



Government of Western Australia
Fire & Emergency Services Authority



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.



YOUR GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR AND SURVIVING THE BUSHFIRE SEASON.

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This publication is intended to be a guide only and readers should obtain their own independent advice and make their own necessary inquiries.



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

If you live in or near a bushland area, bushfire is a real risk to you and your family.

Bushfires happen every summer, they can start suddenly and often without warning. People have been killed or seriously injured and homes destroyed during bushfires.

Before summer starts you need to decide what you will do if a bushfire threatens. If you live or work in a bushland area you need to **prepare** your home, family or business and have a plan so you can **act** to make sure you **survive**.



Whether you choose to leave for a safer place, which may be to relocate to family or friends, or choose to take shelter in a well prepared and defensible home, preparation is the key to survival.

Preparing yourself, your family and your home is your responsibility. You need to understand the risk to your family and home so you can make decisions now on what you will do if a bushfire starts.

Firefighters are preparing for the bushfire season and will do everything they can to make your community safe. Many firefighters are volunteers and take time away from their families and homes during bushfires. You need to help them by developing your bushfire survival plan and preparing your home to make it as safe as possible.

Information in this kit will help you develop your bushfire survival plan.

PREPARE.

Preparing yourself, your family and your home is your responsibility. The more you prepare your home the better the chance it will survive a fire, even if you have left well before the fire because your plan is to leave.

With planning and effort the majority of houses in bushfire risk areas can survive most bushfires.

A well prepared home will give you more protection if a fire threatens suddenly and you cannot leave.



During a major bushfire firefighters will be working to stop the fire. A fire truck may not be available to defend your home. It is your responsibility to reduce the risk to you and your home, and take actions to survive the bushfire.

HOW PREPARED ARE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?

- What is your bushfire risk?
- How will you know what is happening in your area?
- If there is a bushfire how will you stay alert and know when to take action?
- How prepared is your property? Can your home be defended? Will it provide you with shelter if you have to or decide to stay?
- Being in a bushfire may be the most traumatic experience of your life. How prepared are you and your family? Will you cope with the noise and stress of a bushfire?

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO BE SAFE?

Bushfires can change quickly and often without warning. Think about how you may be affected:

- If you have no time to leave and a fire threatens you – what will you do, where will you shelter and how will you get there?
- If you are going to leave – where will you go, how will you get there, what will you take and how will you know when to leave?
- If you are going to stay – prepare for a frightening experience, have a plan for how you will actively defend your house, how you are going to survive and where you will shelter. Find out what equipment you need.
- What you will do if things do not go according to your plan?

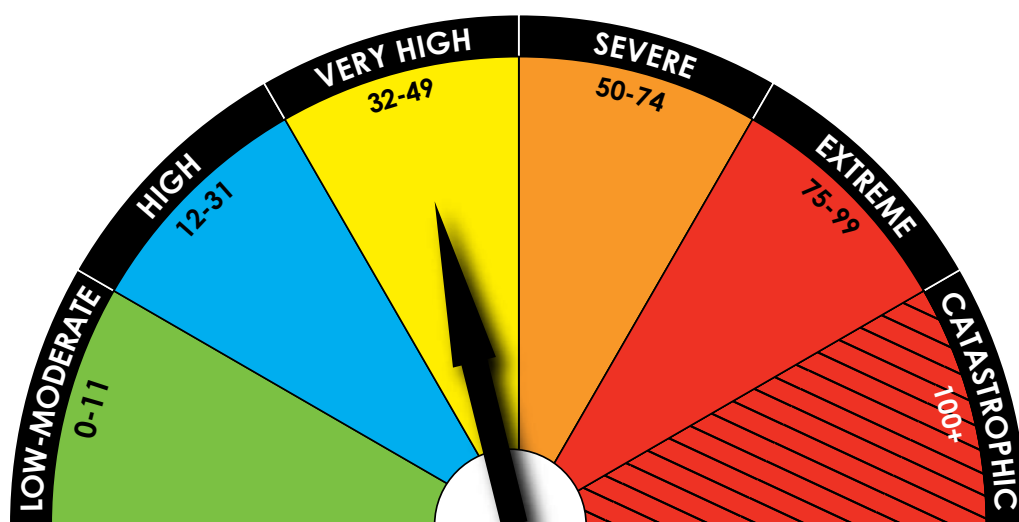
FIRE DANGER RATING

The Fire Danger Rating gives you advice about the level of bushfire threat on any given day. It is based on the forecast weather conditions.

