

Lost documents

In most cases, lost documents can be replaced free of charge. Generally you will need to fill in an application form and in some cases, a statutory declaration. Below is a list of documents you may need to replace, and information on how to do this.

Personal/Family

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages – birth, marriage and change of name certificates (Australia and New Zealand)

Complete a 'Bushfires February 2009 Application for a replacement Birth, Marriage and Change of Name Certificate' form available on the website www.bdm.vic.gov.au (click on 'Forms' and then look at the 'Other forms' section). Lodge the form with the registry. For more information call 1300 369 367.

Medicare – Medicare numbers

Get your Medicare number from any Medicare office or by calling Medicare Australia on 132 011. Medicare Australia will also provide Medicare numbers, on request, direct to hospital staff, health professionals, pharmacists and other support services. This will allow you and your family to get Medicare rebated health services. Replacement cards are available. Get these from Medicare Australia. There is no cost for replacement.

Australian Passport Office – passports

There is no cost for replacement passports for people who lost documents in the bushfires. The scheme stops 10 February 2010. For more information contact the Australian Passport Information Service on 131 232.

Family Law Courts – divorce certificates, court orders, other legal documents

Get replacement copies of documents lost in the bushfires for free from the Family Law Courts registry. Use the 'Document request' form on the website www.familycourt.gov.au (click on 'Forms > Family Law Courts forms' and select 'Document request form'). For more information call the courts' National Enquiry Centre on 1300 352 000.

Australian Taxation Office - personal tax assessment notices, tax returns lodged online, account statements

There is no cost for replacement. For more information call the Emergency Support Infoline 1300 304 975.

Educational qualifications – testamurs and transcripts

Most universities in Victoria will replace copies of your educational qualifications (testamurs, transcripts, academic statements etc) without cost if you lost these in the bushfires. Put your request in writing, including your student ID number, the name of the course you studied and the dates you studied, if you have these. Some institutions may need a statutory declaration. Contact your university or TAFE's student administration, graduation or alumni office for more details about what you need to do.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship – Evidence of Australian Citizenship (Certificate), Certificate of Evidence of Residence Status

The department can help with all citizenship and visa enquiries including replacement of documents. There is no cost for replacement but you will need to fill in a form and supply a copy of your drivers licence and Medicare card. Call the Bushfire Liaison Officer on 0432 758 505 or send an email to vicbushfire.liaison@immi.gov.au

State Trustees – Wills and Powers of Attorney

You can get advice on lost documents such as Wills and Powers of Attorney as well as information on finalising loved one's affairs and administering their estate, help with managing the financial affairs of someone affected by the bushfires, locating next of kin or beneficiaries, funeral arrangements or simply working out what to do next. For more information call the Bushfire Help Line on 9667 6073.

Business

Consumer Affairs Victoria – Business registration

Apply for replacement of documents lodged with the Business Registration section of Consumer Affairs Victoria, including certificates of registration and rules for incorporated associations. You need to write to the Manager of Business Registration, Consumer Affairs Victoria, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne Vic 3000, via letter or email business.affairs@justice.vic.gov.au. You do not need to provide proof (for example, photographs) or a statutory declaration. For more information contact 1300 361 673 (Business Registration).

Note: Consumer Affairs Victoria will only consider replacing documents that were valid at the time of the bushfires. Any certificates or registrations that were cancelled before the bushfires will be renewed with the usual fee.

Australian Taxation Office (ATO) - business tax documents, business activities statements

There is no cost for replacement. For more information call the ATO Emergency Support Infoline 1300 304 975.

Property and tenancy

Department of Environment and Sustainability - Certificates of Title

Complete an 'Application for a New Certificate of Title' form as well as a statutory declaration. Get this form in the booklet *Your Guide to Replacing a Lost or Destroyed Certificate of Title* on the website www.dse.vic.gov.au (click on 'Property, Titles and Maps > Land Titles > Forms, guides and fees' and look at 'Guides > Other' on that page). The completed application form and statutory declaration need to be sent to the department with a copy of your photo identification. There is no cost for replacement for people who lost documents in the bushfires. For more information call 136 186.

Consumer Affairs Victoria – Leases and bonds

Leases

If there is no copy of the original agreement between the tenant or the landlord or agent, both parties can choose to write out the same lease or make a new agreement. Sometimes agents have their own forms but the tenant/landlord can also use Consumer Affairs Victoria's 'Tenancy agreement' form available on the website at www.consumer.vic.gov.au (click on 'Renting > Forms and Publications' and look under 'Forms'). The completed form does not need to be lodged with Consumer Affairs Victoria and there is no fee for making another or a new lease. Make sure everyone keeps a copy of the lease. For more information call 1300 558 181.

Bonds

If there is no copy of the original agreement between the tenant or the landlord or agent, contact the Residential Tenancy Bond Authority to see if they have the details of the agreement and the form itself recorded on their system. If they do, neither the tenant or the landlord/agent need to fill in any new forms. When it comes to claiming any bond,

all that matters is that the signatures on the Repayment Claim forms match up with the signatures on the originally lodged forms kept by the Residential Tenancy Bond Authority. For more information call 1300 137 164 and **see** the 'Renting' chapter.

Motor vehicles

VicRoads – licences and permits

Get a replacement licence or learner permit on the spot by visiting a VicRoads Customer Service Centre. To find out where your closest centre is, visit the VicRoads website at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au (click on 'Office locations and opening hours'). If you cannot go in, call 13 11 71 and VicRoads will deliver the licence or permit to an address of your choice within three working days.

Other

Foreign nationals

Foreign nationals who have lost documents in the bushfires can contact their nearest consulate. A list of consulates is available on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website at www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html

Victoria Police, Licensing Services Division – firearm and private security licenses

Fill in and lodge the 'Bushfire Notification' form, available on the Victoria Police website www.police.vic.gov.au (click on 'Our services > firearms > News and information publications'). There is no cost for replacement for people who lost licences in the bushfires. For more information call 1300 651 645.

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this chapter of the Bushfire Legal Help Handbook is intended to provide general information on legal topics, current at the time of first publication. The contents do not constitute legal advice, are not intended as a substitute for legal advice and should not be relied on as such. You should get legal advice in relation to your individual circumstances and any particular matters you may have.

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