

South Australian **STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE**



**Supporting our communities to
protect what is important to them.**



Contents

This booklet contains information about the State Emergency Service (SES), what it is and the types of incidents it responds to. It also includes advice about how to plan and prepare for extreme weather events to reduce the impact on property and life, and keep you safe.

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Message from the Chief Officer

The South Australian State Emergency Service (SES) is an emergency and rescue service made up almost entirely of volunteers. There are 67 SES units throughout the State and more than 1,600 volunteers who are dedicated to helping their communities during emergencies. Our volunteers are easily identified by their distinctive orange overalls and you will often see them on the news at the scene of various emergencies.

Things happen, issues arise and situations change in the community almost on a daily basis. The SES is a dynamic and hard working organisation and our people are always alert and ready to respond to help the community cope during emergencies. We have a highly skilled and dedicated group of volunteers and we are always looking for new and enthusiastic people to join us.

This publication has been developed to provide you with some more information about who we are, what we do and how you can get involved.

I hope you enjoy learning more about the SES and the part it plays in your community.

Stay safe.

Stuart Macleod ESM

Chief Officer

South Australian State Emergency Service



*Chief Officer
Stuart Macleod
and Paddy the platypus*

About the SES

The SES is a versatile and highly active volunteer emergency service organisation. It works very closely with a diverse group of stakeholders including the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission, Country Fire Service, Metropolitan Fire Service, SA Police, SA Health, SA Ambulance Service and the Bureau of Meteorology.

While the primary role of the SES is to respond to incidents involving floods and storms, it also provides crucial support and assistance to other emergency service organisations with incident response and recovery. One major support role is in assisting the SA Police with searches.

As the Hazard Leader and Control Agency for extreme weather in South Australia, the SES aims to increase community awareness and preparedness relating to extreme weather events such as floods, storms, tsunamis and heatwave. A well prepared community is better able to respond to and recover from an emergency, therefore the SES educates people to be as self-reliant as possible, especially during a flood or storm.

The SES has a total of 67 units spread across the state. These units provide emergency response to the community of South Australia 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Central Region

- Campbelltown
- Eastern Suburbs
- Edinburgh
- Enfield
- Metro South
- Mount Barker
- Noarlunga
- Onkaparinga
- Prospect
- Sturt
- Tea Tree Gully
- Western Adelaide

North Region

- Andamooka
- Booleroo Centre
- Burra
- Bute
- Clare
- Coober Pedy
- Hallett
- Hawker and District
- Kapunda
- Laura

- Leigh Creek
- Maitland
- Marla
- Mintabie
- North Operations Coordination
- Port Augusta
- Port Broughton
- Port Pirie
- Quorn
- Roxby Downs
- Saddleworth and District
- Snowtown
- Spalding
- Warooka

