

YOUR GUIDE TO

# Bushfire Safety



## Information Hotline

1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677)

[cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au)



# Bushfires can start suddenly without warning – are you ready?

## If you and your home are well prepared, you stand a better chance of surviving a bushfire

Every year there are 756 bushfires on average throughout South Australia and about 67% are in the most densely populated areas like the Mount Lofty Ranges.

There is a real chance you will experience a dangerous bushfire at some time in your life.

One of the most important things to do before a bushfire is to decide what you'll do if one should start.

This booklet can help you make that decision and assist you with the steps in preparing yourself, your home and family.

- *Bushfires can start suddenly without warning*
- *They destroy homes, properties and lives every summer*
- *There is a chance you will experience a bushfire in your lifetime*
- *You can increase your chances of survival by preparing*

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## Am I at risk?

- My local area has a history of bushfires
- I live in or near bushland, grassland, forest, paddocks, scrub or heathlands
- I have many trees and shrubs around my home
- My home is built on a slope
- I need to travel through bushland to leave home
- My children go to school in a bushfire risk area, or travel through one on their way
- I don't have a written Bushfire Survival Plan, or it is more than one-year-old

**If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, your safety may be at risk if a bushfire happens near you.**

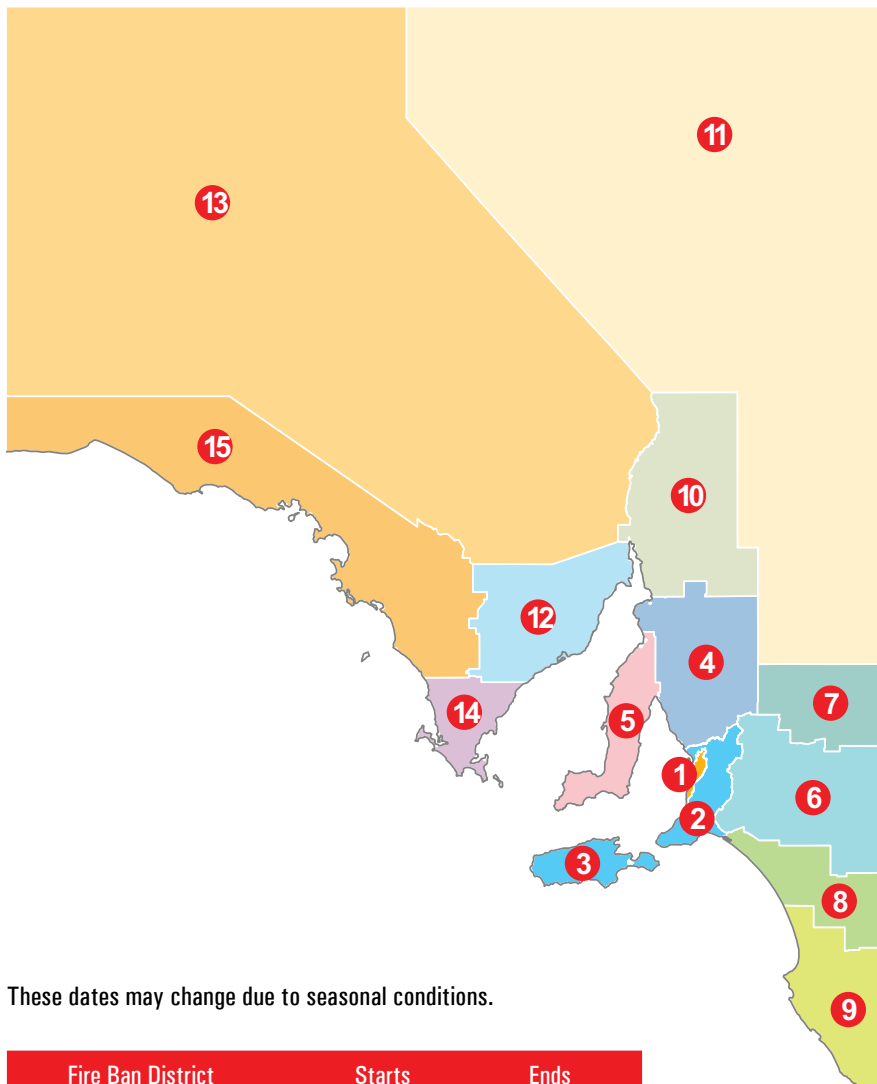


### Did you know?

Over 35 suburbs on Adelaide's fringes and more than 75 towns in the Adelaide Hills, Kangaroo Island and other parts of rural South Australia are in bushfire risk areas.

**Create your Bushfire Survival Plan in 5 minutes  
at [cfs.sa.gov.au/5minutebushfireplan](https://cfs.sa.gov.au/5minutebushfireplan)  
or complete the form at the back of this guide**

# What Fire Ban District am I in?



These dates may change due to seasonal conditions.

	Fire Ban District	Starts	Ends
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
14	Lower Eyre Peninsula	1 November	15 April
15	West Coast	1 November	15 April

## 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 know which district you live, travel or work in.

Find your Fire Ban District at [cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au)

## The Fire Danger Season

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

## Total Fire Bans

The CFS may declare Total Fire Bans in some Fire Ban Districts or even across the whole state on days when high temperatures, strong winds and low humidity could cause fires to become uncontrollable. Barbecues, camp fires, restricted equipment and some activities are not permitted on these days.

## Know your district Fire Danger Season

Contact the Information Hotline on 1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677) or visit [cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au)

# What do the Fire Danger Ratings mean?

Fire Danger Rating	What does it mean?	What should I do?
<b>CATASTROPHIC TOTAL FIRE BAN</b>	<p>If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire</li> <li>• Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions</li> <li>• The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas</li> </ul>	<p><b>For your survival, leave bush fire risk areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay safe by leaving high risk bushfire areas the night before or early in the day— do not wait and see</li> <li>• Your life may depend on the decisions you make even before there is a fire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— When you will leave</li> <li>— Where you will go</li> <li>— How you will get there</li> <li>— When you will return</li> <li>— What you will do if you cannot leave</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>EXTREME TOTAL FIRE BAN</b>	<p><b>Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are dangerous fire conditions</li> <li>• You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Take action now to protect your life and property</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your Bushfire Survival Plan and that your property is fire ready</li> <li>• If a fire starts, take immediate action. If you and your property are not prepared to the highest level, go to a safer location well before the fire impacts</li> <li>• Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas</li> </ul>
<b>HIGH</b>	<p><b>Fires can be dangerous</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's a heightened risk</li> <li>• If a fire starts, your life and property may be at risk</li> </ul>	<p><b>Be ready to act</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be alert for fires in your area</li> <li>• Decide what you will do if a fire starts</li> </ul>
<b>MODERATE</b>	<p><b>Most fires can be controlled</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlled burning may occur in these conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits apply</li> </ul>	<p><b>Plan and prepare</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay up to date</li> <li>• Be ready to act if there is a fire</li> </ul>

The AFDRS introduces 'no rating' for days where no proactive action is required by a community. This does not mean that fires cannot happen, but that they are less likely to move or act in a way that threatens the safety of the community.

