropolitan Melbourne or a restricted area must also comply with the restrictions in place.

In some cases this means the owner or the nominated representative will not be able to visit local businesses to purchase supplies. They should travel with the tools and equipment they need. The use of local contractors is strongly encouraged.

Can leaseholders, owners engage a contractor from metropolitan Melbourne to do the works?

Yes, if the works are covered under 'permitted work' within the metropolitan Melbourne directions set by the Chief Health Officer.

How long can the owner remain at their property?

For a maximum of 72 hours. This can be extended by 24 hours at the discretion of the Alpine Resort Management Board where the owner is required to travel large distances to attend the property.

Can an owner or the nominated representative attend their property multiple times to undertake preparedness works?

Yes, if required the leaseholder owner can apply for additional permits.

Where can Alpine Resort Management Boards ask for assistance to work through this process?

Local Government Victoria is available to take questions and discuss issues with Alpine Resort Management Boards. Please contact LGV on 0418 287 976 or lgv.emergencies@ecodev.vic.gov.au.