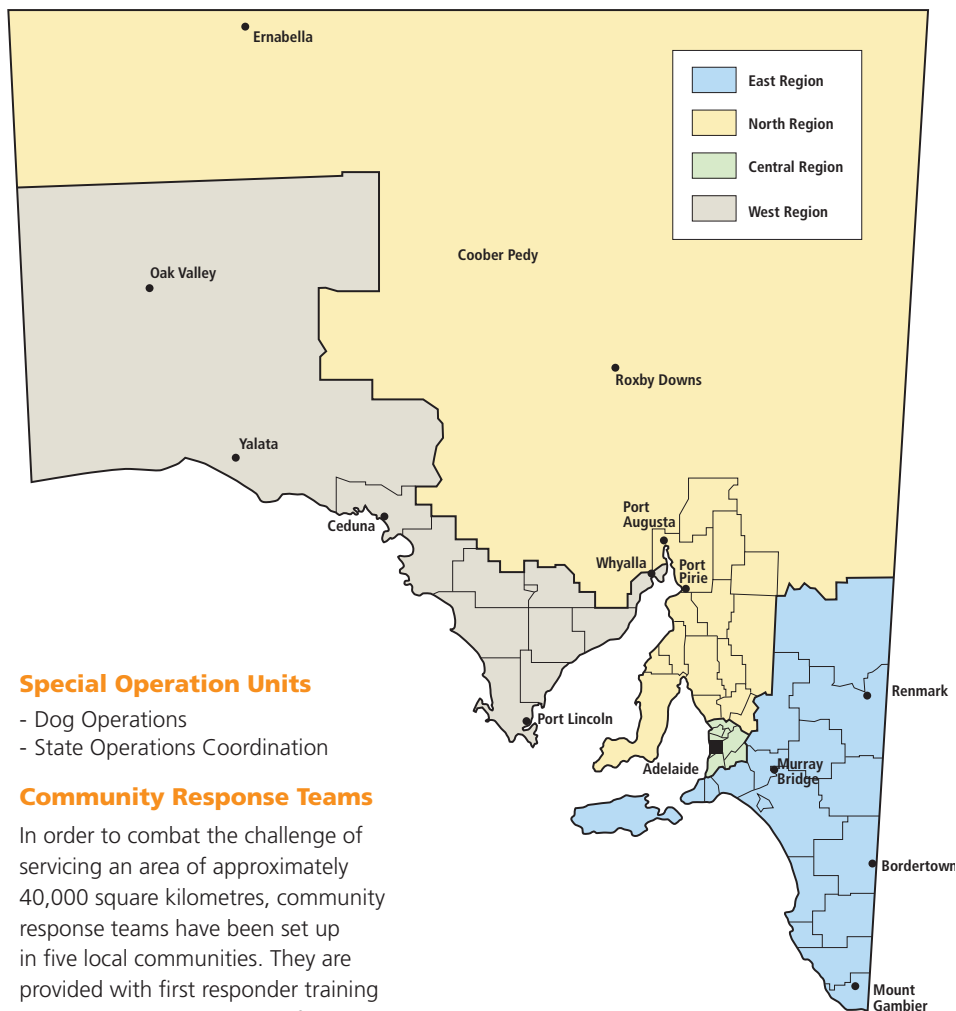
East Region

- Barmera
- Berri
- Blanchetown
- Bordertown
- East Operations Coordination (Riverland)
- East Operations Coordination (South East)
- Kangaroo Island

- Keith
- Kingston SE
- Loxton
- Meningie
- Millicent
- Mount Gambier & District
- Murray Bridge & District
- Renmark & Paringa
- South Coast
- Strathalbyn
- Yankalilla

West Region

- Ceduna
- Cleve
- Cummins
- Kimba
- Nullarbor
- Port Lincoln
- Streaky Bay
- Tumby Bay
- West Operations Coordination
- Whyalla
- Wudinna



Special Operation Units

- Dog Operations
- State Operations Coordination

Community Response Teams

In order to combat the challenge of servicing an area of approximately 40,000 square kilometres, community response teams have been set up in five local communities. They are provided with first responder training and equipment to provide a first response to incidents. Such teams have proven effective where unit responses may take longer periods of time to attend an incident.

The community response teams are located at:

- Innamincka
- Beverley Mines
- Parachilna/Angorichina
- Wirrealpa
- Marla



The many roles of the SES

Flood (including tsunami) response

The SES provides advice, evacuation, rescue and essential supplies to people isolated by floodwater.

In South Australia, the SES also coordinates the Community FloodSafe program where volunteers talk to community groups, local residents, businesses and schools about what they can do to reduce the impact of flood and improve the resilience of their community if a flood should occur. Visit www.ses.sa.gov.au for more information on the Community FloodSafe program.

Storm response

The SES performs tasks such as securing and covering damaged roofs, removing fallen trees and branches from property and rescuing trapped people.

Search and rescue

The SES rescues people from vehicle crashes, cliffs, confined spaces and marine situations as well as performing other general rescues that may be required.

SES volunteers frequently assist the SA Police with searches for lost people.

Heatwave

Like many parts of Australia, South Australia is prone to heatwave.

Extreme weather events are an unavoidable natural hazard, however, good preparation can go a long way to reducing the many costs associated with the damage that these events can cause. Damage can be financial, physical, environmental and psychological. Unfortunately these events can also result in the loss of life.

While very hot days during summer are expected, you need to be aware that hot weather can have a debilitating impact on general wellbeing. Being prepared can reduce the risk to you and your family or at least minimise the impact. As the Hazard Leader and Control Agency for extreme weather the SES provides information, advice and warnings before and during extreme heat events.



Volunteering for the SES

In South Australia there are over 1,600 SES volunteers. These volunteers are trained and ready to help their communities during emergencies and are easily recognised by their orange overalls with 'SES RESCUE' on the back.