## Fires can threaten suddenly and without warning

- **WATCH** for signs of fire, especially smoke and flames
- **KNOW** the Fire Danger Rating and be aware of conditions
- **HAVE** your Bushfire Survival Plan and Emergency kit ready

## To seek information

- Listen to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV
- Go to [cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au)
- Call the Information Hotline 1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677)

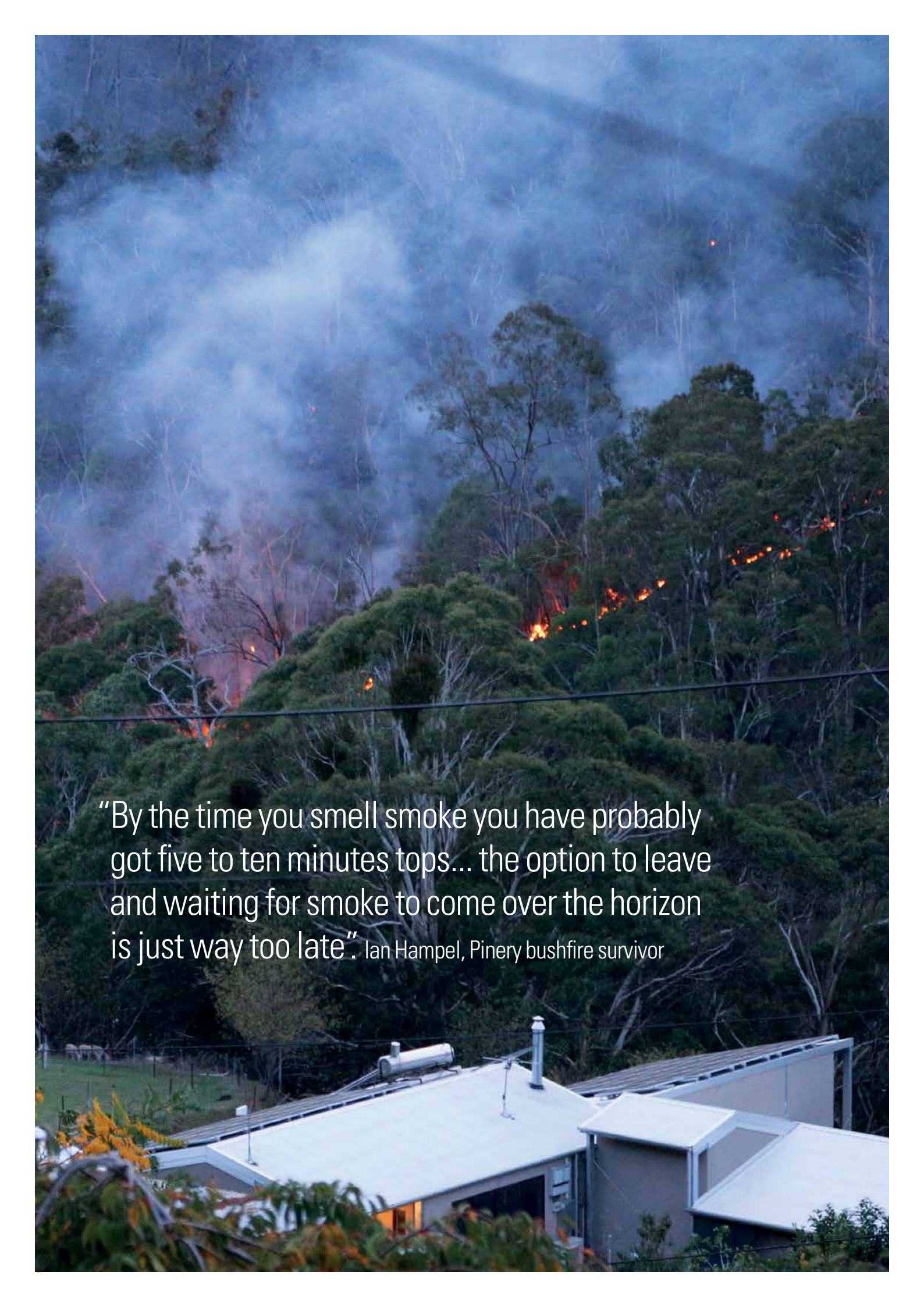
# Fire regulations – what can I / can't I do?

Restrictions are in place during the Fire Danger Season and on Total Fire Ban days.  
Your local council can tell you what restrictions are in place at other times.