The higher the rating the more likely people will die or be injured during a fire. Only well prepared, well constructed and actively defended homes may offer any safety up to the category of extreme.

Consider in your bushfire survival plan if your actions will change at different Fire Danger Rating categories.

The Fire Danger Rating is publicised by the Bureau of Meteorology at www.bom.gov.au and through the media.



BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

If you live in a bushfire risk area you must have a bushfire survival plan. This plan will help you take action and avoid making last minute decisions that could prove deadly during a bushfire.

Develop your plan as a family and make sure you write it down. If you are by yourself you may like to form a plan with a neighbour. Give everybody their own tasks and have a list of actions to take if there is a bushfire.

Keep your bushfire survival plan in an easy to find place and make sure everyone knows where it is. Practice your plan regularly and review it every year.

Templates and checklists are at the back of this kit to help you develop your own bushfire survival plan.

PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL PREPAREDNESS

If you live through a bushfire you may have physical, mental and emotional pain from the experience itself so you will need to consider how you and the rest of your family or household will cope.

Fires can be very frightening, and may make it hard to think clearly or make good decisions. It is important you prepare and practice your bushfire survival plan before the bushfire season starts. This plan will give you a clear set of actions to follow before, during and after a bushfire.

PICTURE YOURSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF BUSHFIRE.

- Before the main fire reaches you, your home may be surrounded by showers of sparks and embers. This can happen for several hours. Embers will collect in corners of your house and will need to be extinguished.
- It is likely there will be strong winds and as the fire gets closer burning leaves and bark will begin to land around your home.
- Thick, heavy smoke will make it dark and you may not be able to see. Breathing may be difficult and your eyes will water and may become red and sore.
- It will be very hot and you will need to wear your protective clothing.
- The fire will make a very loud roaring noise that you may find scary. The burning, crackling and roaring of the fire will be in addition to howling strong winds and sirens from emergency vehicles.
- You may lose power, telephone and water services.
- The fire front will normally take five to 15 minutes to pass your home. This is when radiant heat given off by the fire will be at its highest. When it is uncomfortable you should shelter inside your home. At this time you will need to check the inside of your house for spot fires.



NOW, ASK YOURSELF:

Will I be able to cope during a bushfire?

Will my family or household cope during a bushfire?

What if family or friends are visiting, how will they cope?

Defending your home during a bushfire will take several hours. This includes the time needed to do hard tasks before the fire front reaches your home and then watching for spot fires.

You will need to be in good physical health, with the mobility and ability to maintain a constant watch on your home and surrounding area before, during and after the fire.

Think about any medical conditions that may be an issue from stress and smoke (for example asthma and other respiratory conditions, and heart conditions). These may affect your ability to defend your home.

PREPARE YOUR HOME AND PROPERTY

You should prepare your home to survive the fire front, even if your plan is to leave. The more you prepare your home the better the odds it will survive the fire.

A well prepared and constructed house is more likely to survive a bushfire than an unprepared one.

Walk around your property and imagine a bushfire is approaching. Identify items that are likely to burn or where embers are likely to enter and start a fire.



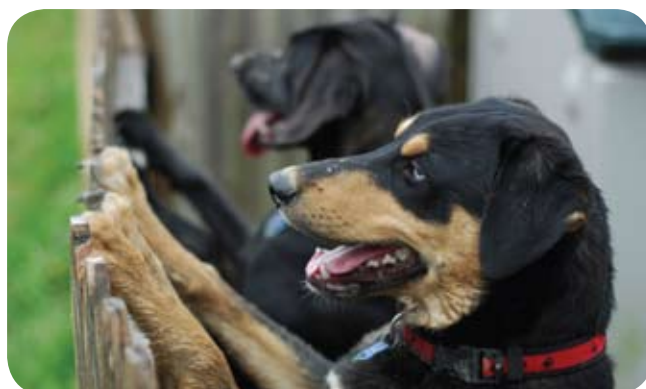
When the Fire Danger Rating is catastrophic for your area it means any fires that start are likely to be so fierce even a well prepared, well constructed and actively defended house may not survive a bushfire. If this sort of fire weather is expected you should leave the day before or hours before a fire might threaten as this is the best option for your survival.

Templates and checklists are at the back of this kit to prepare your home before the bushfire season starts. If you live near a bushland area you should complete these.

PREPARE YOUR PETS AND LIVESTOCK

During a bushfire your pets will need water, shade and a safe place to be. If you have livestock that can be moved out of the area, allow yourself plenty of time to move them.