SES volunteers have a sense of adventure and do exciting things. They receive excellent accredited training, are there for their community when emergencies occur, get to work with other like-minded people and make life-long friends.

The SES is always seeking to recruit South Australians who are reasonably fit and active, community minded and willing to tackle new and interesting challenges.

Here is a bit more information on becoming a volunteer.

What do SES volunteers do?

SES volunteers attend a wide range of emergency incidents. Volunteers respond to callouts within their communities and across the State as needed. Sometimes they even travel interstate to assist other State Emergency Services to support their communities.





What level of commitment does volunteering involve?

Volunteers respond to operational callouts as they occur. It is hard to predict how often this will be, but the SES is generally at its busiest during periods of extreme weather, in particular during floods and storms.

SES volunteers attend regular training evenings and exercises run by their unit. Metropolitan units generally get together for training one night each week. Regional SES units do this as well, although sometimes the frequency may be fortnightly or monthly – it all depends on the unit and the needs of the community it serves. On average, units conduct a full day of exercises (on a weekend day) once every two to three months.

While the SES is the lead agency for flood and storm response, it also provides considerable assistance to other emergency service organisations for a variety of incidents.

In short, this means that SES volunteers are required to respond to a wide range of incidents all year round. Emergencies can happen in the middle of the day, or in the middle of the night.

You will never know what your next challenge will be, but one thing is for sure, life with the SES is never boring!

Can I volunteer if I work full-time or part-time?

Absolutely!

Many SES volunteers are engaged in full-time work and are supported by committed employers who make it possible for them to leave their workplace at very short notice in support of their communities. Others commit to volunteering outside of work hours. The SES also has volunteer places available specifically for people who have the capacity to volunteer during the day time rather than after hours.

Why become a volunteer?

There are many reasons why so many people volunteer for the SES. The rewards of volunteering are many, including learning new skills, keeping fit, gaining valuable qualifications, earning respect within the community and being part of a team.

While the SES responds to some challenging and demanding incidents, the friendships gained, skills learned and satisfaction felt from helping the community are priceless. The SES really does make a difference.





What training is provided?

SES volunteers receive accredited training in many different areas including:

- Vertical cliff, motor vehicle, building collapse and marine rescue
- Air, land and marine search
- Storm damage
- Flood mitigation
- Communications
- Map reading and navigation
- Operations centre duties
- Reconnaissance and observation
- Leadership and instructional methods.



What type of people volunteer?

All types of people volunteer.

No matter who you are, or where you are from, volunteering for the SES is a great way to meet new people and get involved in your community.

Membership of the SES is open to men and women with a reasonable degree of physical fitness and a passion to contribute to their community. The SES accepts members from the age of 13 as cadets and from 18 into general membership. There are many different roles in which you can become involved regardless of your age, gender or background.

It really is a team effort at the SES and we need lots of team players with a variety of skills. Not everyone has to hang off cliffs or cut people out of cars – we also need people to operate radios, observe, search, navigate, operate plant and machinery and lots more. Not everyone has to be super fit or highly mobile, but everyone has to be committed to learning and to making a difference.

How do I become a volunteer?

Becoming a volunteer is easy - all you need is energy, enthusiasm and community spirit.

If you want to be part of a team that really makes a difference, telephone **1300 364 587** or complete the enrolment form online at **www.ses.sa.gov.au** You will then be referred to your nearest SES unit.

For more information feel free to contact your local SES headquarters (see back cover for details) or visit the SES website. The website is also a good place to find out about the latest SES news, warnings and advice.

We've got the gear

We've got the experience

We'll train you

We'll equip you

**All you need to bring
is your energy and your
enthusiasm!**



Extreme weather preparedness

A prepared community is better able to respond to and recover from an emergency

In a typical year in South Australia, floods and storms account for well in excess of 50% of the overall economic costs of all natural hazards, including bushfire. This means that being prepared for floods and storms should be a high priority for all South Australians.

The SES works very closely with the Bureau of Meteorology, especially during periods of extreme weather and when issuing weather related public safety advice.

Things you can do to avoid injury and property damage

Here is some simple advice relevant to all South Australians, which can assist you in becoming better prepared and safer during **floods, storms, heatwave** and **earthquake**.





Floods

A flood can be defined as water inundating land that is normally dry. That is fairly obvious, but you should never be complacent about floods as they can happen in a flash!