Fire Danger Season			Total Fire Ban Day	
Can I light a fire without a permit?	NO	Fires are <b><u>NOT</u></b> permitted.	NO	Fires are <b><u>NOT</u></b> permitted.
Can I burn-off on my property?	NO	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 9 Permit from your local council. <b>Check with your local council for conditions.</b>	NO	Fires are <b><u>NOT</u></b> permitted.
Can I burn rubbish or grass clippings?	NO	For any burning of rubbish or vegetation clippings, a Schedule 9 permit is required from your local council.	NO	The lighting of any fires are not permitted.
You must check with your local council for compliance with Environment Protection Authority restrictions. Some councils have totally prohibited the use of incinerators and open fires for waste disposal on domestic premises.				
Can I have a fire in a forest reserve?	NO	No fires, including barbecues and campfires, are permitted in forest reserves between November 30 and April 30 each year. Gas barbecues may be permitted in designated areas in the Mount Lofty Ranges forest under certain conditions. For enquiries, contact the Forestry Reserve office.	NO	Fires are <b><u>NOT</u></b> permitted.
Can I have a fire in a National Park Reserve?	NO	Strict regulations apply to all fires, including barbecues, in National Parks and Wildlife Reserves. Signs are placed at the park entrance when fires are permitted, but they can only be lit in designated areas. Many National Parks and Wildlife Reserves have total bans on the use of wood fires. For further information, contact the Park Office.	NO	Fires are <b><u>NOT</u></b> permitted.
Can I use a gas or electric barbecue or cooking appliance?	YES	Providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The barbecue or cooking appliance is clear of all flammable vegetation to a distance of at least 4 metres</li><li>• A person who is able to control the fire is present at the site of the fire until it is extinguished</li><li>• An appropriate extinguisher is at hand</li></ul>	YES	A gas or electric barbecue or cooking appliance can be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Within 15 metres of a domestic or commercial premises OR</li><li>• On a coastal foreshore</li></ul> Providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The barbecue or cooking appliance is clear of all flammable vegetation to a distance of at least 4 metres</li><li>• A person who is able to control the fire is present at the site of the fire until it is extinguished</li><li>• An appropriate extinguisher is at hand</li></ul>
Some local councils allow gas or electric barbecues in caravan parks or cleared picnic areas. Look for signs or contact the council for advice.				
Can I smoke cigarettes?	YES	But you must not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smoke within 2 metres of flammable bush or grass outside of a township (penalties apply)</li><li>• Throw a cigarette butt from a vehicle (penalties apply)</li><li>• Drop or throw a cigarette butt where it will come into contact with flammable vegetation (penalties apply)</li></ul>	YES	But you must not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smoke within 2 metres of flammable bush or grass outside of a township (penalties apply)</li><li>• Throw a cigarette butt from a vehicle (penalties apply)</li><li>• Drop or throw a cigarette butt where it will come into contact with flammable vegetation (penalties apply)</li></ul>

Fire Danger Season		Total Fire Ban Day
Can I use a solid fuel (wood/charcoal) barbecue?	<b>YES</b> <p>Provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The barbecue is clear of all flammable vegetation to a distance of at least 4 metres</li> <li>• A person who is able to control the fire is present at the site of the fire until it is extinguished</li> <li>• An appropriate extinguisher is at hand</li> </ul>	<b>NO</b> <p>A solid fuel burning barbecue (one that uses fuel such as wood, charcoal or heat beads) cannot be used unless you obtain a Schedule 10 Permit from your local council. These permits are generally only issued for emergency purposes.</p> <p>A gas-fired barbecue can be used if used within 15 metres of a domestic or commercial premises, or on a coastal foreshore, providing that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The barbecue is clear of all flammable vegetation to a distance of at least 4 metres</li> <li>• A person who is able to control the fire is present at the site of the fire until it is extinguished</li> <li>• An appropriate extinguisher is at hand</li> </ul>
Can I use a pizza oven?	<b>YES</b> <p>Provided it is a gas or electric – see above for barbecues. Wood fired ovens should comply with CFS Code of Practice and must be in a properly constructed fireplace, have a 4m clearance from flammable vegetation, someone in attendance while it is lit and an adequate extinguishing agent at hand.</p>	<b>NO</b> <p>Unless it is gas or electric – see above for barbecues – or you have obtained a Schedule 10 Permit from your local council. All wood fired pizza ovens need a Schedule 10 Permit.</p>
Can I use a chainsaw, brush cutter, mower or slasher?	<b>YES</b> <p>Providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shovel or rake and portable water spray are at hand, and additionally:</li> <li>• All engine exhaust exits through the exhaust system, and</li> <li>• The exhaust system prevents the escape of burning material</li> <li>• Heated parts of the exhaust system are prevented from coming into contact with flammable material / vegetation</li> <li>• The exhaust system is in good working order</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b> <p>Providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shovel or rake and portable water spray are at hand, and additionally:</li> <li>• All engine exhaust exits through the exhaust system, and</li> <li>• The exhaust system prevents the escape of burning material</li> <li>• Heated parts of the exhaust system are prevented from coming into contact with flammable material / vegetation</li> <li>• The exhaust system is in good working order</li> </ul>
Can I use an angle grinder, welder or any other cutting tool that produces sparks outside?	<b>YES</b> <p>Providing you have a 10-metre cleared space to any flammable vegetation, and water or an extinguisher is at hand. A person able to control the device is present at all times while the activity is being undertaken.</p>	<b>NO</b> <p>Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 Permit from your local council. These permits are generally only issued for emergency purposes.</p>
Can I have a campfire, bonfire or light a fire for warmth or comfort?	<b>YES</b> <p>Providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fire is in a 30 cm deep trench (below ground level) and no more than one square metre in area</li> <li>• You have a four-metre cleared space of flammable vegetation around and above the fire</li> <li>• A responsible person is in attendance at all times with water and / or an extinguisher</li> </ul> <p>Please note that only charcoal is allowed to be burnt for comfort fires within a metropolitan area or within township boundaries by the EPA Legislation. Check with your local council before lighting a comfort fire.</p> <p>The use of above ground fires such as chimineas, fire drums, braziers are only permitted with the use of permits.</p>	<b>NO</b> <p>Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 Permit from your local council. These permits are generally only issued for emergency purposes.</p>
Can I use fireworks?	<b>NO</b> <p>Private use of fireworks is banned. Licensed pyrotechnicians may conduct public fireworks displays providing a Schedule 9 Permit has been obtained from CFS.</p>	<b>NO</b> <p>Private use of fireworks is banned. Licensed pyrotechnicians may conduct public fireworks displays providing a Schedule 10 Permit has been obtained from CFS.</p>





"By the time you smell smoke you have probably got five to ten minutes tops... the option to leave and waiting for smoke to come over the horizon is just way too late". Ian Hampel, Pinery bushfire survivor



# Why do I need to plan?

## What will you do in a bushfire?

### Things you should discuss and decide with your family before summer starts

Plan now – get the whole household together and discuss these important decisions with your family.