If possible move larger animals to paddocks with little vegetation. At the start of the bushfire season consider slashing a paddock to create a safer area.



Never turn animals out on to the road to run free. This is dangerous for fire trucks and vehicles, and you may be legally responsible if they cause an accident.

Pets are not allowed into public relocation centres so you need to consider this in your bushfire survival plan.

ACT.

Bushfires can start suddenly so you need to be prepared to act even if you do not receive a warning.



During hot weather:

- Know what the Fire Danger Rating is for your area.
- Watch for signs of a bushfire, especially smoke and flames.
- Have your bushfire survival plan and kit ready.

If a bushfire starts:

- Put your preparations into action, do not 'wait and see' as this can be deadly.
- Act decisively the moment you know there is danger. Your bushfire survival plan will help you do this.
- Look and listen for information on television, radio, the internet, information lines and by speaking to your neighbours.
- Know what level of warning your area is on.

BUSHFIRE WARNING SYSTEM

During a bushfire emergency services will provide as much information to you as possible through a number of different channels.

There will be three levels of warning. These will change to reflect the increasing risk to life and the decreasing amount of time you have until the fire arrives.

An **ADVICE** will provide you with information on a bushfire that is not threatening lives or property but may be causing smoke near homes, such as a small controllable fire.

A **WATCH AND ACT** message will be issued when there is the potential for lives and property to be threatened. These messages will update you on the changing conditions and tell you to start taking action to protect yourself and your family.

An **EMERGENCY WARNING** means you need to take immediate action to survive. This message may or may not start with a siren sound called the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS).

1 ADVICE

An **ADVICE** will provide you with information on a bushfire that is not threatening lives or property but may be causing smoke near homes.

What you should do:

- Know where the fire is and avoid the area if possible.
- Check what the Fire Danger Rating is for your area.
- Keep up to date with any changing conditions.

A **WATCH AND ACT** message will be issued if there is possible threat to lives and homes.

2 WATCH AND ACT MESSAGE

A **WATCH AND ACT** message tells you the fire conditions are changing and there is a possible threat to lives and homes.

You need to act now to prepare for the approaching fire to protect yourself and your family.

What you should do:

- Activate your bushfire survival plan.
- If you have decided to leave for a safer place, leave now. Relocating at the last minute is dangerous. On catastrophic or extreme fire danger days your best option for survival is to leave hours before a fire reaches you.
- If you plan to use your home as shelter, make final preparations now.
 - Clear any material that could catch fire from around your home.
 - Check that pumps, generators and hoses are all working and tanks are full. Add final items to your survival kit and put on your protective clothing.
 - Check that your battery operated radio works. Use your car radio if you have to.

3 EMERGENCY WARNING

An **EMERGENCY WARNING** is the highest level of warning and will tell you of immediate danger. In some circumstances, it may start with a siren sound called the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) to get your attention as the fire is about to arrive. SEWS is a distinctive sound that is broadcast immediately prior to major emergency announcements on radio, television and other communication systems. The signal sounds like 'whoop, whoop, whoop' and is broadcast for up to ten seconds before the broadcast of emergency information. SEWS tells people 'you need to listen - there is an emergency in your area and you need to take action now'. It is used like a siren and is strictly controlled for use by an authorised hazard management agency only.

What you should do:

- Act now. You do not have time to 'wait and see'.
- If the way is clear leave to a safer place now and take your survival kit with you. Leave well before roads are closed and filled with smoke.
- Do not relocate at the last minute in a vehicle or on foot as this is deadly.
- You must seek shelter as the very hot radiant heat from the fire will kill you well before the flames reach you.
- On a catastrophic fire danger day even the best designed, well constructed and actively defended houses may not keep you safe.
- In extreme fire conditions only well prepared, well constructed and actively defended homes may provide safety. Make sure you begin patrolling your property to put out spot fires.
- Do not underestimate the huge physical and mental effort required to maintain your house as a place of safety during a fire.
- If you have not prepared your home, it is too late to do it now.
- Be aware you are likely to lose power, water pressure and most likely mobile and landline phone coverage.

WHERE CAN YOU GET INFORMATION DURING A BUSHFIRE?

1. FESA information line on **1300 657 209**.
2. FESA website at **www.fesa.wa.gov.au** you can subscribe to receive emergency alerts as RSS feeds.
3. Radio, TV, newspapers and news websites (each media outlet determines how often they will broadcast information).
4. During the **EMERGENCY WARNING** phase ABC local radio broadcasts updates at quarter to and quarter past the hour in addition to news bulletins.

