



# Your guide to bushfire safety



Government  
of South Australia

Bushfire Information Hotline  
**1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)**  
[www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)



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## **What's inside the guide:**

PREPARE by knowing your risk  
PREPARE with 7 keys to survival  
PREPARE with knowledge of fires and terminology  
PREPARE your home and property  
PREPARE yourself and your plan  
PREPARE by understanding the regulations.  
ACT with information  
ACT on fire danger days, know where to go  
SURVIVE at home, work and on holiday  
Your Bushfire SURVIVAL Plan

	<b>FIRE DANGER RATING</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION</b>
<b>FIRES CAN THREATEN SUDDENLY AND WITHOUT WARNING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know the Fire Danger Rating in your area and be aware of local conditions</li> <li>Watch for signs of fire, especially smoke and flames</li> <li>Have your Bushfire Survival Plan and Emergency Kit ready</li> <li>Call 000 to report a fire</li> </ul>	<b>CATASTROPHIC</b> TOTAL FIRE BAN	<b>YOU NEED TO ACT NOW</b> Leaving a bushfire prone area the night before or early in the day is the best option for your survival
	<b>EXTREME</b> TOTAL FIRE BAN	<b>YOU NEED TO GET READY TO ACT</b> Leaving early is the safest option for your survival. Only stay if you and your property are prepared to the highest level.
	<b>SEVERE</b> TOTAL FIRE BAN	<b>YOU NEED TO BE AWARE</b> Leaving early is the safest option for your survival. Only stay if you your home is well prepared and you can actively defend it.
	<b>VERY HIGH</b>	<b>YOU NEED TO BE PREPARED</b> Check your bushfire survival plan, know where to go for more information and monitor the situation for any changes.
	<b>HIGH</b>	
	<b>LOW-MODERATE</b>	

The information in this book is just an introduction and only one of the tools you should use to ensure you are prepared for bushfire. For more information, CFS recommends:

- Attending a local Bushfire Blitz meeting in your area
- Joining or establishing a neighbourhood Community Fire Safe group
- Completing our online Bushfire Household Self-Assessment Tool
- Browsing our fact sheets online (a full list is on p72)
- Downloading the Alert SA mobile phone app.

To find out more about these **options visit**

## **PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.**

**Living in a bush setting is a lifestyle choice for many South Australians. The benefits are enormous, but so are the risks.**

All people living in or near bush, grassland or scrub—including those in suburban fringe areas of Adelaide and regional South Australia—are in danger of experiencing a bushfire.

In South Australia we have experienced several such events. Ash Wednesday in 1983 and the Wangary Bushfires in 2005 resulted in serious loss of life, but every year there are thousands of incidents and homes lost to bushfire. The reality of experiencing a dangerous bushfire is a risk that everyone must seriously consider.

**While fires are inevitable, they are also survivable—and your chances of saving yourself, your family and your home increase according to your level of planning and preparation. The CFS will not always be able to protect each individual property threatened by fire. People who do not have a Bushfire Survival Plan are putting themselves and their family at risk**

Before summer starts you need to decide what you will do if a bushfire threatens.

**PREPARE** yourself, your family, home or business: know your bushfire risk and have a Bushfire Survival Plan.

**ACT** on the fire danger ratings: put your preparations into action, do not wait and see.

**SURVIVE** by monitoring conditions if a fire starts: know the bushfire warning alert levels and what you will do if you are caught in a fire.

This booklet is an introduction to help you plan to protect your home and the lives of you and your family. It explains ways of making your property less vulnerable to bushfire attack and will help you make better choices if a bushfire threatens.

## **Prepare**

**Whether you choose to leave early to go to a safer place or to stay and defend your well prepared**

## **home, planning and preparation is the key to survival:**

- Prepare and practise your Bushfire Survival Plan well before the fire season
- Prepare your home and your property to survive the fire front, ember attack and radiant heat
- Even if your plan is to leave early, the more you prepare your home and property the greater the chance your home will survive the bushfire
- If you prepare your property but don't feel able to stay and defend it, then plan to leave early. Make this part of your Bushfire Survival Plan
- Prepare for those days when the forecast Fire Danger Rating is Very High, Severe, Extreme or Catastrophic
- If you prepare to leave early, consider when you will leave, where you will go, how you will get there safely and what you will take with you
- If you are planning to stay and defend, prepare for a frightening experience
- Find out what equipment you need and determine what you will do if things do not go according to plan
- Plan for no electricity, no water and very little warning
- Prepare for when a fire is close to you

**Preparing yourself, your family and your home is your responsibility. The more you prepare your home the better the chances are that it will survive a bushfire, even if you plan to leave well before a bushfire starts. Preparing is not just about property and plans it is also about considering your physical, mental and emotional preparedness.**

# **Am I at risk?**

## **Assessing your risk**

1. Do you live, work or travel outside the Safer Settlement of Adelaide?
2. Do you live in or near bush, grassland, forest, paddocks, scrub or heath?
3. Does your local area have a history of bushfires?
4. Do you have many trees and shrubs around your home?
5. Is your house built on a slope?
6. If you need to leave your home, do you need to travel through bushland?
7. Is your Bushfire Survival Plan more than one year old?

**If you answered "Yes" to one or more of these questions, then you and your family may be at risk in the event of a fire.**

CFS's online Bushfire Household Self-Assessment Tool will help you learn more about your risk.

**"... Then it was all go preparing the house. Our fire-fighting pump is always set up to our cement tank; so Damien started it up and we wet down the house, filled up the gutters, put covers over our windows in case they blew in, filled up the bath and all the buckets we could find. While Damien was on the roof blocking the gutters, he felt the wind change**

**and knew we were in trouble. Outside it was so eerie, and raining ash. Inside I tried to keep it as normal as possible for the kids, putting all the lights on. Then we lost power. ...**

**The kids and I didn't return until 6pm. I tried to picture what we were in for, but you just can't. As soon as we got to where the fire started, so did the tears. We had only lived on our property for three and a half months when the fire came.**

**We bought at Greenpatch as we thought it was one of the prettiest places on the planet."  
Jodie Curtis, Black Tuesday Survivor**

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

- More than 35 suburbs in Adelaide's fringes are in bushfire prone areas
- More than 75 towns in the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island are in bushfire prone areas
- 75 towns in other parts of rural South Australia are in bushfire prone areas?
- Between 1/3 and 1/2 of people living in bushfire prone areas don't understand the threat bushfires pose to them and their family

Visit the CFS website to find out if you live in a bushfire-prone area: [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

# **Keys to survival**

**There are seven keys to bushfire survival. It is recommended that you review these and your circumstances as part of developing your Bushfire Survival Plan.**

## **Written & practised bushfire survival plan**

Bushfire behaviour

Fire danger days

Preparing your home & property

Acting on fire danger days

Physical and emotional preparation

Emergency kits

## **Understanding bushfire behaviour**

It is important to understand the characteristics and behaviour of bushfires, which are influenced by vegetation, topography and climate.

What do you know about bushfire behaviour?

## **Recognising fire danger days**

Bushfires can be more dangerous on certain days. Learn to recognise the characteristics and terminology of these days.

Do you know the signs?

## **Preparing your home and property**

Even if your Plan is to leave early, a well prepared home is more likely to survive a bushfire.

How prepared is your property?

## **Acting on fire danger days**

Put your preparation and plans into action on fire danger days.

What will you do on a day of high fire danger?

## **Writing and practicing your Bushfire Survival Plans**

Your plan is central to your survival. Have you got a Plan?

## **Considering your physical and emotional preparation**

It's important to be realistic about what you can and can't do. Ensure you and your family understand fully what a bushfire can mean in terms of fear, stress and threat to personal life.

How prepared are you?

## **Creating emergency kits**

Kits keep all the things you will need together and accessible. Think about: what you need to help survive the day; what to take with you to safety; what you need for the 24-48 hours following a fire.