- Which Fire Danger Rating is your trigger to leave?
- Will you leave early that morning or the night before?
- Where will you go?
- What route will you take – and what are your backup route(s) if a fire is already in the area?
- Who else do you need to consider, young children or elderly parents?
- What will you take with you?
- What are you going to do with pets, horses or livestock?
- Who else do you need to talk to about where you are going?
- Is there anyone outside your neighbourhood that you need to help or check up on?
- How will you stay informed about warnings and updates?
- What will you do if there is a fire in the area and you cannot leave?

**Many people have died trying to leave at the last minute - leave early, don't wait**

### Leaving early – what does it mean?

- Leaving early means being away from high risk areas **before** there are any signs of fire
- It does not mean waiting for a warning or a siren
- It does not mean waiting to see or smell smoke
- And it does not mean waiting for a knock on the door

Fires can start and spread very quickly. Leaving early is the safest option for anyone in a high risk bushfire area.

### Where to go on fire danger days

**Leaving a high risk bushfire area early, before a fire starts, is always the safest option for your survival.**

We have identified places that can offer relative safety from a bushfire. For more information, maps of these places and to find out if you live in or near a Bushfire Safer Place visit [cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au).

#### Bushfire Safer Places

##### BUSHFIRE SAFER PLACE



Adelaide Metropolitan area, outer suburbs and rural settlements. Use if you need to relocate early.

Suitable for use during forecast bad fire weather or during bushfire. May be subject to sparks, embers and smoke.

##### BUSHFIRE LAST RESORT REFUGE



Ovals, buildings in rural areas. Use only if your plan has failed.

Only use if your plan has failed and you cannot reach a Bushfire Safer Place. Not suitable for extended use and provides only limited protection during bushfire.

**Create your Bushfire Plan in 5 minutes  
at [cfs.sa.gov.au/5minutebushfireplan](http://cfs.sa.gov.au/5minutebushfireplan)  
or complete the form at the back of this guide**

# Prepare your home and get ready

## A well prepared home

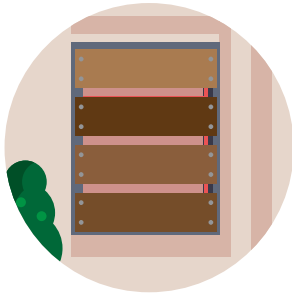
- Is more likely to survive even if you aren't there
- Can make it safer for you and firefighters to defend
- Can offer more protection if a fire threatens suddenly and you cannot leave
- Is less likely to put your neighbours' homes at risk

## Five top actions to make your home safer

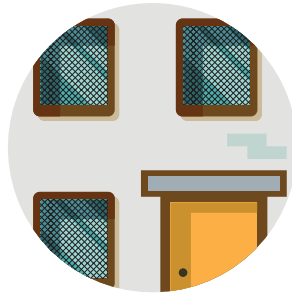
- **Trim overhanging trees and shrubs; mow grass and remove the cuttings.** A cleared area around your home can stop the fire spreading to your home and other buildings
- **Remove materials** that can burn around and underneath your home e.g. door mats, wood piles, mulch, leaves, paint, outdoor furniture
- **Clear and remove** all the debris and leaves from the gutters surrounding your home. Burning embers can set your home on fire
- **Prepare a sturdy hose** with metal fittings which will reach all around your home
- **Have a reliable independent water supply** of at least 5000 litres, such as a tank or swimming pool. You will need a generator or diesel / petrol water pump too. Do not rely on mains water or electricity being available during a fire



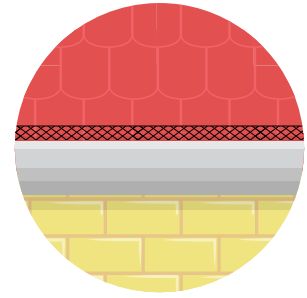
## More permanent measures you can take to protect your home



**Block up** areas where embers can enter the house



**Install metal fly screens** on all windows and vents



**Install metal gutter guards**



**Position gas cylinders** on side of house and **away from trees and gardens**



**Direct any cylinder pressure valves** away from the house



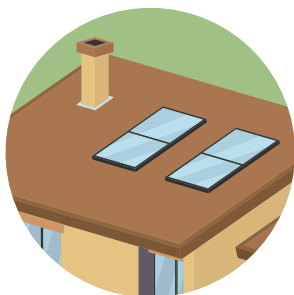
**Move garden beds** away from the house



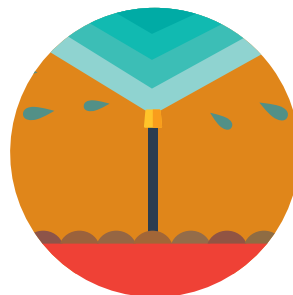
**Replace wood fences** with **metal fences**



**Use stones or rocks** instead of mulch in garden beds



**Install wire-reinforced glass** or a thermal plastic cover on skylights



**Install a home bushfire sprinkler system** that directs water over the roof, windows, doors and underfloor areas. All fittings should be metal, as plastic melts. Ensure you have enough independent water to run the sprinklers and seek professional advice for design and installation

**If you are constructing a home in a bushfire risk area you can find detailed information on the best options at [sa.gov.au](http://sa.gov.au) – Bushfire Regulations**

# Prepare your home and get ready



## Before summer

- Pack an emergency kit with essential items and keep it in a handy place
- Scan important documents and photos onto a USB stick / external drive / back up to cloud
- Buy a battery-operated radio, powerful torch and extra batteries
- Save important contact numbers in your mobile phone. Include family and friends and the Information Hotline – 1800 362 361. Have a spare mobile phone that you keep fully charged for emergencies.
- Set aside protective clothing (long sleeved, made from natural material such as cotton, sturdy footwear such as leather boots and a P2 mask) for each member of the family
- Put woollen blankets in your car in case you get caught on the road
- Mark your main routes, including backup routes and petrol stations on hard copy maps
- Make arrangements with anyone you plan to visit or stay with when you leave early
- Help vulnerable family members, like elderly parents or people with a disability to prepare themselves and their homes
- Talk to neighbours or nearby friends about ways you can help each other
- Don't forget pets. Make sure you can contain them and you have prepared a pet emergency kit

## Pets, animals and horses

Remember to prepare your pets as well. Make sure your pet is wearing an identification tag or is microchipped.