Get to know your local area, particularly if there is a history of flooding and be aware of the specific flood risk to your property.

During a flood you should take the following precautions:

- Secure your property and valuables.
- Turn off power sources such as gas and electricity and do not turn anything on again until you are sure it is safe to do so.
- Have waterproof bags ready to protect clothing and important documents.
- Never attempt to drive in floodwaters. Be aware that roads can become treacherous and impassable due to heavy rains.
- Obey road closure signs and stick to the main roads.
- Always follow instructions and directions from local authorities and be ready to evacuate if necessary.
- Do not camp in creek beds.
- Never enter floodwaters and in particular do not allow children to play in or near them.
- If stranded stay with your vehicle.
- Stay tuned to local radio for current weather advice and warnings.

Storms

During storms and periods of generally wet and windy weather you should take the following precautions:

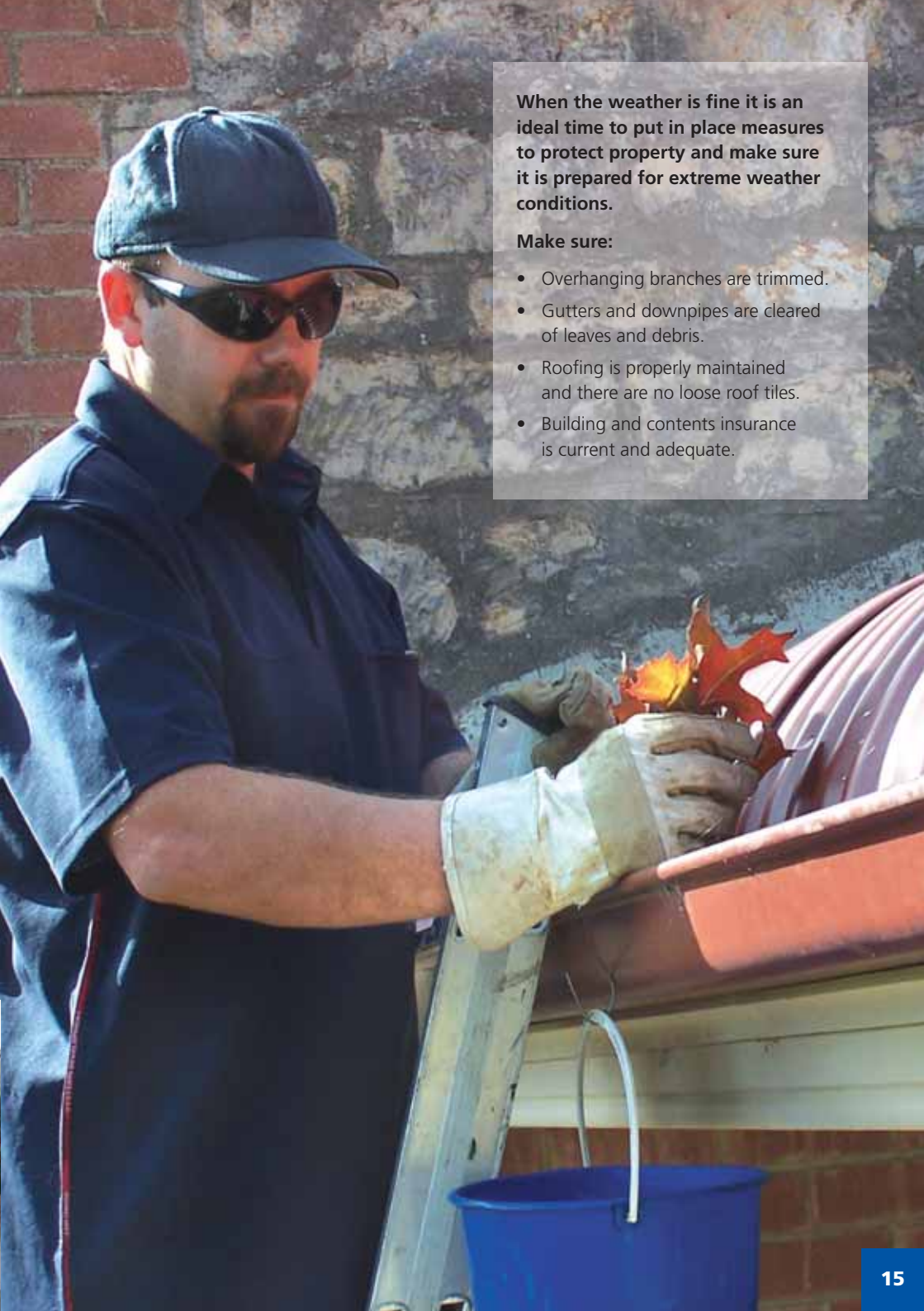
- Ensure loose items such as outdoor furniture and children's play equipment (e.g. trampolines and cubby houses) are put away or secured.
- Park vehicles undercover or away from trees.
- Stay indoors and away from windows at times when weather conditions are severe.
- Stay away from fallen powerlines (it should be assumed that they are live - fallen powerlines should be reported to ETSA Utilities on 131 366).
- Keep clear of creeks and storm drains.
- Do not ride or walk through floodwaters.
- Consider the security of pets.

