

Advice for French Island visitors

French Island in Westernport Bay is a remote and unique nature based locality close to Melbourne.

The Island is large, approximately 170 km², but sparsely populated with just over 100 residents.

As French Island has remained relatively isolated and undisturbed from urban development, it lacks many of the amenities we are used to having on the mainland.

All visitors planning to visit French Island need to consider the enclosed information and advice to ensure a safe and enjoyable stay.



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French Island

When on the island

The General Store approximately 3km from the Jetty on Tankerton Rd is available during business hours to obtain food, bottled water, petrol and basic supplies, it is however recommended that you bring everything you will need for the duration of your stay.

Hazards to be aware of on French Island:

- Swimming is not recommended due to the soft muds and strong currents.
- Snakes are present and should be left alone.
- Mosquitoes are active and visitors should wear insect repellent at all times.
- Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return, choose a distance that suits your level of fitness.
- Always carry identification and relevant personal health information e.g. regarding allergies and who to contact in case of emergency.

For emergencies

In case of a life threatening emergency call Triple Zero (000). If safe and trained to do so administer first aid until emergency services arrive.



Enjoy your stay on

French Island



Things to consider before you go



Getting there

Access to and from French Island is by passenger ferry from Stony Point and Phillip Island (www.westernportferries.com.au) or by the vehicular barge from Corinella. Severe weather can restrict the running of these services so visitors need to consider overnight on-island accommodation arrangements as alternative transport off the island is unlikely.

Utilities

There is no mains power, gas or reticulated drinking water.



Communication

Mobile phone coverage varies depending on the carrier. Check with your carrier for service details. There are some black spots, especially in the island's interior and within the National Park. Will you have enough power to maintain and use your mobile phone for the duration of your visit?

Medical

There is no medical facility or any medical assistance available on the island. Bringing your own first aid kit is recommended. You also need to bring any required personal medication.

Emergency service response can be delayed on French Island from the mainland.



Transport

All roads and tracks are unsealed and subject to seasonal closure. Tracks can be wet, sandy, boggy and/or dry. Sturdy shoes or walking boots are recommended.



Victoria Police reminds drivers and cyclists that the road laws apply to all public roads on French Island.



There is no public transport available. Walking and cycling are the best ways for visitors to get around, unless you book a tour through a commercial operator.



Other services

There are limited government services available on French Island. Parks Victoria has a presence managing the National Park that occupies two thirds of the Island and CFA support a brigade of local volunteer firefighters.

The residents on French Island have established the French Island Community Association (FICA), a non-profit group to represent their interests.

There is useful community emergency and other practical information provided for French Island on the FICA website: www.frenchislandinfo.com



Street addressing on the Island is limited but for visitors with a smartphone it is recommended you download the Emergency + App.

This is a Triple Zero (000) app that provides and displays the GPS coordinates of your location so you can read it out to the emergency operator to direct emergency responders to your location during an emergency.

French Island is a high bushfire risk area and visitors should remain aware of this risk if planning on visiting or camping during forecast fire danger periods. The park will be closed on Code Red days and other days as determined. For more information and details on park closures visit the Parks Victoria website before your departure.

VicEmergency is the official Victorian Government smartphone app for emergency warnings and information. Download the VicEmergency app, set up a user profile and watch zones for French Island to ensure you receive official warnings and information when planning to visit.

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