Add the following items to your emergency kit:

- Suitable transport carriers or leash
- Food and drinking water
- Any medications / vet contact details
- A familiar item (toy, bed, treats) to help reduce stress

If you have **horses**, move them somewhere else ahead of time if they won't be safe on your property.

## Your emergency kit

Important items:

- Drivers licence / photo identification
- Passport
- Photos
- Will
- Jewellery
- Insurance papers
- Medical prescriptions
- USB stick or file containing important files / papers

Medicines and first aid kit

Mobile phone, charger and power bank

Battery powered radio, torch and spare batteries

Overnight bag with change of clothes, toiletries, sanitary supplies

Adequate amount of water and food

100% woollen blankets

Contact information:

- Doctor
- Council
- Power company
- Insurance company





# On a fire risk day

## What do I do on fire risk days...

- If your plan is to leave early – leave
- Watch the local conditions – stay up to date with where fires are located
- Move horses and livestock to a safe area
- Keep pets in a safe place ready to move
- Pack personal items and put in car
- Remove anything that will burn easily from around the house
- Add final items to emergency kit
- Pack the car – remember important items such as wallet, cards, keys, papers, etc.
- Put car in driveway or on the side of road ready to go
- Turn off the gas
- Block the downpipes and partially fill gutters if you have time
- Make sure everyone is wearing or has protective clothing – natural material such as pure wool, heavy cotton drill or denim and strong leather boots
- Tell people you are leaving
- Close and lock all doors and windows
- Leave front gate or access gate open
- Help vulnerable family and friends to get ready and leave early

## Leave early – don't wait

Leaving late means you will be on the road when conditions are at their most dangerous or you may not be able to get out at all.

## Monitor for warning messages



**EMERGENCY WARNING**



**WATCH AND ACT**



**ADVICE**

## Where to find warnings and updates



### Local news

Listen to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations and watch Sky News TV



### 1800 362 361

Information Hotline  
Download the AlertSA app



### Online

CFS Website  
[cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au)



### Social media

Twitter @CFSAAlerts  
Facebook @countryfireservice



### National Relay Service

Callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech / communication impairment can contact us by calling TTY 133 677



### 131 450

If you do not speak English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service for translating information

In some circumstances



**You may receive a SMS to your mobile phone**



**You may receive a call to your landline phone**

**The longer you wait, the greater the risk to your life**

## During a fire

**Bushfires are scary and stressful.**

**Understanding what to expect and having a plan about what you will do can help you cope if you get caught.**

### What to expect

- Embers, spot fires moving ahead of the main fire
- Smoke, heat, noise and darkness – this is before the fire hits
- Lack of visibility, making it hard to know where the fire is, travel will be dangerous
- Fires approaching from any direction (or two directions at once)
- Burning embers landing around your property for hours before or after the main fire front has passed
- Roads blocked by fallen trees, branches, power lines and emergency vehicles

The best way to prepare yourself mentally is to have a written and practised plan that everyone in your household understands and has agreed to.

### How you might feel

- Confused
- Unable to breathe properly
- Tired and emotionally exhausted
- Anxious
- Disoriented
- Scared
- Thirsty and hungry
- Indecisive

### Expect disruptions to services

Disruptions to telephone service, internet, mains power and water are common during a fire or on a fire risk day.

Don't rely on having mains power and water.

If the power goes out you will not be able to use:

- Cordless phones, phones connected to nbn
- Remote control garage doors, electric gates or similar devices
- Computer and the internet, radio / TV
- Air conditioners and coolers
- Electric pumps





"The wind absolutely roared; smoke was heavy in the air and breathing and seeing was not easy."

Kerri and Ian Huppatz, Black Tuesday survivors



# Radiant heat can kill

## Radiant heat is the main cause of people dying in a bushfire

- Radiant heat is many times hotter than the air temperature
- The front of a moving fire radiates up to six times more heat than its back
- It can cause surfaces to catch alight, crack and break windows, allowing embers into the house
- Bushfires radiate a more significant amount of heat than grassfires
- Radiant heat only radiates in straight lines. It can be blocked by a solid object such as a concrete wall or building
- Bushfires generate lethal heat
- The hotter, drier and windier the day, the more intense a bushfire will be and will generate more radiant heat
- It can cause injury and death from burns and cause the body's cooling system to fail, leading to heat exhaustion and possible heart failure
- The best protection from radiant heat is distance

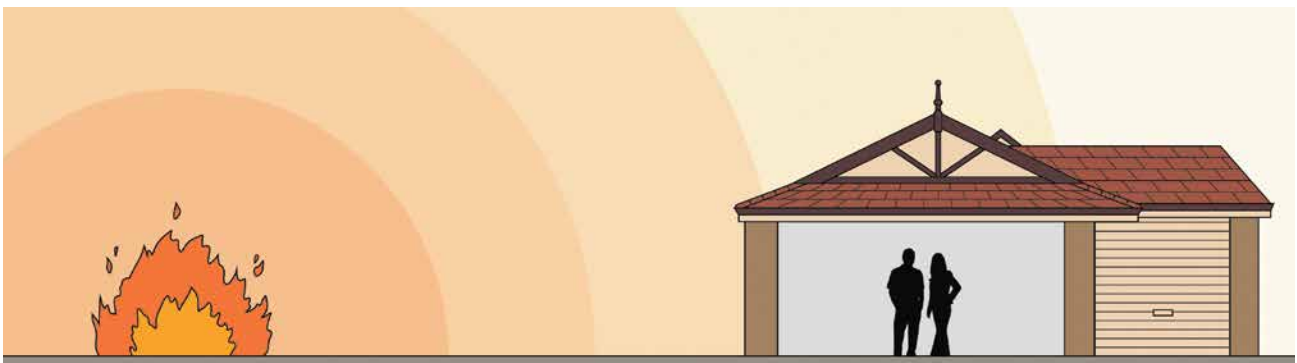
## If you are caught outside in a fire try to protect yourself by:

- Covering up exposed skin with natural fabrics like 100% cotton or wool
- Being as far away as you can – distance is the best protection from radiant heat
- Getting behind a solid object
- Staying away from windows as radiant heat can pass through glass

The biggest killer of people in bushfires is radiant heat.