SURVIVE.

During a bushfire the safest place to be is away from the fire. Being involved in a fire may be one of the most traumatic experiences of your life.

You and your family's survival and safety will depend on the decisions you make now and acting on these decisions. Do not wait and see.

Put your safety first. Any decision you make should be based on your survival, homes can be rebuilt. Leaving early if a fire starts, hours before a fire reaches you, will always be the safest option for you and your family or household.



Only stay and defend your home if it is well prepared and constructed, and you are capable of actively defending it. Prepare for the emotional, mental and physical impact of defending your home. If you have any doubts about defending your home, you should leave.

If you do need to use your home for shelter, stay in the house when the fire front is passing. This usually takes five to 15 minutes. Keep checking for spot fires around and inside your home, especially in the roof space. Spot fires can still occur several hours after the main fire.

Remember to cover up as much skin as you can, but do not overload yourself with tight fitting or heavy clothing, as the heat will be intense. Two layers of loose fitting, natural fibre clothes work well. You should protect yourself from radiant heat with long sleeves, long trousers and strong leather boots.

Templates and checklist to help you prepare your bushfire survival plan are at the back of this kit. Whether you choose to leave for a safer place or to shelter in a well prepared and defensible home, preparation is the key to survival.

PREPARING YOUR BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

Developing a bushfire survival plan is critical. Your plan must be prepared and practiced with all members of your family or household before the start of the bushfire season.

When developing your plan decide together if you will leave for a safer place, which may be to relocate to family or friends, or stay to actively defend your home.



You should have a plan to ensure you are prepared, organised and know what to do when a bushfire starts. Your plan should cover a range of situations you may be faced with and what you will do if things go wrong.

Everyone's bushfire survival plan will be different depending on individual situations and circumstances.

Some people in your family may need to leave early, especially if they are sick, elderly or have a disability, while other family members may stay behind.

If you are going to leave early decide when this will be. Have a backup plan in case you cannot leave in time. It is too late and too dangerous to leave when roads are closed and filled with smoke.

Make sure everyone in your family knows where your safer place is and how you will get there. Consider what will happen if you or your family are at work or school. Also think about what will happen if some of your family is at home and others cannot get back to the house.

You should have the right equipment to actively defend your home, protective clothing for all your family or members of the household and a well prepared property. Don't forget to also consider what you will do with your pets and livestock if there is a bushfire.

You will need to think about:

- If your home is defensible?
- If it is in a location that makes it difficult or dangerous to actively defend?
- Who could be home when a bushfire occurs?
- If your household includes elderly relatives, young children, people with disabilities or illness? Can these people be relocated? Who will care for them?

STAYING TO ACTIVELY DEFEND YOUR PROPERTY CAN BE VERY DEMANDING.

Do you have the skills, knowledge and capacity to check for and extinguish spot fires up to 10 hours after the fire front has passed?

ARE YOU PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY PREPARED?

Do you have the right equipment and resources to put out fires around your property? (eg. sufficient water supply, petrol/diesel portable pump, generator)

Relocating at the last minute can lead to serious injuries or you may die. If you plan to leave for a safer place early, do you know where you will go and how you will get there? You may not have to travel far to find a safer place.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHEN TO LEAVE?

Your plan to leave needs to be based on a series of triggers – leaving at the first trigger (extreme or catastrophic fire weather forecast) is the safest option. Do not wait for a warning before acting. Not hearing a warning does not necessarily mean there is no threat. You should watch for signs of a bushfire, especially smoke and flames.

DO YOU HAVE A BACKUP PLAN IF YOUR SITUATION CHANGES?

When the Fire Danger Rating is catastrophic or extreme it may not be possible to actively defend your home. On these rare days fires can be so bad that even well prepared and constructed houses that are actively defended will not survive. What would you do in those circumstances?

Being involved in a bushfire can have a serious and long lasting psychological and emotional impact both from the experience itself and how others around you handle the experience.

Fires can be extremely frightening and may make it difficult to think clearly and make good decisions. Having a plan to follow will help you avoid last minute decisions that could cost you or a member of your family their life.

CHECKLIST - PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY

Prepare your home and property for bushfire season. It's everyone's responsibility. If you live in or near bushland take the time to complete and action this checklist.

STARVE THE FIRE

Clear around your home so that embers will have less chance to start a fire when they hit the ground. This will also help reduce the damage caused by the fire.