What would you pack?

## **Understand bushfire behaviour**

**Every fire is different.**

**Understanding how a fire behaves will help you to understand how to prepare your property.**

A more intense fire will generate more heat, be harder to control and cause more damage, than a smaller or less intense fire. Fire intensity depends on three main factors: vegetation, weather and topography.

# Vegetation

The intensity of a fire increases in proportion to the amount and types of available fuel.

A bushfire in a forest (filled with heavy undergrowth) will be very hot yet may not move quickly, while a fire in grassland may be less intense but will burn very quickly. Bushfires in coastal scrub burn very hot yet do not move as fast as a grass fire. While all these bushfires may burn differently, they all have the potential to claim lives and destroy property.

Reduction of vegetation by clearing undergrowth is an essential part of your fire protection strategy because it is the best method for reducing the intensity of a bushfire.

# Weather

Weather conditions such as extreme heat, low humidity, gusting winds and low rainfall dramatically increase a bushfire's intensity and the rate at which it spreads. Dry vegetation ignites and burns much more easily.

In South Australia, the hot northerly winds pose the greatest danger. However, experience has shown that a south-westerly change although cooler, can increase this danger by moving the fire in a different direction and catching people unaware.

Your bushfire protection strategy should take into consideration that fires are most likely to come from the northern and western sides.

## **Topography**

Fires burn more quickly and with greater intensity up slopes than on flat ground or downhill—the most dangerous home sites are on ridge-tops and steep slopes. North-facing slopes also receive more direct sunlight which dries out vegetation and can result in more intense fires.

Topography can also affect road access—for example it may limit major roads to narrow streets that can make it difficult for residents to get out or fire trucks to get in.

**See fact sheet #2.1 for more info**

## **FINE FUELS**

You will sometimes hear the words "fuel" and "vegetation" used interchangeably because vegetation is a fire's main fuel source. However certain vegetation is more dangerous. "Fine fuels" such as grass, leaves, bark and twigs less than 6mm in diameter ignite readily and burn rapidly when dry. Fine fuels and dense undergrowth increase the risk and intensity of bushfires.

# Fire Danger Ratings

**On certain days, bushfires that start will be much more dangerous. Fire Danger Ratings are your early warning.**

The rating is forecast each day during the Fire Danger Season to predict how a fire would behave if one started—including how difficult it would be to put out and what impacts it might have on the community.

The higher the Fire Danger Rating, the more dangerous the fire conditions.

The Fire Danger Rating table below explains what each rating means and what actions you should take for each level. Take the time to review and understand the chart.

The Fire Danger Rating is not a predictor of how likely a bushfire is to occur, but how dangerous it could be if it did occur. It should be used as an early indicator to trigger your plans.

The Fire Danger Rating is issued after 4pm daily for the following day and is usually broadcast as part of nightly news weather reports.

It is also available from the Bureau of Meteorology:  
[www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au), on the CFS website:  
[www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

**Know your Fire Danger Rating, monitor local conditions and keep informed.**

## **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

Knowing tomorrow's Fire Danger Rating can help you organise your family if your local school's plan is to close on certain fire danger days..

### **Fires can threaten suddenly and without warning**

Watch for signs of fire, especially smoke and flames

Know the Fire Danger Rating in your area and be aware of local conditions

Have your Bushfire Survival Plan and kit ready

Call 000 to report a fire

To seek information

- listen to local radio
- go to [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)
- Call the Bushfire information Hotline 1300 362 361 (TTY 133677)

FIRE DANGER RATING	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
<b>CATASTROPHIC</b> <b>TOTAL FIRE</b> <b>BAN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire.</li> <li>• If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be extremely difficult to control and will take significant firefighting resources and cooler conditions to bring it under control</li> <li>• Spot fires will start well ahead of the main fire and cause rapid spread of the fire. Embers will come from many directions.</li> <li>• Buildings are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions.</li> <li>• The safest place to be is away from bushfire risk areas</li> </ul>	<p><b>YOU NEED TO ACT NOW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put your survival first and leave bushfire risk areas the night before or early in the day–this is your safest option</li> <li>• Act immediately–do not wait and see</li> <li>• Avoid forested areas, thick bush or long, dry grass;</li> <li>• Prepare, know and practise a plan for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How you will respond to the FDR</li> <li>– How you will respond to an emergency warning for a bushfire</li> <li>– How you will respond to a bushfire given no warning</li> <li>– How you will communicate information</li> <li>– Who will be in charge</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

FIRE DANGER RATING	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
<p><b>EXTREME TOTAL FIRE BAN</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are very hot, dry and windy conditions for a bush or grass fire</li> <li>• If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be unpredictable, move very fast and very difficult for fire fighters to bring under control</li> <li>• Spot fires will start and move quickly. Embers may come from many directions.</li> <li>• Buildings that are prepared to the highest level, have been constructed to bushfire protection levels and are actively defended may provide safety.</li> <li>• You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</li> <li>• The safest place to be is away from bushfire risk areas</li> </ul>	<p><b>YOU NEED TO GET READY TO ACT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only stay with your property if you are prepared to the highest level. This means your building needs to have been constructed to bushfire protection levels e.g.; enclosed eaves, covers over external air conditioners, metal flyscreens etc</li> <li>• You must be well prepared and able to actively defend your building if a fire starts. This means you have the right equipment and resources to put out fires around your building e.g.; enough water supply, petrol/diesel portable pump, generator, protective clothing etc.</li> <li>• If you are not prepared to the highest level, leaving bushfire risk areas early in the day is your safest option</li> </ul>

<b>FIRE DANGER RATING</b>	<b>WHAT DOES IT MEAN?</b>	<b>WHAT SHOULD I DO?</b>
<b>SEVERE TOTAL FIRE BAN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are hot, dry and possibly windy conditions for a bush or grass fire.</li> <li>• If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be hard for fire fighters to bring under control</li> <li>• Well prepared buildings that are actively defended can provide safety.</li> <li>• You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>YOU NEED TO BE AWARE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well prepared buildings that are actively defended can provide safety. This means you have the right training equipment and resources to put out fires around your building e.g.; enough water supply, petrol/diesel portable pump, generator, protective clothing etc.</li> <li>• If you are not prepared, leaving bushfire risk areas early in the day is your safest option</li> </ul>
<b>VERY HIGH HIGH LOW- MODERATE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a fire starts, it is likely to be controlled in these conditions and buildings can provide safety.</li> <li>• Be aware of how fires can start and reduce the risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your Bushfire Survival Plan</li> <li>• Monitor conditions.</li> <li>• Action may be needed</li> </ul>

# **Fire Ban Districts**

## **SA Fire Ban Districts**

South Australia is divided into 15 Fire Ban Districts.

Each district has its own fire danger season dates, so it is important to be aware of which district you live, travel or work in.

If you are unsure of which district you live in, visit the CFS website ([www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)) to help you locate your Fire Ban District.

## **The Fire Danger Season**

The Fire Danger Season generally runs from November to April. During the season, restrictions are placed on lighting fires to reduce the chance of bushfires starting.

<b>Know Your District Fire Danger Season</b>			
	<b>Fire Ban District</b>	<b>Starts</b>	<b>Ends</b>
1	Adelaide Metropolitan Area	1 December	30 April
2	Mount Lofty Ranges	1 December	30 April
3	Kangaroo Island	1 December	30 April
4	Mid North	15 November	30 April
5	Yorke Peninsula	15 November	30 April
6	Murraylands	15 November	15 April
7	Riverland	15 November	15 April
8	Upper South East	15 November	15 April
9	Lower South East	22 November	30 April
10	Flinders	1 November	15 April
11	North East Pastoral	1 November	31 March
12	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	1 November	15 April
13	North West Pastoral	1 November	31 March

<b>Know Your District Fire Danger Season</b>			
	<b>Fire Ban District</b>	<b>Starts</b>	<b>Ends</b>
14	Lower Eyre Peninsula	1 November	15 April
15	West Coast	1 November	15 April

These dates may change due to seasonal conditions. Contact the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677), or visit [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

# **Total Fire Bans**

**A Total Fire Ban is declared by the CFS Chief Officer in conjunction with the Bureau of Meteorology and issued with the Fire Danger Rating.**

On certain days, it's even more important than others to reduce the chances of bushfires starting by restricting risky activities through a Total Fire Ban.