It is also important for motorists to be vigilant and exercise additional care during storms.

Motorists should:

- Observe all road signs.
- Be alert to sudden changes in road conditions.
- Be aware of any fallen trees, branches and debris.
- Drive carefully on wet and slippery roads.
- Turn on your headlights if visibility is poor (and remember to turn them off when you arrive).
- Be aware of emergency services workers and others who may be working on the side of the road.
- Avoid driving in extremely adverse conditions unless it is absolutely necessary. If it is, maintain an increased safe driving distance between your car and the car in front of you and reduce your speed.
- Never attempt to drive in floodwaters.
- Stay tuned to local radio for current weather advice and warnings.

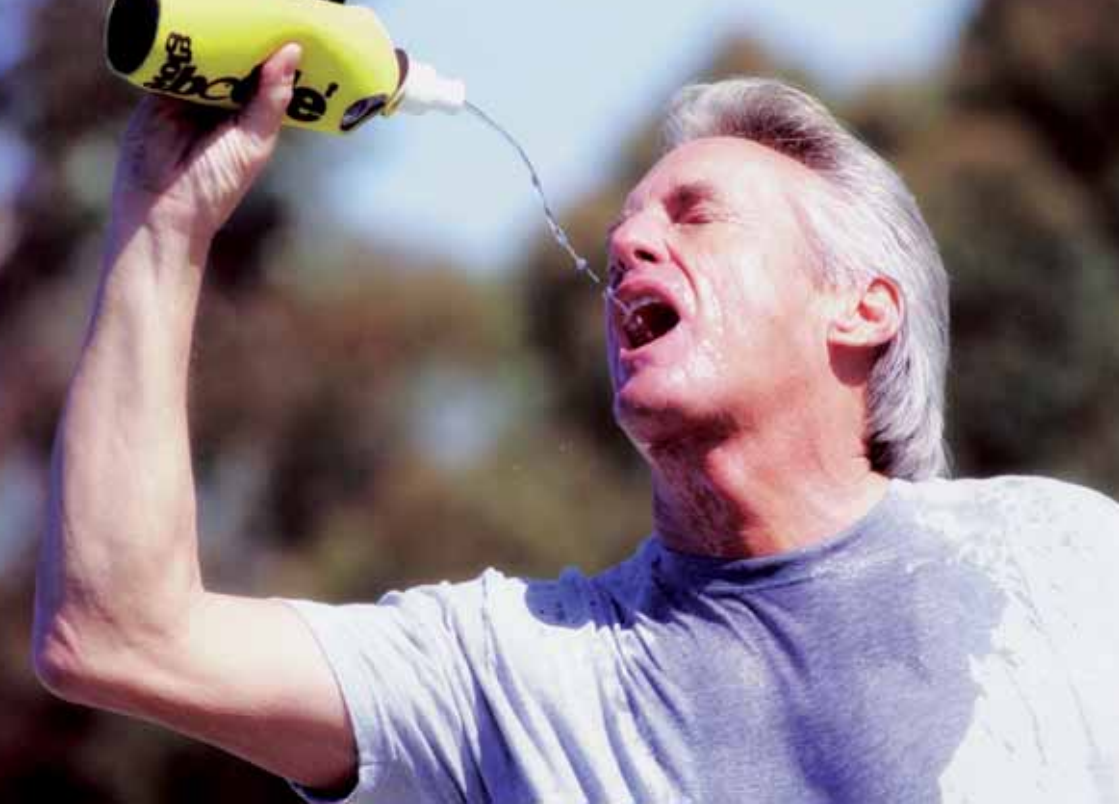




When the weather is fine it is an ideal time to put in place measures to protect property and make sure it is prepared for extreme weather conditions.

