



The First 72 Hours Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is The First 72 Hours program?

The First 72 Hours program has been designed to align with page 10 of the Victorian State Emergency Management Plan under shared responsibility, the SENDAI Framework, and National Principles for Disaster Recovery.

The program was developed by Alpine and Moira Shire Councils in conjunction with the Country Fire Authority (Victoria), Victoria State Emergency Service, and Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council based on initial work by Corrangamite Shire. Approvals were also sought from Emergency Management Victoria and Emergency Recovery Victoria.

The program has been designed and tested to be simple, replicable, and work for people with colour blindness, dyslexia, low literacy levels, as well as for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. The 72 Hours program is culturally safe and inclusive for First Nations Peoples and people who are LGBTQIA+.

Who is The First 72 Hours program intended for?

The First 72 Hours program is a practical tool designed to help individuals, households, businesses, and communities identify their vulnerabilities in emergencies and create personalised plans that suit their own individual needs to strengthen their resilience.

Rather than replacing existing resources or programs, The First 72 Hours program serves as a bridge, guiding people towards expert advice and support from emergency services, agencies, and local government. By empowering individuals and communities to take proactive steps towards their own resilience, the program enhances preparedness efforts while allowing emergency services and agencies to focus on their education and engagement more effectively.

Who can implement The First 72 Hours program?

Local government, agencies, and community groups can all play a part in supporting individuals, households, businesses, and communities to implement the program.

The First 72 Hours program aims to encourage individuals to hold kitchen table conversations with their family, friends, neighbours, and community to empower others to plan for the types of emergencies that may impact them. These conversations can be powerful at uncovering vulnerabilities and gaps which can be brought to the experts to provide information and advice to achieve greater resilience goals within the community.



Where did The First 72 Hours program come from?

The First 72 Hours program began as a government directive in Canada back in World War I when individuals were expected to sustain their own continuity of livelihood and quality of life for 72 hours due to competing priorities from National Defence.

Since its inception, The First 72 Hours program has been adopted multiple times, including in New Zealand in 2011 following the devastating Christchurch earthquake. Under shared responsibility, as outlined in the Victorian State Emergency Management Plan, individuals, households, businesses, and communities are expected to be resilient for the first 72 hours of an emergency.

In response, the Alpine and Moira Shire Councils developed a simple, replicable program to support their communities in achieving this goal. This program has since been made freely available to other local governments, agencies, and community groups.

What can the First 72 Hours program be used for?

The First 72 Hours program is not just about major disasters such as fires, floods, and storms. It can be tailored to anything deemed an emergency or impact in an individual's life. This also considers no power, no communication options, lack of access to food, or isolation. It can even be used as a plan for no work for an extended period of time.

What do you mean by a plan?

Planning allows individuals to recognise their own strengths and identify any gaps. When things are put into place, it can result in an increased sense of confidence and mental wellbeing knowing that they have made the decisions during times of peace. This can contribute to making people feel better about how they might handle a situation, leading to greater outcomes and the feeling that all is not out of their control in the event of an emergency.

It does not have to be a big written plan, although sometimes it is. It may just mean that people put something into place, such as a backup generator for power outages.

Can I change The First 72 Hours program?

For the integrity of the one brand, one message, and to avoid confusion in communities, the collateral is not to be changed without written permission from the developers. You can add your details to the white box on the flyer and add your logo to the worksheet and the flyer.

Any requests for changes to the branded materials or delivery of the program is to be directed to the developers by emailing em@alpineshire.vic.gov.au.



What if I work in another state or country?

We are aware that different states and countries may require a change in the expert agency section and information section.

If this is the case for you, we ask that you collaborate with the developers to make changes that meet the needs of your state and country. This will ensure that the one brand, one message is retained, and the changed collateral can then be added and shared to benefit others in your state or country.

Is The First 72 Hours program easy to roll out?

The First 72 Hours program offers a flexible and adaptable approach to community resilience, designed to foster kitchen table conversations within households, among neighbours, and across communities to encourage community planning.

Implementation can take various forms, including:

- Digital engagement – Sharing a Council-branded video, such as the one featured on this webpage, along with access to a downloadable worksheet and flyer with printable copies available for broader distribution.
- Interactive workshops – Hosting round-table discussions where individuals and communities collaboratively develop plans for specific emergency scenarios. This hands-on approach enables participants to replicate the process for other emergencies and share their knowledge with family, friends, and neighbours.
- Community-driven initiatives – Facilitating discussions that identify and address local challenges, leading to collective problem-solving and proactive community planning.