A Total Fire Ban day can be declared at any time of the year and for any Fire Ban District. The ban stays in place for 24 hours. The CFS releases the information to the media the evening before the Total Fire Ban day to coincide with nightly news broadcasts.

Penalties of fines up to \$10,000 and two years' jail can be imposed if you break the law. On-the-spot fines of up to \$315 may also apply.

On a Total Fire Ban day, fires cannot be lit in the open, apart from a very few exceptions.

**More information on what you can and can't do on a Total Fire Ban day is on pages 38-46**

## **National Parks**

On certain fire danger days, the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) may close certain national parks or reserves in the interest of public safety. Parks and reserves may also have their own fire restrictions.

Check the DEWNR website for more information:  
[www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)

## **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

Knowing that it's a Total Fire Ban Day can help you plan your activities.

## **Schools**

Check with your child's school, preschool or day-care centre, or on the Department for Education and Child Development website ([www.decd.sa.gov.au](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au)) for information on policies and procedures that will affect your school or school buses on fire danger days.

Also check what your school's policy will be if a fire starts. You will most likely want to go to your children, but travelling during a bushfire could put you and them at greater risk.

# **Prepare your home and property**

Preparation of your home and property is an essential key throughout the year to ensure that you, your property and your family survive. A well prepared home is more likely to survive a bushfire than one that hasn't been prepared.

## **A well prepared home:**

- can be easier for you or firefighters to defend
- is more likely to survive, even if you're not there
- is less likely to put your neighbours' homes at risk
- will give you more protection if a fire threatens suddenly and you cannot leave and have to take shelter

## **Why houses burn down**

There are various ways in which a house can burn during a bushfire—radiant heat ahead of the fire front, burning debris and embers falling on the building and direct flame contact.

Research has shown that the biggest cause is sparks and embers landing on or near your home that can trigger a fire well before and for hours after the bushfire has passed.

Sparks and embers enter a home wherever there is a gap, such as under roofing tiles, under the floor in crevices, window sills and vents and under verandahs.

## Ways to protect your home:

- **Starve the fire** by clearing vegetation and rubbish away from your home and using non-flammable building materials
- **Create a defensible space** by carefully managing trees close to your home and reducing vegetation for 20 metres
- **Fill the gaps** where embers might enter or catch
- **Protect your assets** with adequate home and contents insurance

**Even if you plan to leave early, there is a greater chance that your home will be saved if you have undertaken preparations.**

**See fact sheets #4.1-4.12 for more info**

## In the garden

**Reducing the amount of vegetation on a property is one of the most critical components of preparing for bushfires.**

**Measures that should be taken before the fire season include:**

- Removing dead branches, leaves and undergrowth from around your home especially under trees.
- Pruning tree limbs that are lower than two metres above the ground or overhanging your home.

- Reducing, removing and managing vegetation such as long grass within 20 metres of your home and within 5 metres of any sheds and garages.
- Removing bark, heavy mulch, wood piles and any other flammable materials close to your home and sheds.

**There are various other measures that can be taken in the garden to protect your home. They include:**

- Installing a sprinkler system to wet down your home and garden to reduce the impact of radiant heat, sparks and embers. (All fittings should be metal, as plastic melts).
- Ensuring access to an independent water supply such as a tank, dam or swimming pool of at least 5000 litres.

**Do not rely on mains water being available during a fire.**

- Installing a petrol/diesel-driven water pump.
- Making sure hoses are long enough to reach around your home.
- Using a stone wall, earth barrier, or fence close to your home as a radiant heat shield.
- Planting lower flammability vegetation, including plants and trees with low oil and high water and salt content.
- Developing a well-managed vegetable garden, as it can act as an excellent fuel break.
- Planting trees and shrubs with space between them so they do not form a continuous canopy.

**"We thought clearing our property would be hard, but we got some mates around to help, then had a barbie in our nice clean yard. Next week it's Phil's place."**

**Jamie Kindler, SA**

## **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

A Bushfire Ready property with excess vegetation removed or reduced creates a larger and more attractive entertaining space

### **Actions in and around the home**

Some basic measures to improve your home safety are:

#### **Smooth surfaces**

Paint or refurbish dried exterior timber, repair nooks or crannies where leaves and debris can gather. Design pathways, driveways and lawns around your home to keep a clear area immediately around your home.

#### **Roofing**

Well-secured metal roofing is preferable. A tiled roof needs to be well fitted with fire-resistant sarking (fibreglass-based aluminium foil).

## **Walls**

Choose non-flammable wall materials such as brick, mud brick and fibre cement. Vinyl weatherboards, rough timber and other cladding can warp or catch fire. Gaps in external roof and wall cladding need to be sealed.

## **Windows, crevices and vents**

Spark-proof your home with bronze or stainless steel flywire screens on windows and doors, or install fire resistant metal shutters. Cover all wall cavities in fine wire mesh. Enclose areas under decks and floors. Screen vents in the roof space with fine wire mesh.

## **Sprinkler system**

A home bushfire sprinkler system that directs water over the roof, windows, doors and underfloor areas is one of the most effective ways of protecting against radiant heat, direct flame and ember attack. Seek professional advice for design and installation.

## **Skylights**

Install wire-reinforced glass or a thermo plastic cover on skylights as plastic can melt and glass can break in intense heat.

## **Property access**

Gateways should be at least 3 metres wide and there should be clear access with a turnaround point for firefighting vehicles.

## **Gutters**

Regularly clean gutters and remove leaves and bark from any areas where they can become trapped.

# **PREPARE your property**

## **Season by Season**

### **Winter**

#### **Take advantage of the cooler weather to clean up your property and ember proof your home**

- Clear all gutters and create as much defensible space as possible around your home.
- Remove dead vegetation from around your home and prune lower limbs of trees.
- Check with your council to see if a permit is required to burn off garden waste, or dispose of the material through mulching or at a council rubbish dump

- Ember-proof your home: seal gaps and areas under your home, verandahs or balconies; repair any loose tiles or gaps in your roof; cover windows, crevices and vents with fine wire mesh or flywire; repair or fill nooks and crannies where leaves or embers could gather.

## **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

Clean gutters are also less likely to overflow into your roof cavity and electrical sockets during heavy rain

## **Spring**

### **Get ready for the impending Fire Danger Season**

- Slash or mow long grass and remove cut material (unless it can rot down before summer).
- Remove weeds.
- Cut back trees overhanging your home.
- Remove fallen branches and other debris.
- Remove leaves from gutters.
- Check and service all mechanical equipment, including grass cutters, water pumps, sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers.
- Prepare/check your emergency kit.
- Review, update and practise your Bushfire Survival Plan.

# **Summer**

## **Maintain your preparedness through the Fire Danger Season**

- Maintain defensible space of up to 20 metres around your home (greater if on a slope) and 5 metres from sheds and garages.
- Clear around trees.
- Remove leaves from gutters.
- Slash stubble near sheds/buildings (following regulations for Total Fire Ban Days).
- Check reserve water supplies.
- Practise your Bushfire Survival Plan with your family.
- Ensure you have a portable battery-powered radio and spare batteries to listen to bushfire warnings.
- Monitor Fire Danger Ratings.

# **Autumn**

## **Clean up after Summer**

- Remove undergrowth and dead vegetation.
- Check with your council to see if a permit is required for a burn-off.
- Check for any fire hazards and remove.

## **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

Properties with reduced vegetation are less likely to harbour snakes.