- ☐ Cut long grass and dense scrub.
- ☐ Regularly rake up leaf litter and twigs under trees.
- ☐ Prune lower tree branches (up to two metres off the ground) to stop a ground fire spreading into the canopy of trees.
- ☐ Remove shrubs and small trees under and between larger trees.
- ☐ Clear vegetation along the boundary of your property to create a firebreak. Make sure you meet your local government's firebreak requirements.
- ☐ Keep roof gutters and valleys clear of leaves and bark.

MAKE A SAFETY ZONE

Within the safety zone:

- ☐ Create a 20 metre circle of safety around your home and other buildings. This area needs to be cleared of all rubbish, long dry grass, bark and material that may catch fire.
- ☐ Create and maintain a minimum two metre gap between your house and tree branches.
- ☐ If possible, plan your garden so that your vegetable garden, lawn, pool or patio is on the side of the house likely to face a fire (where the bush is).

FILL THE GAPS

In a bushfire houses usually catch fire when embers get into the roof space, a wall cavity, on to ledges or under the house. Prevent sparks from entering your house by blocking all the gaps.

- ☐ Block any gaps under floor spaces, in the roof space, under eaves, external vents, skylights, evaporative air conditioners, chimneys and wall cladding.
- ☐ Place metal fly wire mesh on all vents to keep sparks and embers out.

FIX THE FIRE TRAPS

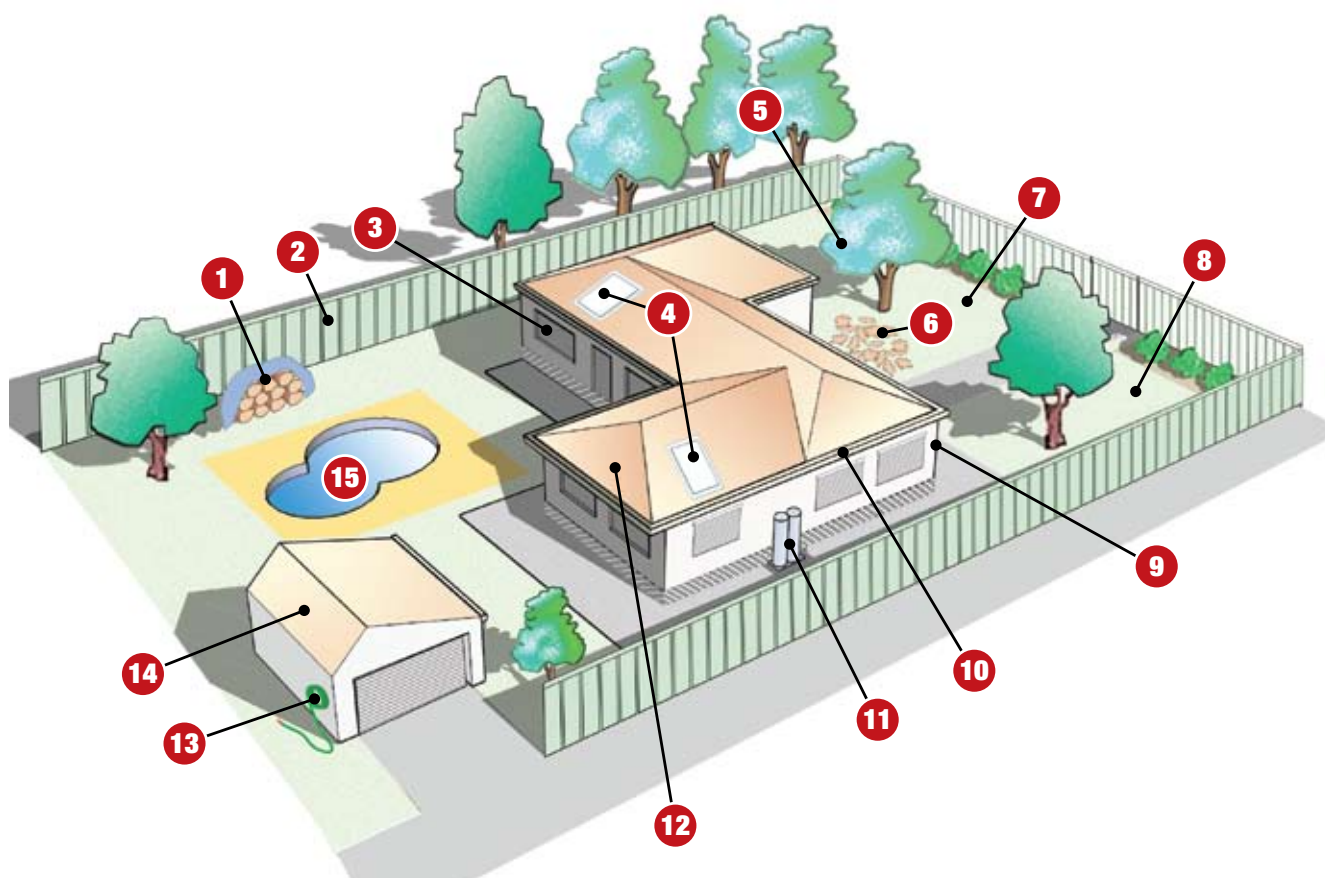
- ☐ Do not pile wood against or near the house.
- ☐ Remove any timber, rubbish and old junk lying around.
- ☐ Move all fuel containers into a shed away from your house and have a firebreak around it.
- ☐ Keep LP gas cylinders on the side of the house furthest away from the likely direction of bushfires (where the bush is).