Make sure:

- Overhanging branches are trimmed.
- Gutters and downpipes are cleared of leaves and debris.
- Roofing is properly maintained and there are no loose roof tiles.
- Building and contents insurance is current and adequate.



Heatwave

During the 20th century, heatwaves caused more deaths in Australia than any other natural hazard. With global warming resulting in rising temperatures and common extreme weather circumstances, heatwaves have become a part of life in Australia.

Extreme heat can have a detrimental impact on communities. It affects many parts of everyday life such as health and wellbeing, energy and infrastructure, public transport and agriculture. It can also contribute to an increased fire risk and heat stressed trees, both of which pose a significant threat to public safety.



During periods of extreme heat you should take the following precautions:

- Drink plenty of fluids but avoid alcoholic and caffeinated drinks.
- Make regular contact with elderly relatives, friends and neighbours, especially if they live alone to ensure they are keeping cool and drinking plenty of fluids.
- Keep homes cool by closing blinds and curtains during the day and making good use of fans or air conditioners (which are on the cool setting).
- Stay indoors. Open up homes at night if it cools down.
- Limit outdoor activities to mornings and evenings.
- When outdoors wear light, loose fitting clothing as well as a broad brimmed hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- Ensure babies and young children stay out of the sun and give babies extra fluids, dress them lightly and keep them where it's cool.
- People with ongoing mental health conditions or dementia should continue to take their medication, stay in touch with family or friends and seek medical help if they start to feel unwell.
- Never leave children or pets unattended in the car.
- Make use of air conditioned public facilities such as shopping centres, cinemas and libraries.
- Be aware of the symptoms of heat stress and if they develop take cool baths or showers and use cool packs or wet towels to cool down.
- Remember that cordless landline telephones do not work during power outages. Make sure you have alternative means of communication.
- Consider the safety of your pets and animals. Wet them down and ensure they have adequate shade and water.
- Seek medical advice if you are feeling unwell.

The SES has developed a *Heatwave Information Guide* which provides more detailed advice. For a copy visit www.ses.sa.gov.au



Earthquake

An earthquake is a sudden shaking of the Earth's surface caused by rock movement or breakage deep within the Earth, which is the result of stresses that have built up within the Earth's brittle crust.

If an earthquake strikes you should take the following precautions:

- Stay indoors and seek shelter under a door frame, table, or bench.
- If outdoors, keep well clear of buildings, other structures, powerlines, trees, etc.
- If in a vehicle, stop in an open area and listen to your car radio for advice.
- Do not use lifts.

After an earthquake you must remain vigilant:

- Expect aftershocks.
- Watch for hazards and check for injuries or damage.
- Turn off electricity, gas and water.
- Only use telephones in an emergency.
- Avoid driving unless for an emergency.
- Stay calm and help others if possible.
- Stay tuned to local radio for advice and warnings.





It is a good idea for all households to have an emergency kit that includes items such as a battery operated torch and radio (plus spare batteries), first aid supplies and a list of useful phone numbers.

Remember!

**Telephone 132 500 for SES response
and 000 if the matter is life threatening.**

Weather information can be found at www.bom.gov.au

Contact details

For general enquiries *(Administration hours are Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm)*

SES State Headquarters

Telephone: (08) 8463 4171

Address: Level 8, 60 Waymouth Street, Adelaide.

SES Central Region Headquarters

Telephone: (08) 8345 9100

Address: 25 Fourth Street, Bowden

SES East Region Headquarters

Telephone: (08) 8531 2940

Address: 100 Adelaide Road, Murray Bridge

SES North Region Headquarters

Telephone: (08) 8633 3811

Address: Short Street, Port Pirie

SES West Region Headquarters

Telephone: (08) 8682 6746

Address: 32 Matthew Place, Port Lincoln

To volunteer telephone **1300 364 587**

For SES response telephone **132 500** *(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)*

For life threatening emergencies telephone **000**

www.ses.sa.gov.au



Follow the SES on Twitter at http://twitter.com/SA_SES



Government
of South Australia



RESCUE