By offering multiple engagement methods, The First 72 Hours program empowers communities to take ownership of their preparedness, strengthening resilience at both individual and collective levels.

Does The First 72 Hours program replace other programs?

No, The First 72 Hours program is a conversation starter designed to lead individuals and communities to the great resources they need to suit their individual needs. It also supports expert agencies to identify gaps and produce information that suits the needs of individuals and communities.

What do you mean by experts?

We recognise that individuals are the experts in their own lives, as they best understand their unique needs and vulnerabilities. Once these vulnerabilities are identified, individuals should be empowered to seek guidance from subject matter experts to develop informed and effective plans.



These experts may include:

- Country Fire Authority (CFA) – for fire preparedness and response.
- State Emergency Service (SES) – for emergencies such as floods, storms, and landslides.
- Local General Practitioners (GPs) – for medical advice and health-related planning.
- Red Cross – for family reunification, psychological first aid, and planning for children and seniors.
- Agriculture Victoria (AgVic) – for concerns related to pests or animal disease.
- Insurance Council or Legal Council – for guidance on insurance and legal considerations.
- Essential service providers – such as power, water, and internet companies, as well as agencies supporting specific demographics.

Local government can play a key role in facilitating connections between communities and these experts, ensuring individuals and communities receive the information and support needed to enhance their preparedness and resilience.

How does this help local governments and agencies?

The First 72 Hours program is designed to align with page 10 of the State Emergency Management Plan under shared responsibility, the SENDAI Framework, and the National Principles of Disaster Recovery. It supports Councils to fulfil their obligations to help communities build resilience and take responsibility for themselves during the first 72 hours of an emergency.

Recognising the financial constraints of local government, the program was developed on a minimal budget and is shared free of charge to support resilience-building through stronger connections between Councils and their communities at minimal cost.

By fostering collaboration between communities and local government, the program enables both to work together in addressing significant issues identified by communities. Councils play a critical role in advocating for these issues, ensuring they are acknowledged in Incident Control Centres and by decision-makers with a deeper understanding of community needs.

The First 72 Hours program enhances the accuracy of community profiles and generates essential data for securing funding tailored to local needs. It also facilitates informed decision-making, ensuring that actions taken during critical moments are more effective and efficient.

Agencies can roll out The First 72 Hours program by tailoring it to fit alongside existing programs and messages.



Where do I go to get more information?

For any questions, to discuss changes, or to roll out The First 72 Hours program in your community, email em@alpineshire.vic.gov.au

How do I get the collateral?

If you are a local government, agency, or community group, you can request the appropriate collateral and information by emailing em@alpineshire.vic.gov.au

Can I share The First 72 Hours program with other Councils or organisations?

Yes, however we ask that you have them email em@alpineshire.vic.gov.au for appropriate collateral and information so that we can track the program reach and benchmark growth.

What if we have an idea to add to the collateral?

We love to collaborate with other local governments and organisations to increase the available collateral for the benefit of all and encourage you to contact us to discuss by emailing em@alpineshire.vic.gov.au

We also love to acknowledge and promote the good work done by all.

Who has already contributed to the program?

We acknowledge Corrangamite Shire for the initial concept of The First 72 Hours program.

The First 72 Hours program was developed by Karen van Huizen from Alpine Shire Council and Kate Goldsmith from Moira Shire Council, alongside Country Fire Authority (Victoria), Victoria State Emergency Service, and Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council with support from Australasian Institute of Emergency Services.

The translated collateral was developed by Alpine Shire Council, Campaspe Shire Council, Greater City of Shepparton, Moira Shire Council, and the Northern Ethnic Multicultural Association.

The New South Wales conversion was undertaken by Federation Shire Council.



Why would I take on the First 72 Hours program?

The First 72 Hours program is a cost-effective, ready-to-use initiative that strengthens community resilience while aligning seamlessly with Council plans and Municipal Emergency Management Plans.

By adopting the program, Councils and agencies benefit from:

- Minimal cost implementation – The program comes with developed and tested collateral, reducing the need for additional resources.
- Consistent messaging – A single brand and message ensure clarity and impact across different communities.
- Stronger collaboration – Councils can share best practices, success stories, and rollout strategies, enhancing collective resilience.
- Alignment with agencies – The program supports and reinforces existing agency messaging, ensuring a coordinated approach to emergency preparedness.

Taking on The First 72 Hours program is an opportunity to empower communities, fulfil Council obligations, and enhance resilience, all with minimal cost and maximum impact.