### **PREPARE emergency kits**

**Emergency kits should be prepared before the fire season.**

**They should include:**

- What you need to help survive the day of a bushfire;
- What to take with you to safety;
- What you need for up to four days following a fire.

**General Items:**

- Battery powered AM/FM radio plus spare batteries
- Waterproof torch
- Woollen blankets
- Clothing to protect you during a bushfire (see below)
- First aid kit with manual
- A can opener
- Emergency contact numbers

**Before you leave, add:**

- Money, key cards and credit cards
- Medications, toiletries and sanitary supplies

- Special requirements for infants, elderly, injured, or those with disabilities
- Important documents (eg Insurance papers, wills, passports), valuables and photos
- drinking water (three litres per person per day) and food for at least 48 hours
- A change of clothes for everyone
- Mobile phone & charger
- Blankets
- Children's toys

## **For your pets**

- Basket/cage/leash
- Medications, food, drinking water and bowls
- Familiar item (toy, bed, treats) to help reduce stress

**You should keep your Emergency Kit/s in waterproof storage containers in a location that is easy to get to and that the whole family knows about.**

## **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

A well-prepared emergency kit means you'll know exactly where to find the torch next time the power fails

## **What to wear to protect yourself**

**Despite the heat, it is important you do not wear summer clothes during a fire. In the event of fire everyone involved should wear:**

- Natural fabrics such as cotton, denim or wool (synthetics can melt or burn).
- A long sleeved shirt to prevent burns to the upper body and arms.
- A pair of heavy cotton pants or overalls to shield your legs.
- Sturdy leather work boots and a pair of wool socks to prevent burns to the feet.
- A wide brimmed hat to stop embers from dropping on your head or down your back.
- Work gloves to protect your hands.
- A pair of goggles to safeguard your eyes against smoke, embers and debris in the air.
- A P2 rated face mask or cloth to cover your nose and mouth to protect you from inhaling smoke and embers

**You must also drink water regularly to avoid dehydration**

**See fact sheet #3.3 for more info**

## **PREPARE your Bushfire Survival Plan**

**If you live in a bushfire prone area you must have a Bushfire Survival Plan.**

**Your plan will help you take action and avoid making last minute decisions that could prove deadly during a bushfire.**

Your Bushfire Survival Plan outlines what you need to do to help safeguard your property and—most importantly—what actions each member of your family will take on fire risk days and if a fire threatens.

Making a choice when a bushfire threatens is too late. The majority of people in bushfires die fleeing their homes at the last moment. Leaving late is a deadly option.

**"When we first moved here, my eldest daughter was four and my youngest was a slowly expanding bump. It was very soon apparent that in the event of a fire, Mike would be out on the truck. There was no guarantee he would be able to get home to help me if a fire threatened our area. Staying and defending our home on my own in my condition simply wasn't an option."**

**Danielle Clode in Future in Flames**

## **A good Plan:**

- is prepared well before the Fire Danger Season
- is written down so that the details are to hand when you need them
- has been practised, so you know how it will go on the day
- is created with the whole family and covers everyone, including the young and elderly
- includes what to do:
  - before the Fire Danger Season
  - on a Total Fire Ban day
  - during a bushfire

- after a bushfire
- can adapt to unforeseen circumstances

**A template to complete your plan is included in this guide**

## **PREPARE yourself and your family physically, mentally and emotionally.**

**Being in a bushfire may be the most traumatic experience of your life.**

A bushfire can be a terrifying situation. Strong gusty winds, intense heat and flames will make you tired quickly. Thick, heavy smoke will sting your eyes and choke your lungs. It will be difficult to see and breathe. The roaring sound of the fire approaching will deafen you. Embers will rain down, causing spot fires all around you. Power and water may be cut off. You may be isolated. It will be dark, noisy and extremely physically and mentally exhausting.

You need to realistically consider the overwhelming physical and psychological demands of facing a bushfire.

If you have any doubts about your ability to cope you should plan to leave early.

**See fact sheet #3.1 for more info**

# **Understanding fire regulations:**

**Regulations have been introduced throughout South Australia to protect lives and property during the bushfire season.**

**They apply to everyone, not just those living in bushfire areas.**

**It is essential that you are familiar with the regulations and understand what you can and cannot do, whether you are at home, on holiday or visiting a national park.**

Once the Fire Danger Season has begun there are strict controls on the lighting of fires and the use of certain tools in the open. The restrictions remain in place until the end of the season (see page 21 for the dates in your district).

## **Notes**

- \* A Schedule 9 or Schedule 10 Permit refers to a permit issued under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005.  
Your council fire prevention officer or CFS office can provide further advice.
- \*\* An engine or vehicle exhaust system complies if:
  - (a) all engine exhaust emitted by the engine or vehicle exits through the system; and

- (b) the system, or a device or devices forming part of the system, is designed to prevent the escape of burning material from the system; and
- (c) the system, or a device or devices forming part of the system, is designed to prevent heated parts of the system from coming into contact with flammable material; and
- (d) the system is in good working order.

\*\*\* domestic premises means a building or other structure that is fixed to the ground and connected to a reticulated or stored water supply and that is occupied as a place of residence but does not include a caravan.

**If in any doubt, phone the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361.**

## Your questions answered

**Q:** Can I light a fire in the open air for burning off grass, stubble, weeds, undergrowth or other vegetation?

FIRE DANGER SEASON		TOTAL FIRE BAN	
<b>NO</b>	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 9 permit * from your local council.	<b>NO</b>	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit * from your local council.

**Q:** Can I burn off rubbish or grass cuttings?

FIRE DANGER SEASON		TOTAL FIRE BAN	
<b>YES</b>	<p>But only in a properly constructed incinerator you must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A four metre cleared space around and above</li><li>• A responsible person must be in attendance at all times with water or an extinguisher</li><li>• All incinerator doors and openings must be closed and screens</li><li>• and guards in place</li></ul> <p><b>If you want to burn on the ground you will require a Schedule 9 permit * from your local council.</b></p>	<b>NO</b>	<p>Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit * from your local council.</p> <p><b>The lighting of incinerators is banned on a total fire ban day.</b></p>

Check with your local council and the Environment Protection Authority, which also have control over the lighting of fires.

Some councils have totally prohibited the use of incinerators and open fires for waste disposal on domestic premises.

**Q:** Can I light a campfire, bonfire or light a fire for warmth or comfort?

(See special provisions for gas or electric barbeques below)

FIRE DANGER SEASON		TOTAL FIRE BAN	
<b>YES</b>	But only if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In a properly constructed fireplace; <b>or</b></li><li>• In a portable cooking appliance; <b>or</b></li><li>• The fire is in a 30cm deep trench and no more than one metre square in area <b>and</b></li><li>• You have a four metre cleared space around and above the fire</li><li>• A responsible person is in attendance at all times</li><li>• An adequate agent to extinguish the fire is at hand</li></ul>	<b>NO</b>	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit * from your local council.

**Q:** Can I use a gas or electric barbeque?

FIRE DANGER SEASON		TOTAL FIRE BAN	
<b>YES</b>	Providing you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A four metre cleared space around and above the gas fire</li><li>• or electric element</li><li>• A responsible person is in attendance at all times</li><li>• An adequate agent to extinguish the fire is at hand</li></ul>	<b>YES</b>	Providing it is gas or an electric element and used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Within 15 metres of domestic premises ***, <b>or</b></li><li>• On a coastal foreshore</li></ul> Providing you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A four metre cleared area around and above the barbeque A responsible person is in attendance at all times with water or an extinguisher at hand</li></ul>

Some councils allow gas or electric barbeques in caravan parks or cleared picnic areas. Look for the signs or contact the council for advice.