*"People forget about the air vents and the roof. Hot embers can blow under your iron or tiles and quietly burn your house down when you think it's all safe."*

Ralph and Tracey Butler, Pinery bushfire survivors



**The best way to survive a bushfire and avoid radiant heat is to leave early and be away from the threat**



# How bushfires behave



## Embers

- Embers are burning twigs, leaves and pieces of debris
- Embers are carried by the wind and land ahead or away from the main fire and can start spot fires
- Ember attack occurs when twigs and leaves are carried by the wind and land on or around a building
- Embers can land on top of debris in your gutters and set your home on fire
- Embers can get in under gaps in your roof or the air vents and can set fire to your roof
- Ember attack is the most common way homes catch fire during bushfires
- Ember attack can happen before, during and after a bushfire

## Wind

Strong winds are normally present during bushfires, the wind pushes flames closer to unburnt fuel and causes the fire to travel faster. Wind also dries out vegetation, making it more

flammable, and bends flames over, allowing radiant heat to pre-heat unburnt fuel.

Wind has a significant influence on the:

- Speed at which a fire spreads – the higher the wind speed, the greater the fire danger
- Direction in which a fire travels and the size of the fire front
- Intensity of a fire by providing more oxygen
- Likelihood of spot fires caused by embers

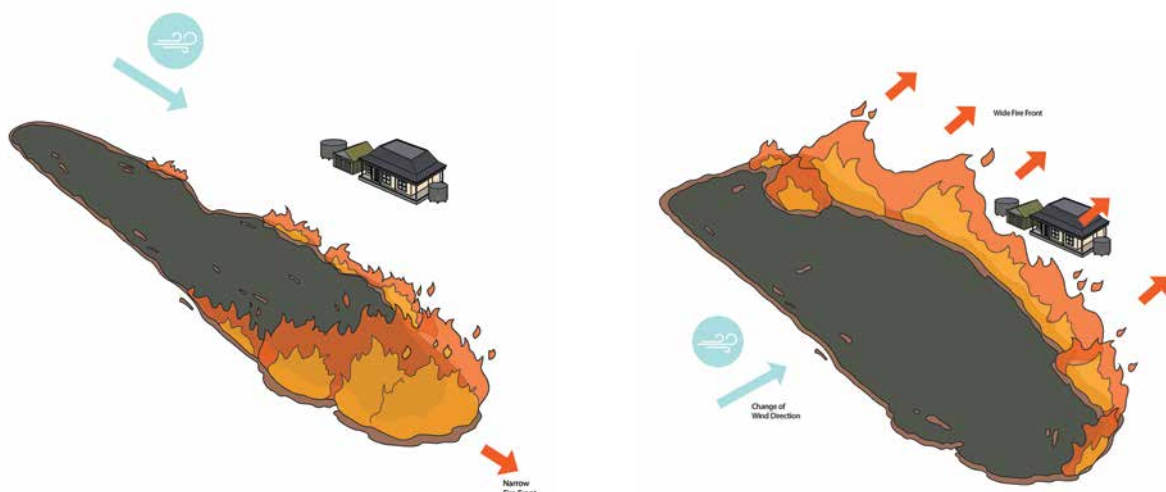
## Wind change

A change in wind direction is one of the most dangerous influences on how a fire behaves.

Many people who die in bushfires get caught during or after the wind changes.

In South Australia, winds are hottest from the north / north-west which is usually followed by a south-west wind change.

A change in wind direction can rapidly change the direction and size of the fire front.



## Surviving if you get caught in a building

- *Only shelter in a room that has a direct exit to the outside of your home*
- *If your home is on fire, you will need to go outside to burnt ground if possible*

### **If you are caught in a bushfire your best chance of survival is to shelter in a solid brick building**

- Make sure you have two points of exit – including one direct exit out of the house
- Most bathrooms are not suitable to shelter in. They typically have only one door which can make escape impossible if that exit is blocked by flames and heat
- Most bathrooms also have frosted windows that do not let you see outside – during a bushfire it is important that you can look outside and see what is happening
- Wear protective clothing, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts of natural fibres such as 100% cotton or wool. Wear sturdy shoes such as leather boots (not sandals or runners)

### **If your home catches fire while you are inside, you will need to act quickly**

- Close the door to the room that is on fire
- Keep down low to minimise breathing in toxic smoke from the house fire
- Move away from the areas of your home on fire, closing all the doors behind you
- **Do not get trapped in a room with only one exit**
- Move outside to burnt ground as soon as you can
- Wherever possible, try to put a solid object between you and the radiant heat from the fire
- Drink water to prevent dehydration



## If you are caught in a car



**Sheltering in a car is extremely dangerous and can result in serious injury or death.  
Always plan to leave early to avoid this situation**

**If you come across smoke or flames while driving – turn around and drive to safety. If you must stop:**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Position the car to minimise exposure to radiant heat:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try to find a clear spot and park away from dense bush and long grass</li><li>• Park behind a barrier such as a wall or rocky outcrop</li><li>• Park the car to face towards the oncoming fire front</li><li>• Park off the roadway and turn hazard lights on. Car crashes are common in bushfires due to not being able to see the road clearly</li></ul> | <b>2 To increase your chances of survival:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stay in the car and close windows and doors tightly</li><li>• Cover up with woollen blankets and get down below window level – you need to protect yourself from radiant heat which will pass through glass</li><li>• Drink water to prevent dehydration</li></ul> | <b>3 As soon as you become aware that the fire front is close by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shut all vents and turn off the air-conditioning</li><li>• Turn off the engine</li><li>• Stay down until the sound of the fire has passed, carefully leave the car (it will be hot)</li></ul> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

# If it's a fire danger day tomorrow...

## Fire danger day predicted

Know your risk, check and follow your plan, stay informed



### Months and weeks before

- Know your risk (see page 3)
- Prepare your property (see pages 10-13)
- Prepare yourself and your family (see page 22)
- Prepare your kits (see page 12)
- Prepare and practise your plan (see pages 23-25)

### Night before or early in the morning

- Check the Fire Danger Rating
- Remind everyone of the plan and check that they understand their role
- Check your kit
- Let family or friends know what you intend to do
- Keep pets inside with sufficient drinking water and food
- Move stock to well cleared area with plenty of drinking water
- Check your pump and generators
- Water garden
- Block down pipes and fill gutters with water
- Move flammable items away from the house; shut off gas at meter or bottle
- Prepare water buckets, a torch and ladder ready to check the ceiling space
- Prepare for the possibility that no power and / or no phone lines will be available

### Daytime

- Stay informed (see page 13)
- Keep hydrated
- If no fire, keep monitoring

If leaving early, pack car and leave now.