PROTECT YOUR ASSET

- ☐ Check that your home and contents insurance cover is adequate. Take into consideration renovations, fixtures and additions such as swimming pools, sheds, gazebos, luxury fittings or new appliances.

CIRCLE OF SAFETY

- Create a 20 metre circle of safety around your home and other buildings. This area needs to be cleared of all rubbish, long dry grass, bark and material that may catch fire.
- Prune lower branches (up to two metres off the ground) to stop a ground fire spreading into the canopy of the trees.
- Clear vegetation along the boundary of your property to create a firebreak. Make sure you meet your local government's firebreak requirements.
- Cut long grass and dense scrub.



1. Do not pile wood against or near the house
2. Install a fire or heat radiation shield such as a solid fence
3. Place metal fly wire mesh on all windows or vents to keep sparks and embers out
4. Block any gaps under floor spaces, in the roof space, under eaves, external vents, skylights, evaporative air conditioners, chimneys and wall cladding
5. Create and maintain a minimum two metre gap between your house and tree branches
6. Rake up leaf litter and twigs under trees
7. Remove shrubs and small trees under and between larger trees
8. Ensure garden mulch is kept way from house and grass is kept short
9. Ensure all gaps in external wall claddings are sealed
10. Keep roof gutters and valleys clear of leaves and bark
11. Keep LP gas cylinders on the side of the house furthest away from the likely direction of bushfires (where bush is)
12. Block any gaps in the roof space
13. Hoses must be long enough to reach all parts of your house. Use metal hose fittings for taps as they are less likely to melt
14. Remove flammable materials and store them away from the house
15. Make sure there is water - it is likely you will lose water and power supplies during a bushfire. It is important you have an alternative water supply. You will need a petrol, diesel or generator powered pump to draw water from dams, pools or a water tank

CHECKLIST - PREPARING YOUR SURVIVAL KIT

Prepare a bushfire survival kit before the bushfire season starts. This will help you get through the first few days after a fire. Make sure you have transport and a bushfire survival kit ready regardless of whether you are going to leave or to actively defend your house.

GENERAL ITEMS:

- ☐ Portable battery operated AM/FM radio
- ☐ Waterproof torch
- ☐ New spare batteries
- ☐ First aid kit with manual
- ☐ Woollen blankets

ON THE DAY ADD:

- ☐ Cash, key cards and credit cards
- ☐ Medications, toiletries and sanitary supplies
- ☐ Special requirements for infants, elderly, injured, disabled and pets
- ☐ Mobile phone and charger, or phone card
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers
- ☐ Extra car and house keys
- ☐ Combination pocket knife
- ☐ Important documents, valuables and photos
- ☐ Change of clothes for everyone

FOOD AND WATER:

- ☐ Drinking water (at least three (3) litres per person per day for four (4) days)
- ☐ Canned food (dried food is also a good alternative) to last four (4) days
- ☐ Can opener, cooking gear and eating utensils
- ☐ A portable gas stove or barbeque
- ☐ Water container (for storing washing and cooking water)



FACTSHEET: **HOW BUSHFIRES BEHAVE**

It is important you understand how bushfires behave to help you protect your family and home against them. All fires need fuel, air and heat.

FUEL

Vegetation around your home such as dry grass, leaves, twigs and bark provide fuel for a fire. This fuel plays a part in how hot a fire can be and how fast it can spread. If fuel is removed, the fire will starve.