**Q:** Can I drive a vehicle off road?

FIRE DANGER SEASON		TOTAL FIRE BAN	
<b>YES</b>	You can drive a vehicle within 2 metres of flammable bush or grass provided that the engine is fitted with an exhaust system that complies with the requirements listed above. **	<b>YES</b>	You can drive a vehicle within 2 metres of flammable bush or grass provided that the engine is fitted with an exhaust system that complies with the requirements listed above. **

**Q:** Can I have a fire in a National Park Reserve or a forest reserve?

<b>YES</b>	Strict regulations apply to all fires, including barbeques, in government reserves. For further information contact the relevant government office.	<b>NO</b>	Fires are NOT permitted.
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**Q:** Can I use fireworks?

<b>NO</b>	Private use of fireworks is banned.  Licensed pyrotechnicians can conduct firework displays providing a Schedule 9 permit * has been obtained	<b>NO</b>	Private use of fireworks is banned.  Licensed pyrotechnicians can conduct firework displays providing a Schedule 10 permit * has been obtained.
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**Q:** Can I use a grinder or welder outside?

<b>YES</b>	Providing you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A four metre cleared space around and above the area</li><li>• A responsible person is in attendance at all times the appliance is in use</li><li>• A portable water spray in good working order is at hand</li></ul>	<b>NO</b>	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit * from your local council.
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**Q:** Can I use a chainsaw, grass trimmer, lawn mower or slasher?

FIRE DANGER SEASON		TOTAL FIRE BAN	
<b>YES</b>	Provided that the engine is fitted with an exhaust system that complies with the requirements listed above ** <b>and:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You have a four metre cleared space around the area <b>or</b></li><li>• The operator has a shovel or rake and a portable water spray in good working order.</li></ul>	<b>YES</b>	Provided that the engine is fitted with an exhaust system that complies with the requirements listed above ** <b>and:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You have a four metre cleared space around the area <b>or</b></li><li>• The operator has a shovel or rake and a portable water spray in good working order.</li></ul>

# **ACT to protect yourself and your property**

**Fires can threaten suddenly and without warning. Be prepared to enact your Bushfire Survival Plan without receiving any emergency warning.**

**The CFS cannot guarantee a fire truck will be there to protect your property so you need to:**

- Know what the bushfire dangers are for your area
- On a daily basis, know the Fire Danger Rating for your area and what you need to do
- Act decisively the moment you know there is danger
- Watch for signs of fire, especially smoke and flames
- Put your Bushfire Survival Plan into action (avoid a "wait and see" response)

## **ACT with information**

Look and listen for information on television, radio, internet, mobile phones and by speaking with neighbours.

- CFS website [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)
- CFS email updates; RSS feeds, facebook and twitter
- Alert SA mobile phone app
- Bushfire Information Hotline 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)
- ABC Local Radio (across Australia)

- Our other Emergency Broadcast Partners:  
FIVEaa Radio, Sky News Television, Commercial Radio Australia (full list available on our website)
- Don't forget your own senses: sights, sounds and smells

## **Bushfire "Watch and Act" & "Emergency Warning" Messages**

There are three types of Bushfire Messages that will alert you to a bushfire:

### **Advice message**

A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. This is general information to keep you up to date with developments.

### **Watch and Act message**

A fire is approaching you, conditions are changing. You need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.

### **Emergency Warning message**

You are in danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted by fire. This message will be preceded by an emergency warning signal (a siren sound).

## **Emergency Alert telephone warning system**

In an emergency in your area, you may receive a message via your landline (to service location) or mobile (based on your billing address) advising you of the nature of the emergency and where you can go for more information.

Remember that power failures will prevent cordless phones from working and fires may damage telephone infrastructure in your area or prevent mobile reception. The fire may be travelling too fast to get a warning out.

For more information on Emergency Alert please visit [www.emergencyalert.gov.au](http://www.emergencyalert.gov.au)

**EMERGENCY ALERT.  
BE WARNED. BE INFORMED.**

Do not wait for a warning message before you act.

**Do not rely on one single source for emergency warning information.**

**See fact sheet #2.5 and 2.6 for more info**

## **ACT on Fire Danger Days**

Fires can threaten suddenly and without warning and can travel very fast. It's important that you use triggers to

warn you of the potential for danger before a bushfire even starts.

## **Know your trigger:**

Finding out tomorrow's Fire Danger Rating is the best trigger and should be the first step in activating your Bushfire Survival Plan, whether that be to leave early or stay and defend.

You may have different plans for different Ratings. If your plan is to leave, it's important to know where to go.

## **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

Leaving early gives you the chance to spend a nice planned day somewhere safe, rather than worrying about the possibility of panicked evacuation.

## Where to go: Bushfire Safer Places in SA

Least Safe ↔ Safest	<b>BUSHFIRE SAFER PLACE</b>	Adelaide Metropolitan area, outer suburbs and rural settlements	If you need to relocate early. Suitable for use during forecast bad weather or during a bushfire May be subject to sparks, embers and smoke
	<b>LAST RESORT REFUGE</b>	Designated ovals and buildings in rural areas.	If your plan has failed. Not suitable for extended use and may provide only limited protection during bushfire.

CFS has developed a hierarchy of places that can offer relative safety from bushfire. It is important that you know what each of these are, where they are and what risk you may be exposed to if you use one of these options during a bushfire.

More details and designated places can be found on the CFS website: [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au) or in the Alert SA mobile phone app.

**On fire danger days, your safest option is to visit friends, family or attractions in a Bushfire Safer Place**

**See fact sheets #1.6 and 2.4 for more info**

Many people have died in bushfires because they have tried to relocate too late and have been trapped and burnt in their cars or on foot. Leaving early for your safer place is vital.

## **ACT when a fire is approaching**

### **STAGE 1**

#### **As the fire front is approaching**

**Stay close to your home and extinguish any spot fires caused by flying embers and sparks. An ember or spark attack can occur up to an hour before the main fire front arrives and up to eight hours after.**

## **Embers or sparks and burning debris can be large and frightening**

Research across Australia has shown wind-blown sparks and embers are the biggest cause of home destruction in a bushfire.

The main cause of death in bushfires is radiant heat, so it is important to take shelter in your home as the temperature associated with the fire front rises. Do not shelter in a dam, swimming pool, or tank as your face, head and lungs will be exposed to radiant heat and smoke.

It is important when you shelter, that you have 2 exits.

## **STAGE 2**

### **When the fire front arrives**

**Go inside but stay alert as the fire front approaches. Identify a room for the elderly young or other less able-bodied people to shelter in.**

This room should be away from the likely direction of the fire and have at least 2 exits. Patrol the house for sparks and embers and put them out if safe to do so. Do not go under the house or into a basement as you can become trapped if the house catches fire. The fire front normally passes within a few minutes, after which it is usually safe to return outside.

## **STAGE 3**

### **After the front has passed**

**It is essential to remain vigilant for many hours after the fire front has passed.**

Small fires started by embers can soon burn out of control if they are not extinguished quickly, so keep checking.

Hose down the house, paying special attention to the roof space, window frames and under-floor areas. Remember, homes will generally withstand the initial passage of a bushfire providing you have prepared your home appropriately.

**For more information on planning for each stage, see page 65**

**See fact sheet #1.8 for more info**

## **SURVIVE**

**Remember, people will always be more important than houses.**

**Your main priority is to ensure you and your loved ones are safe and survive.**

**You need to know what to do if you are caught in a fire—you may be threatened by a fire without any warning**

**Preparation is the key to surviving a bushfire.**

**Whatever happens:**

- Make a plan and stick to it—don't wait and see.
- Monitor conditions and know the daily Fire Danger Rating.

**On Total Fire Ban days, it's recommended that you relocate if you have no plan to stay and defend, or if you are caring for vulnerable, young or elderly people.**

If it is forecast to be Catastrophic, leave as early as possible whatever your initial plan.

- Keep up-to-date through the CFS website and local radio (see our website for a full list of our Emergency Broadcast Partners)
- The safest place is away from the fire—your life and survival is the highest priority
- You and your family's survival and safety will depend on the decisions you make now and acting on these decisions. Put your safety first.