## Fire starts in the area

Follow your written Bushfire Survival Plan, stay informed, stay alert



### It may already be too late to leave safely

- Let neighbours and friends know you are staying
- Get into protective clothing (see page 12)
- Turn on sprinklers
- Shut doors / windows
- Put tape across the inside of windows so they remain in place if broken
- Watch out for embers
- Prepare yourself mentally for the coming fire
- Stay informed (see page 13)

### 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

**Through all stages of a fire,  
it is important to stay informed**



### Fire coming

Stay calm, check for embers, extinguish spot fires



#### What to Expect

- Flying embers and sparks can light spot fires hours before the fire front arrives
- Smoke will reduce visibility
- You may be without power and water

#### What to do

- Fight spot fires
- 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 to keep out smoke and embers
- Prepare inside your house (e.g. remove curtains, move furniture away from 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
- Stay informed (see page 13)

#### Don't

- Try to outrun the fire in a car. It is likely too late to leave and a car offers little shelter in a bushfire

### Fire arrives

Seek shelter and actively defend from inside



#### What to Expect

- It will be dark, and very loud
- There will be smoke, embers and flames
- Radiant heat is the biggest killer

#### What to do

- 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 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
- Continue to drink water

#### Don't

- Shelter in a dam, swimming pool, tank or grazed paddock – radiant heat and smoke can still damage your face, head and lungs

A fire front may approach from any direction. You may be subject to multiple fronts at the same time or separate times.

### After fire has passed

Actively defend your property, return home when safe, look after yourself and loved ones



#### What to Expect

- Embers and spot fires are still a threat for many hours – even days – after a fire front has passed

#### What to do

- Remember to put on any protective clothing you removed while inside
- Go outside and extinguish small spot fires and burning embers
- Hose down the house, paying special attention to the roof space, window frames and under-floor areas
- 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
- 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 and roads are safe
- If you have left, make sure it is safe to return before coming home

There is more information on surviving after the fire – returning home, treating injuries and your emotional health – over the page.

**Page 13 has a list of ways to get information.  
See page 26 for the list of warning messages and what they mean.**

## Preparing yourself



### Preparing yourself emotionally

- How you plan to behave in a bushfire is even more important than how well you prepare your house for a bushfire
- Consider how well you understand the physical capacity of yourself and others in your household to withstand the demands of staying and defending the property.
- Have a detailed plan about when to leave, but have an equally detailed plan about how you will cope if you can't leave; how will you actively defend and shelter in your house, how will you get out if your home is burning down, and where will you escape to?
- Have a detailed plan about how you will get to where you will be safe
- Know where your closest Bushfire Safer Place and Bushfire Last Resort Refuge is located
- Bushfire severity is an open-ended scale; while we can't say how bad it can get, we can decide the point at which it's no longer safe to stay. You should consider what your threshold is for your location and circumstances
- Always make sure your plan is flexible, because your original plan may not be possible; if the wooden deck outside your front door is burning, can you go out the back door?
- There is no guarantee that fire fighters will be able to get to you or your property, so you have to make your plan with the assumption that they can't

- If you're in a bushfire risk area, resilience is a constant process. Never sit back and think you're totally safe; always look for the things you can do to reduce your risk
- Homes and things can be replaced. People can't

### After a fire...

**Survival is also about how well you recover in the days and weeks after the fire.**

### Returning home

- Check television, radio, internet and other information sources to find out when it is safe to return home
- Be careful travelling home: watch out for hazards on the road, such as trees that have fallen or service vehicles and personnel, who may still be working in the area
- A fire can be 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 the local recovery centre
- Bring another adult with you when you first return
- Prepare mentally, have support and offer support to others during this time
- Look out for potential hazards when you enter your home and wear protective clothing

*"If people don't feel physically and emotionally ready to defend their home then the best place is not to be there." Ian Hampel, Pinery survivor*

# Bushfire Survival Plan

This plan is for

Name

Date

## Pre-season checklist

Before the bushfire season, it is important to prepare your property and your family.

☐ Know your risk    ☐ Prepare your property    ☐ Prepare your kits    ☐ Prepare and practise your plan

### Important telephone numbers

Fire, Police, Ambulance: 000 (TTY 106)	Insurance Company	Policy number
Doctor	Local Council	Family / Friends
School	Water Supplier	Family / Friends
Vet	Electricity Supplier	Family / Friends
Bank	Gas Supplier	Family / Friends

### Information Hotline 1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677)

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

Other ways we will stay informed

Our nearest Bushfire Safer Place

Our nearest Bushfire Last Resort Refuge (if all plans fail)

### Leave early – who is going to leave early? (List names and complete the leave early plan)

Name	Telephone
Name	Telephone
Name	Telephone
Name	Telephone

### Stay and defend – who will stay and defend? (List names and complete the stay and defend plan)

Anyone who is going to stay and defend must be involved in completing the plan, so that they know what to do

Name	Telephone
Name	Telephone
Name	Telephone
Name	Telephone

**Remember to include your entire household in your plan, including pets, horses, animals and anyone who might be relying on you for their safety**

# Leaving Early Plan

It is recommended that you **leave early** if:

- There is a **Catastrophic** Fire Danger Rating
- There is an **Extreme** Fire Danger Rating and your home has not been specially designed and constructed

It is a **Total Fire Ban** and:

- Your **property** has not been well maintained, you don't have the right **equipment** or you don't have a **practised plan** to stay and defend
- The **people** who will be at home are not able to help actively defend the property e.g. they are not emotionally prepared and physically fit or are young, elderly or have a disability

## We will follow this plan when

The declared Fire Danger Rating is

- ☐ High    ☐ Extreme (Total Fire Ban)    ☐ Catastrophic (Total Fire Ban)
- ☐ **Other triggers** (e.g. family members being home alone, loss of water or power and the ability to leave your home safely)

### When to go

(This is the most important part of your written Bushfire Survival Plan. Plan to leave early enough to avoid being caught in smoke, the fire or on congested roads. E.g. the night before or morning of a fire danger day, a fire in the area, the smell of smoke.)