HEAT AND RADIANT HEAT

Bushfires generate unbelievable heat. Much of this heat goes up into the air but significant heat also radiates at ground level. This radiant heat spreads the fire by drying out vegetation so it will burn. Cover as much of your skin as you can with two layers of loose fitting clothing. It will be very hot so avoid tight fitting, heavy clothes and synthetic clothing.

Radiant heat is the main cause of people dying in a bushfire. Radiant heat may not set fire to your house but it can crack and break windows that will allow embers in that can start fires inside your house.

EMBERS

Even if the fire front does not reach your home it can still be damaged by burning embers carried by strong winds. Embers can get into your house through gaps in roofs, walls, evaporative air conditioners, windows and doors. They can land on materials that easily burn and this can start a fire. Research has shown that ember attack is the main reason that houses catch fire during a bushfire. Embers can continue to threaten your home even after the fire front has passed.

DIRECT FLAME CONTACT

When materials close to your home catch fire flames can touch the outside of your home. How long flames are in direct contact with your home depends on the amount of fuel to be burnt.

OXYGEN

A bushfire needs oxygen in the air to keep going and the more there is the faster the fire burns. Strong winds not only force the fire along but also increase air circulation and provide more air. Any change in wind direction or speed can rapidly increase the rate of spread and the direction of the fire.

WIND

Strong winds usually come with bushfires and as the wind increases so does the fire's temperature. The wind pushes flames closer to fuel making the fire travel faster. Embers and other burning materials are also carried by the wind which can damage homes kilometres from the fire front.

FIRE SPREAD

Fires usually spread faster in grassland than in forests because winds are stronger and the fuels are less dense. Bushfires will move faster when travelling uphill and slow down travelling downhill. The speed of a fire front advancing will double with every 10 degree increase in slope. On a 20 degree slope, bushfire speed is four times faster than flat ground.

Houses located on tops of hills or ridges are particularly vulnerable to fires burning in a valley below.

Refer to FESA's *The Homeowner's Bushfire Survival Manual* – November 2008 5th Edition.

FACTSHEET:

FIRE DANGER RATING AND

WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

FIRE DANGER RATING	FIRE BEHAVIOUR	IMPACT POTENTIAL	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
Catastrophic FDI 100+ Total Fire Bans will be declared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some fires will be unpredictable, difficult to control and move very fast Flames will be higher than roof tops Thousands of embers will be blown around your home causing other fires Spot fires may start 20 kilometres ahead of the main fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People will die or be injured A lot of homes and buildings will be destroyed Well prepared, well constructed and actively defended homes are highly unlikely to be safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put your survival first and leave, it is the best option It is safest to leave early, that is hours or the day before a fire starts Under no circumstances will it be safe to stay and defend your home
Extreme FDI 75-99 Total Fire Bans will be declared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some fires will be unpredictable, difficult to control and move very fast Flames will be higher than roof tops Thousands of embers will be blown around your home causing other fires Spot fires may start six kilometres ahead of the main fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a high chance you will die or be injured Many homes and buildings are likely to be destroyed or damaged Only very well prepared, well constructed and actively defended homes may offer any degree of safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put your survival first and leave if a fire starts, it is the best option Put your bushfire survival plan into action Only stay and defend your home if it is well prepared, well constructed and you can actively defend it If you are in doubt about defending
Severe FDI 50-74 Total Fire Bans are likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some fires will be unpredictable, difficult to control and move very fast Flames may be higher than roof tops Embers are likely to be blown around your home causing other fires to start Spot fires may start four kilometres ahead of the main fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a chance you will die or be injured Some homes and buildings will be destroyed or damaged Well prepared, well constructed and actively defended homes are likely to offer safety during a fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put your survival first and leave early, that is hours before a fire reaches you Put your bushfire survival plan into action Only stay and defend your home if it is well prepared, well constructed and you can actively defend it If you are in doubt about defending your home, leave