**"It seemed that 40 years of CFS training and working with volunteers helped us to survive, but nothing could have stopped the inferno that engulfed everything in its path on that fateful day.**

**Many lessons were learnt on how we must prepare for this sort of once-in-a-lifetime event. Reflecting on our actions, it would seem that we could have done no more when the fire was upon us but could have done plenty before the fire season started."**

**Max and Jean Hitch, Black Tuesday Survivors**

# **Why do people die in bushfires?**

## **Leaving late**

Many people who die in bushfires are caught by fire in their cars or on foot trying to escape. Maximise your chances of survival by leaving early.

## **Lack of planning**

Fires can be very frightening and may make it hard to think clearly or make good decisions. Sometimes people find out too late they don't have essential resources to enact their plans. It is vital that you have a written and practised Bushfire Survival Plan.

## **Radiant Heat**

Radiant heat is the heat you feel radiating from a fire. In major bushfires, this heat can be so intense that it can kill people from hundreds of metres away without a flame ever touching them.

## **Protecting yourself from radiant heat**

- Distance—the best protection is being as far away from a fire as possible
- Shield—solid walls or buildings can create a barrier between you and the heat
- Clothing—as a last resort, protective clothing can reduce the impact of radiant heat

## **Heat-related illness**

Heat stress and dehydration are dangers during bushfires

### **Protecting yourself from heat-related illness**

- Drink lots of water
- Cool yourself by loosening clothing and encouraging airflow
- Rest (when it is safe to do so)

**See fact sheet #3.2 for more info**

## **SURVIVE on holiday**

**Travellers and holidaymakers are also at risk during the fire danger season and need to take precautions.**

**If travelling through bushland areas, make sure you take appropriate fire protection clothing and equipment and identify the local Fire Ban District. Be aware of the Fire Danger Rating for the area.**

## **Bush Walking**

**It is advisable not to go bushwalking on fire danger days, but if you are caught in a bushfire you should:**

- Never try to outrun the flames.
- Head for a natural fire break, e.g. streams, clearings or rock outcrops.
- Keep away from high ground in the path of the fire. Never shelter in an above ground water tank.

- Cover yourself or shelter behind a solid object such as a rock, to protect against radiant heat.

## **On the road**

**Cars are a dangerous place to be during a bushfire, as they offer little protection from radiant heat and driving conditions are often difficult and stressful.**

Bushfires often jump roads so find an alternative route if you are confronted by a bushfire. If you become trapped, try to find clear ground away from any dense vegetation and stay in your vehicle.

Wind up your windows, close vents and turn your engine and air-conditioning off.

Shelter on the floor of your vehicle and cover yourself with woollen blankets to protect from radiant heat.

Stay in your vehicle until the bushfire has passed.

You can prevent your car from starting fires by parking away from long grass, and by regularly clearing dried grasses from under your car when driving offroad.

## **Camping and houseboats**

**People on camping and houseboat holidays must ensure they are familiar with local fire restrictions.**

If camping or staying in a caravan park, enquire if a safe refuge area has been designated (informally by the park, or formally by the CFS as a Bushfire Last Resort Refuge).

A brick toilet building or shower block might be an option.

Be careful using generators and make sure you are familiar with restrictions applying to fires and barbeques.

If visiting a national park, ask the rangers about the local fire and barbecue regulations as they can vary.

This also applies to houseboat users when lighting fires along riverbanks.

## **Travelling outside SA?**

**Local ABC radio stations across Australia broadcast emergency information, advice and updates.**

In South Australia, tune into your local ABC or one of our other Emergency Broadcast Partners: FIVEaa Radio, Sky News Television, WIN Television, Commercial Radio Australia (full list available on our website)

**Visit the fact sheets section of our website to find more information especially for holiday-makers and travellers.**

## **Bushfire Survival Plan**

### **REMEMBER**

Even people who are extremely well prepared can die fighting fires at home. The safest option is always to leave early

**Thinking "I will leave early" is not enough.  
You must PREPARE to ACT and SURVIVE.**

The decision about whether you should leave early or stay and defend your property is up to you and others in the household and needs to be made well before a bushfire threatens your home—in fact, well before the Fire Danger Season arrives.

### **What will you do?**

In deciding whether your plan will be to leave early or stay to actively defend your property, consider the following:

## **Can your home be defended?**

- Is it constructed to meet the latest regulations for building in bushfire prone areas?
- Is it in a location that puts it at higher than normal risk or makes it difficult to defend—such as on a steep slope or in close proximity to bushland?
- Does it have a defendable space with at least 20 metres cleared of flammable materials and vegetation?
- Do you have the right equipment and resources to actively defend? e.g. sufficient water supply (minimum of 5,000 litres), petrol or diesel pump, generator, appropriate clothing)
- Is your property prepared and maintained for bushfires?

## **Are you able—physically and mentally—to defend it?**

- Will there be enough people home to actively defend without the support of fire fighters?
- Are you all physically fit to fight spot fires in and around your home for up to 10 hours or more? Have you considered the debilitating effects of heat, dehydration and firefighting on stamina—even for physically fit people?
- Do you have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively fight a fire?
- Are you mentally and emotionally able to cope with the ferocity, violence and traumatic effect of a bushfire, while remaining calm and implementing your plan?

## **You should plan to leave early if:**

- The questions on this page make you doubt your ability, the preparedness of your property, or if you are for any reason
- You are on your own: defending a house requires at least two able-bodied, fit and determined adults.
- You know you cannot defend your property. For example, you do not have the right equipment or you are sick.
- There are children, older people or people with special needs or disability in the home.
- You are not physically or mentally prepared.
- The Fire Danger Rating is Severe and your property is not well prepared.
- The Fire Danger Rating is Extreme and your property is not constructed and prepared to the highest level.
- The Fire Danger Rating is Catastrophic, regardless of any preparations you have made.

**See fact sheet #1.3 for more info**

## **Planning to leave early**

**"Leaving early" means leaving before your chosen escape route is compromised by fire and smoke, or by strong winds that may bring down trees and power lines well before the fire arrives.**

**The only way to guarantee this is to leave before a bushfire even starts—the night before or early in the day of a forecasted fire danger day.**

### **In planning to leave early, you need to consider:**

- When will you leave—have you decided what will be your trigger?
- Will your plan be different for weekdays, weekends or if someone is home sick?
- Are all members of your household going to leave early?
- Which members of your household (if any) will stay and defend?
- Where will you and your family go to ensure you are all safe? (Do you have friends, relatives or fun activities in a nearby Bushfire Safer Place?)
- What route will you take to get there? How long will it take to get there?
- What will you take when you leave early? (see page 33 for some suggestions)
- What will you do if there are many fire risk days in one week?
- What warnings can you expect to get?
- Do your friends, family and neighbours know the details of your plan?
- What will you do with your pets and animals?
- What will be your trigger to return?
- Do you have a contingency plan if it is unsafe to leave?

## **Contingencies:**

**It is important to recognise that in an emergency unexpected things are likely to occur, so you will need to adapt to changing circumstances and have a plan that will work in different situations.**

### **Consider:**

- Will your plan need to be different on weekends from weekdays?
- Will you have different plans for different Fire Danger Ratings (e.g. "stay and actively defend" up to Severe, but "leave early" for Extreme and Catastrophic)?
- What if your children are at school?
- What if you have house guests or someone is home sick?
- What if a fire starts quickly and you don't have time or it is unsafe to leave?
- What if your plan is to stay, but conditions make it too dangerous?

