

Bushfire attack level (BAL)

What is a BAL?

A Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) determines the ability of a building to withstand a bushfire attack (ember attack, radiant heat and direct flame contact). Construction requirements are increased on residential buildings providing greater protection for occupants who may be inside as well as increasing the chances of the building withstanding the affect of a bushfire. If your proposed residential building is within a Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) then a BAL assessment will be required.

Bushfire Building Regulations 2011

The Building Amendment (Bushfire Construction) Regulations 2011 came into effect on 8 September 2011. These regulations implement permanent bushfire construction requirements across Victoria.

The Regulations range from construction methods that provide ember protection at the lowest level, to direct flame protection at the highest. All new houses or alterations/additions in a designated BPA must meet a minimum BAL of 12.5.

A site assessment is required to ascertain your property's BAL, which will determine the construction methods that must be used. The construction requirements of the standard take into account a range of factors, including the Fire Danger Index, land slope and types of surrounding vegetation and its proximity to the building.

Bushfire Attack Level	Description of Predicted Bushfire Attack & Levels of Exposure
BAL - LOW	There is insufficient risk to warrant specific construction requirements.
BAL - 12.5	Ember Attack.
BAL - 19	Increasing levels of Ember Attack and burning debris ignited by windborne embers together with increasing heat flux between 12.5 and 19 KW m ²
BAL - 29	Increasing levels of Ember Attack and burning debris ignited by windborne embers together with increasing heat flux between 19 and 29 KW m ²
BAL - 40	Increasing levels of Ember Attack and burning debris ignited by windborne embers together with increasing heat flux with the increased likelihood of exposure to flames.
BAL - FZ	Direct exposure to flames from fire front in addition to heat flux and ember attack