### Where we will go and how we will get there

(Choose areas within a Bushfire Safer Place. Consider friends, relatives or activities in low fire danger areas. Plan several exit routes in case the road is blocked.)

## We will take

(Prepare your emergency kit as well as anything else you might need such as kids' favourite toys, medications, pet needs.)

- ☐ External hard drive (scanned documents / photos)    ☐ Insurance documents, passports, license, banking details and other certificates
- ☐ Medications    ☐ Mobile phone / charger    ☐ Personal treasures

### We will tell (before and after)

### We will come back when (e.g. when the area is declared safe, 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? Do you have a "Stay and Defend" plan?)



# Stay and Defend Plan

It is recommended that you **do not** stay and defend if:

- There is a **Catastrophic** Fire Danger Rating
- There is an **Extreme** Fire Danger Rating and your home has not been specially designed and constructed

**Anyone who is not going to leave early must be involved in completing this stay-and-defend plan to ensure they know what to do. Every plan will be different depending on your circumstances. Use the headings below to list tasks to do.**

It is a **Total Fire Ban** and:

- Your **property** has not been well maintained, you don't have the right **equipment** or you don't have a **practised plan** to stay and defend
- The **people** who will be at home are not able to help actively defend the property e.g. they are not emotionally prepared and physically fit or are young, elderly or have a disability

**We will follow this plan when**

The declared Fire Danger Rating is

- ☐ High    ☐ Extreme (Total Fire Ban)    ☐ Catastrophic (Total Fire Ban)
- ☐ **Other triggers** (e.g. a fire in the area, the smell of smoke, family members home alone, house guests, power failure, etc.)

**The night before or early the morning of a fire danger day, we will**

(Fires start suddenly and without warning. When bad conditions are forecast, what will you do to prepare before a fire starts in the area?)

**Before the fire approaches, we will**

(Those leaving early should have already left the property, list the things you need to do in preparation.)

**As the fire front passes, we will**

(When will you move inside to shelter? Stay safe by monitoring the fire from inside your home, check for embers, etc.)

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

(Patrol your property to extinguish burning embers. You may need to do this for several hours.)

**Our Back-up plan**

(What will you do if you can't follow your written Bushfire Survival Plan? Make sure you identify a safer location and safe route/s.)

# Bushfire Warning Messages

## Advice message



A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.

## Watch and Act message



There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.

## Emergency Warning message



An Emergency Warning is the highest level of Bushfire Alert. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

## Advice – Reduced Threat

CFS will issue a Reduced Threat Message when the threat to the community has reduced

**Remember – don't wait for a warning. Take action quickly and don't delay.  
You may lose power, water, phone and internet.**

## Emergency Alert telephone warning system

**EMERGENCY ALERT** is the national telephone warning system used by emergency services. The system sends voice messages to landline telephones and text messages to mobile telephones within a defined area. The message will provide information on the current emergency, what action to take and where to find further information.

Emergency Alert is not used in all circumstances, only at the highest threat level.

If you receive a warning message you are in danger and need to act.

**Do not wait for a warning message before you act.**

## Emergency kit checklist

- ☐ Overnight bag with change of clothes and toiletries
- ☐ Medicines and first aid kit
- ☐ Mobile phone and charger
- ☐ Adequate amount of water and food
- ☐ Battery powered radio, torch and spare batteries
- ☐ 100% Woollen blankets
- ☐ A familiar item / toy for children
- ☐ Important items
- ☐ Drivers licence / photo identification
- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Photos
- ☐ Will
- ☐ Jewellery
- ☐ Insurance papers
- ☐ Medical prescriptions
- ☐ USB stick or file containing important files / papers
- ☐ Contact information – Doctor / Council / Power company
- ☐ Our kit is stored in \_\_\_\_\_

## Add the following items if you have a pet

- ☐ Suitable transport carriers or leash
- ☐ Food and drinking water
- ☐ Any medications / vet contact details
- ☐ A familiar item (toy, bed, treats) to help reduce stress

## Protective clothing checklist

- ☐ Wide-brimmed hat
- ☐ Eye protection goggles
- ☐ P2 mask
- ☐ Loose, long sleeved cotton shirt
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Long cotton pants / jeans
- ☐ Sturdy leather shoes or boots

Additional resources and  
fact sheets available at  
**[cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au)**

# CFS Regional Offices

## Adelaide office

### Level 1

37 Richmond Road  
Keswick SA 5035  
Telephone 08 8115 3300  
PO Box 2468, Adelaide SA 5001

## Communications and Engagement Unit

### Level 1

37 Richmond Road  
Keswick SA 5035  
Telephone 08 8115 3319  
PO Box 2468, Adelaide SA 5001

## 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 8522 6088  
PO Box 1506, Willaston SA 5118

## Region 3

### Murraylands & Riverland

11-17 Kennett Road  
Murray Bridge East SA 5253  
Telephone 08 8532 6800  
PO Box 1371

## Region 4

### Mid North & Pastoral

40 Flinders Terrace  
Port Augusta SA 5700  
Telephone 08 8642 2399  
PO Box 2080

## Region 5

### South East

46 Smith Street  
Naracoorte SA 5271  
Telephone 08 8762 7100  
PO Box 8

## Region 6

### Eyre Peninsula & West Coast

32 Matthew Place  
Port Lincoln SA 5606  
Telephone 08 8682 4266

## Contact the

### Information Hotline

1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677)  
or visit [cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au)



[cfs.sa.gov.au](http://cfs.sa.gov.au)



@Countryfireservice



@CFSalerts



@SA\_CountryFireService



[www.alert.sa.gov.au](http://www.alert.sa.gov.au)

## Hearing or speech impaired?

Contact us via the National  
Relay Service (NRS) by calling  
(TTY 133 677) or through other  
contact options available  
[relayservice.gov.au](http://relayservice.gov.au)

## Speak and Listen NRS users

Telephone 1300 555 727

**BE BUSHFIRE READY**

**PREPARE  
& PLAN**

**STRAIGHTAWAY**

**LOOK &  
LISTEN**

**EVERY DAY**

**DO YOUR 5 MINUTE  
BUSHFIRE PLAN**

**CFS.SA.GOV.AU**



Government of  
South Australia