**Your plan (or plans) should have contingencies for different situations.**

**See fact sheet #1.4 for more info**

## **Planning to stay and defend**

**Staying to actively defend your home involves the risk of psychological trauma, injury and death.**

**Your property must be well prepared if you intend to stay and defend.**

**The more prepared your home is, the more likely it is to survive a bushfire.**

**On days where the Fire Danger Rating is forecast to be Catastrophic, leaving is the best option for you and your family's survival.**

**Are you confident from your answers to the questions on page 61-62 that your home is defensible and that you have the skills, knowledge and equipment to defend it?**

**Before and after the fire front, you are actively defending and protecting your home from the outside. As the fire front passes, you are actively defending and being protected by your home from inside.**

## **What will you need to do if preparing to stay and defend?**

### **Before the fire approaches:**

- Make sure everyone is in adequate clothing to protect them from radiant heat, smoke and embers
- Remind everyone of the plan and check that they understand their role
- Locate your Emergency Kit (see page 33)
- Tune your battery operated radio to your local ABC—or one of our other Emergency Broadcast Partners—and have spare batteries handy
- Ensure there is enough drinking water as it will be extremely hot
- Secure livestock in well cleared areas with sufficient drinking water
- Move flammable items (such as outdoor furniture, doormat, hanging baskets) away from the house; shut off gas at meter or bottle
- Let family or friends know that you are staying at home
- Prepare water buckets, a torch and ladder ready to check the ceiling space
- Put tape across the inside of windows so they remain in place if broken
- Prepare for the possibility that no power and/or no phone lines will be available
- Keep pets inside with sufficient drinking water and food.

- **Don't:**
  - Stand on your roof with your hose: often more people are injured falling from roofs than suffer burn injuries
  - Waste water wetting down roofs and walls at this stage. Use the water only for extinguishing burning material

**How many of these tasks can you do the night before, when the Fire Danger Rating is announced?**

**As the fire approaches, stay calm and ensure that you:**

- Remove flammable items from the exterior of the house (e.g. blinds, outdoor furniture, door mats etc)
- Block down pipes and fill gutters with water
- Wet vegetation near your house with a hose or sprinkler (now that the fire is closer)
- Shut all windows and doors and place wet blankets and towels around windows and door edges
- Prepare inside your house (e.g. remove curtains, move furniture away from windows, close doors & windows)
- Stay close to the house, drink water and check welfare of others
- Patrol the inside of the home as well as the outside for embers or small fires

**As the fire front arrives:**

- Take all firefighting equipment inside such as hoses and pumps as they may melt during the fire

- Move inside the house until the fire front passes. If possible shelter in a room that it is on the opposite side of the house to the approaching fire and has two exits
- Patrol the inside of the home—including checking the ceiling space—for embers or small fires

**After the fire front has passed:**

- Go outside and extinguish small spot fires and burning embers
- Patrol the property inside and out, including the ceiling space and extinguish any fires. Sparks and embers will continue to fall and smoulder, so keep checking for several hours
- Let everyone know that you are okay
- Monitor the radio for updates
- Stay with your home until you are sure the surrounding area is clear of fire.

**See fact sheet #1.5 for more info**

**Editable electronic versions of the plans in this book are available online at [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)**

## **Survive: after the fire**

**This information is not a substitute for first aid training. Whether you plan to leave early or stay to actively defend, first aid training could help you survive a bushfire**

**Survival isn't just about what happens during the fire, it's also about how well you recover in the days, weeks and years after the fire.**

## **Returning home**

Look and listen for information on television, radio, the internet and other information lines to find out when an all clear advice has been issued and if it is safe to return home.

**Be careful travelling home:** watch out for downed power lines; fallen trees; low branches and burning debris; wandering animals; damaged infrastructure including walls, bridges, roads and footpaths; emergency services, who may still be working in the area.

A fire can be very destructive and selective, leaving one home untouched and destroying the next. If your home has been badly fire damaged and you need a place to stay, seek help from welfare agencies.

**You need to be mentally and emotionally prepared when returning to your property.** If you live alone, you may want to bring someone with you when you first return. It is best that you prepare mentally, have support and offer support to others during this time.

**Access to your home should be limited to adults initially for safety reasons.** When you arrive home you should be very cautious and aware of the following potential hazards: live electricity; leaking gas (odour or

hissing); septic or sewage leaking; hot embers; trees and over hanging branches; major structural damage.

## **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

Research shows that those who have prepared for a bushfire recover better than those who were not prepared.

### **Treating burns and injuries:**

- Follow DRSABCD (Danger, Response, Send for help, Airway, Breathing, CPR and Defibrillation).
- Remove the patient from danger—do not become a casualty yourself.
- If a person's clothes catch on fire, stop the person moving or running around, as this will fan the flames. Remember: **STOP—COVER—DROP—ROLL** to extinguish the flames
- Hold the burnt area under cool running water until the injury has returned to normal body temperature (up to 20 minutes)
- Only remove jewellery and clothing if it is not stuck to the burnt area
- Cover the burn with a sterile, non-stick dressing (eg. Cling wrap, but not overhead/face burn)
- If the casualty is conscious and thirsty, give frequent small sips of water
- Alleviate extreme pain by gently pouring cool water over the dressing
- Calm patient
- **Seek medical aid urgently**

**Do not:**

- Apply any lotions, ointments or oily dressings
- Prick or break blisters
- Give alcohol to drink
- Overcool the patient, particularly if very young, or if the burnt area is extensive
- Remove clothing stuck to burnt area

**With thanks to RAH Burns Unit and St John Ambulance Australia SA Inc**

## **How to look after your emotional health**

Being in a bushfire may be the most traumatic experience of your life. It is as important to look after your emotional recovery as it is to treat physical injuries.

- Make sure you and your family are safe
- Follow your normal routine if you can
- Get information about how people feel after an emergency and how long it takes to feel better
- Spend time with people you care about
- Talk about what has happened to you
- Talk to your family—especially your children—about how they feel
- Take time to rest and do things you enjoy
- If you are not feeling better, seek help from a mental health professional, doctor, or recovery worker

More detailed information to help you complete your plan can be found in our act Sheets and brochures, available on the CFS website: [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

# **1. Planning to Survive a Bushfire**

## **Your guide to bushfire safety (this booklet)**

- 1.1 Prepare. Act. Survive.
- 1.2 7 keys to survival?
- 1.3 Plan now to stay and defend or leave early
- 1.4 Planning to leave early
- 1.5 Planning to stay and defend
- 1.6 Bushfire Safer Places (where to relocate on days of severe, extreme and catastrophic fire weather)
- 1.7 On the day of a bushfire
- 1.8 What to do in the event of a bushfire

## **2. Understanding Bushfires and Warnings**

- 2.1 Bushfire behaviour in detail
- 2.2 SA Fire Ban Districts and Fire Danger Season
- 2.3 Fire danger rating
- 2.4 Fire danger days
- 2.5 Bushfire Warning messages
- 2.6 Emergency broadcast partners (where to listen for warning and alert messages)
- 2.7 Ways to stay informed

## **3. Preparing Yourself**

- 3.1 Preparing yourself for bushfire
- 3.2 How people die or survive in bushfires
- 3.3 Bushfire survival kits

### 3.4 After the fire

## **4. Preparing your Property**

- 4.1 Preparing your property
- 4.2 How houses burn
- 4.3 Identifying hazards around your home
- 4.4 House siting and design
- 4.5 Landscaping to minimise the impact of bushfire
- 4.6 Fuel breaks
- 4.7 Creating asset protection zones (KI)
- 4.8 Firefighting equipment
- 4.9 Sprinkler systems
- 4.10 Bushfire shelters and bunkers
- 4.11 House fires
- 4.12 Bushfire information for renters
- 4.13 Natural Gas and Bushfires
- 4.14 Burning Off
- 4.15 Chaff Pile/Stubble Dump Burning

## **5. Pets, Horses and Livestock**

- 5.1 Care of pets and livestock
- 5.2 Horses and bushfires
- 5.3 Protection of fodder reserves

## **6. Machinery, Storage, Permits and Restrictions**

- 6.1 Use of machinery

- 6.2 Maintenance of machinery
- 6.3 Storage of flammables
- 6.4 LP gas safety
- 6.5 Permits

