

FRIDAY, 27 MAY, 2022

RACV URGES VICTORIANS TO BE SAFE THIS WINTER

RACV is encouraging Victorians to take the necessary precautions to ensure their safety at home and on the road ahead of winter.

According to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, there were more than 150 severe weather events in Victoria during 2021, including extreme winds, rain, hail and flooding.

Australia is currently in the midst of a La Niña weather phase, meaning the odds of above-average winter rainfall will increase again in 2022.

RACV General Manager Home Portfolio, Darren Turner, said being prepared for severe weather events at home can save owners time, money and prevent the risk of serious injury.

“When it comes to avoiding serious damage to your home and your possessions in a severe weather event, it’s often the simple things that make the biggest difference,” Mr Turner said.

“It’s important to tend to any maintenance required around the home – particularly cleaning out gutters – and check that loose items such as outdoor settings, umbrellas and trampolines are secured under cover and away from trees.

“Don’t take any risks – stay indoors and away from windows during a storm and continue to monitor weather warnings and forecasts through the VicEmergency and Bureau of Meteorology websites.

“Stay away from fallen powerlines – you should always assume that a powerline is live, with the potential to cause very serious harm.”

RACV advises that one of the most crucial aspects of preparing for severe weather is ensuring you have sufficient insurance cover – urging people to check that their policy is up to date and covers for extreme events, such as floods.

The RACV website features a helpful tool to assist home-owners in [calculating the rebuild cost of your home](#).

Darren also highlighted the need for Victorians to ensure their heaters are running efficiently after months of inactivity.

“Running a heater that isn’t working efficiently can impact the health, safety and finances of your household,” Mr Turner said.

“A regular heater service by a qualified professional before winter can help improve air quality, reduce running costs, maximise the life span of your heater and greatly reduce the risk of an electrical fault and fire.”

RACV Policy Lead - Safety, Elvira Lazar, said there were several things people could do to prepare for extreme weather on the road.

“Whether it’s a severe storm, powerful winds or just light rain, a change in conditions on the road and home can have a significant impact,” Ms Lazar said.

“Victorians are aware of how quickly weather conditions can change, so it’s important to plan ahead wherever possible and have safety at the forefront of your mind.”

RACV has a dedicated webpage with expert advice on staying safe and protecting your property in the event of severe weather at <https://www.racv.com.au/membership/member-benefits/expert-advice/advocacy-for-members/severe-weather>.

Ms Lazar outlined RACV’s tips for staying safe on the road in the event of heavy rain and flash flooding.

“If driving conditions are dangerous, increase the gap between you and the car in front to give you more time to react and, if necessary, safely pull over,” Ms Lazar said.

“If a road is flooded, find an alternative route. Flood waters can be deeper than you think and sometimes powerful enough to wash a car right off the road – it’s simply not worth the risk.”

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