## **7. Preparing Your Business**

- 7.1 Bushfire safety: for organizations and business (fact sheet) Bushfire Safety for Business and organisations (Full guide and templates)

## **8. Preparing with Others**

### **Brochure: Community Fire Safe**

- 8.1 Fire safety strategies for community groups
- 8.2 Telephone trees
- 8.3 Carer's information

## **9. Surviving While Travelling and on Holidays**

- 9.1 Campfires and barbecues
  - Brochure: Holiday safety and survival
  - Brochure: Bushfire safety for travellers

# **Bushfire Survival Plan Checklist**

Date of this plan:

## **Important phone numbers**

Fire, Police, Ambulance: 000 (TTY 106)

Doctor:

School:

Vet:

Bank:

Insurance Company: Policy number:

Water Supplier:

Electricity Supplier:

Gas Supplier:

Local Council:

Family/Friends:

Family/Friends:

Family/Friends:

Family/Friends:

**Bushfire Information Hotline 1300 362 361  
TTY 133 677**

The frequency of our local ABC and /or other radio station  
broadcasting emergency warnings and information:

Our Fire Ban District is:

Our nearest Safer Place:

Our nearest Last Resort Refuge (for if all plans fail):

**Leave early—who is going to leave early?**

**Leave early—who is going to leave early?**

Name

Phone Number

Name

Phone Number

Name

Phone Number

Name

Phone Number

Name

Phone Number

**Stay and defend—who will stay and defend?**

Name

Phone Number

Name

Phone Number

Name

Phone Number

Name

Phone Number

Name

Phone Number

**Listen out for bushfire "Watch & Act" and  
"Emergency Warning" messages**

Monitor your local ABC or other Emergency Broadcast Partner radio station using a battery powered radio for information.

## **Leaving Early Plan**

It is recommended that you leave early if:

- It's a Total Fire Ban day and you have no plan to stay and defend; you or your property are not prepared; you are not physically fit or emotionally prepared; you are caring for vulnerable, young or elderly people.
- If it is forecast as Extreme, you should only stay to defend if you are extremely well prepared and your home is properly constructed.
- If it is forecast as Catastrophic, you should leave as early as possible whatever your initial plan.

### **Our trigger/s to enact this plan:**

- ☐ Fire Danger Rating of Very High
- ☐ Fire Danger Rating of Severe (Total Fire Ban)
- ☐ Fire Danger Rating of Extreme (Total Fire Ban)
- ☐ Fire Danger Rating of Catastrophic (Total Fire Ban)
- ☐ Other triggers:

## **Where to go:**

(Choose places in Bushfire Safer Place. Consider friends, relatives or activities in low fire danger areas)

## **When to go:**

(Plan to leave early enough to avoid being caught in smoke, the fire or on congested roads)

## **How to get there:**

(What mode of transport will you take? Consider a number of travel routes and how long the journey will take. Plan alternative routes in case the route is blocked)

## **What to take:**

(Prepare an emergency kit—blankets, water, first aid kit, medications, change of clothes, important documents. Organise household members and make arrangements for pets)

## **Who to tell:**

(Before and after)

## **Our trigger to return:**

(e.g. When a lower Fire Danger Rating is released)

## **Back-up plan if we don't get out before a fire:**

(is there somewhere else you can go to shelter?)

Know the forecast Fire Danger Rating by visiting  
[www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

Check local weather reports or contact the Bushfire  
Information Hotline on 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677).

## **Stay & Defend Plan**

It is recommended that you do not stay to defend if:

- It's a Total Fire Ban day and your property is not prepared; you are not physically fit or emotionally prepared; you are caring for vulnerable, young or elderly people.
- There is an Extreme Fire Danger Rating and you and your home are not prepared to the highest level.
- There is a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating.

## **Other triggers that mean we will NOT stay and defend are:**

(e.g. family members home alone, house guests, power failure, etc.)

## **Our trigger/s to enact this plan:**

Fire Danger Rating of Very High

☐ Fire Danger Rating of Very High

☐ Fire Danger Rating of Severe

☐ Fire Danger Rating of Extreme

☐ Other triggers:

## **Before the fire approaches, we will:**

(activate your plan—those leaving early should have already left the property, otherwise it is too late and they will have to stay. List the things you need to do in preparation for the fire front)

## **As the fire approaches, we will:**

(prepare for ember attack on or near your home, list the actions you are going to take)

## **As the fire front approaches, we will:**

(stay safe by monitoring the fire from inside your home, document what you will do)

## **After the fire has passed, we will:**

(patrol your property to extinguish burning embers. You may need to do this for several hours. Outline what actions you will take)

## **Contingency plan:**

(what will you do if you can't activate your plan? Leaving late is deadly. Make sure you identify a safer location and safe route/s)

## **Recovery:**

(what activities will you do /what help will you seek as part of your recovery?)

## **Listen out for bushfire "Watch & Act" and "Emergency Warning" messages**

Monitor your local ABC or other Emergency Broadcast Partner radio station using a battery powered radio for information.

## **Activating your Bushfire Survival Plan**

Once the plan is completed, it is important that you practise and review the plan regularly. This will mean that if you need to activate the plan in a real bushfire, you will have already gone through the thought processes and be able to respond appropriately.

### **Follow these steps:**

## **Identify the Fire Danger Rating**

Identify and use the Fire Danger Rating for the day to guide which plan to activate.

## **Activate your Bushfire Survival Plan**

- Activate your plan that is relevant to the Fire Danger Rating.
- Someone must take charge and lead the family through the process by communicating clearly what needs to be done.
- Make sure you know who is doing what and when.

## **Prepare Yourself**

Retrieve your emergency kit and put on protective clothing.

## **Prepare to Leave Early**

Pack your relocation kit into the car and relocate to a Bushfire Safer Place. Make sure you have plenty of time to leave and do not return until it is safe to do so.

**OR**

## **Prepare to Stay and Defend**

Ensure you have the necessary equipment ready and are mentally prepared to actively defend for an extended period of time

## **Keep informed**

Monitor Bushfire "Watch & Act" and "Emergency Warning" messages:

- CFS website [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)
- Alert SA mobile phone app for iPhone or Android.
- CFS twitter and facebook

- through your local ABC Radio through another emergency broadcast radio station (full list on the CFS website)
- Bushfire Information Hotline: 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677).

Bushfires are unpredictable and you need to be prepared for the unexpected. Do not rely solely on one source for information about bushfire incidents.

## **CFS regional offices Government of South Australia**

### **Adelaide office**

Level 7, 60 Waymouth Street  
(GPO Box 2468)  
Adelaide SA 5000  
Telephone: (08) 8463 4200

### **Region 1**

#### **Mount Lofty Ranges /Kangaroo Island**

75 Gawler Street  
Mount Barker SA 5251  
Telephone: (08) 8391 1866

## **Region 2**

### **Mount Lofty Ranges/ Yorke Peninsula/ Lower North**

The University of Adelaide  
Roseworthy Campus - Building F3  
1454 Mudla Wirra Road  
Wasleys SA 5400  
Telephone: (08) 85226088  
PO Box 1506, Willaston SA 5118

## **Region 3**

### **Murraylands & Riverland**

10 Second Street (GPO Box 1371)  
Murray Bridge SA 5265  
Telephone: (08) 8532 6800

## **Region 4**

### **Mid North & pastoral areas**

3 Main Street (PO Box 2080)  
Port Augusta SA 5700  
Telephone: (08) 8642 2399

## **Region 5**

### **South East**

46 Smith Street (PO Box 8)  
Naracoorte SA 5271  
Telephone: (08) 8762 2311

## **Region 6**

### **Eyre Peninsula & West Coast**

32 Matthew Place  
Port Lincoln SA 5606  
Telephone: (08) 8682 4266

## **PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE.**

Contact the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361  
(TTY 133 677)  
or visit [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

**PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.**  
**BUSHFIRE READY**