FIRE DANGER RATING	FIRE BEHAVIOUR	IMPACT POTENTIAL	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
Very High FDI 32-49 Total Fire Bans may be declared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some fires may be difficult to control quickly and fast moving Flames may burn into the tree tops Embers may be blown around your home causing other fires to start Spot fires may start two kilometres ahead of the main fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is unlikely you will die or be injured, or your home will be destroyed Well prepared and constructed homes that are actively defended are likely to offer safety during a fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put your survival first and leave early, that is hours before a fire reaches you Put your bushfire survival plan into action Only stay and defend your home if it is well prepared, well constructed and you can actively defend it If you are in doubt about defending your home, leave
High FDI 12-31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fires can be controlled but there is still a potential threat to your life and home Embers may be blown ahead of the main fire causing other fires to start close to the main fire Spot fires can occur close to the main fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is highly unlikely you will die or be injured, or that homes will be destroyed Well prepared and constructed homes that are actively defended can offer safety during a fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put your survival first and leave early, that is hours before a fire reaches you Put your bush fire survival plan into action Only stay and defend your home if it is well prepared, well constructed and you can actively defend it If you are in doubt about defending your home, leave
Low Moderate FDI 0-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fires can be easily controlled and are slow moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is little risk to your life or home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put your bushfire survival plan into action Ensure your family, home and property is well prepared for the risk of bushfires

*FDI means the Fire Danger Index. It is a number that represents the Fire Danger Rating based on how fast a fire would spread, difficulty for firefighters to put the fire out, temperature, relative humidity and wind speed.

Fires can threaten suddenly and without warning.

Know your fire danger rating, monitor local conditions, and keep informed.

Call 000 to report a fire.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

STATEWIDE

FESA (Fire & Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia)

FESA information line (for alerts and warnings): **1300 657 209**

www.fesa.wa.gov.au

Police, Fire, Ambulance (for life threatening emergencies) call 000

Bureau of Meteorology (B.O.M)

www.bom.gov.au/weather/wa

If you notice any suspicious activities call Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000

For bushfires in national parks or information on prescribed burns:

Department of Environment and Conservation

www.dec.wa.gov.au

Road conditions (Main Roads) 138 138

Tune in to **ABC Radio** for current bushfire warnings.

LOCAL

GP/Doctors Surgery

Hospital

Shire/Local Government

School

Neighbour

Out of area family contact

Other

CHECKLIST - PREPARE TO ACTIVELY DEFEND

You should have equipment to actively defend your home, protective clothing for all your family and a well prepared property.

WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Everyone must wear protective clothing to avoid injury from sparks, embers and extreme heat. Cover as much of your skin as you can with two layers of loose fitting clothing. It will be very hot so avoid tight fitting, heavy clothes and synthetic clothing.

Wear:

- ☐ Loose fitting clothes made from natural fibres like pure wool, heavy cotton drill or denim.
- ☐ Long sleeved shirts
- ☐ Trousers, jeans or overalls
- ☐ Sturdy leather shoes or boots without elastic sides
- ☐ Wool or cotton socks
- ☐ A wide brimmed or hard hat
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Goggles or glasses to protect your eyes from ash and embers
- ☐ A moistened face mask to protect your face from ash and other particles.

Do not wear:

- ☒ Synthetic clothing
- ☒ Singlets
- ☒ T-shirts
- ☒ Short sleeved shirts
- ☒ Shorts
- ☒ Dresses or skirts
- ☒ Sandals or thongs
- ☒ Stockings or synthetic socks



CHECKLIST - PREPARE TO ACTIVELY DEFEND

HAVE FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT READY

Consider what equipment you will need to actively defend your home.

- ☐ Hoses must be long enough to reach all parts of your house. Use metal hose fittings for taps as they are less likely to melt.
- ☐ Ladders for inside and outside the house. These need to be long enough so you can check your roof cavity and eaves.
- ☐ Knapsack or garden backpack spray to help you put out spot fires. If you decide to use a garden backpack make sure it has been cleaned out before using it in a bushfire.
- ☐ Metal rakes and shovels can be used to break up piles of burning material and for covering embers with sand.
- ☐ Cotton mops can hold a lot of water and can be used to put out embers.
- ☐ Buckets allow you to move water quickly and easily.
- ☐ Wet towels and blankets can be used under doors and windows to seal gaps. This will stop embers and smoke from coming inside your house.

MAKE SURE THERE IS WATER

It is likely that you will lose water and power supplies during a bushfire. It is important you have an alternative water supply.

- ☐ Identify storage options that you could fill with water.

You could use:

- Rubbish bins (wheelie bins) and storage bins
- Bath, laundry tub, sinks, basins and buckets
- Troughs or garden ponds
- Swimming pool, water tanks and dams if available

- ☐ A petrol, diesel or generator pump to draw water from dams, pools or a water tank.



BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

LEAVING FOR A SAFER PLACE

Use this guide to develop a bushfire survival plan that is suitable for your family and personal situation. You may wish to sketch a plan of your house and property to help you identify hazards and plan actions to reduce these risks.

FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

This bushfire survival plan is for (list all household members):

What will be your trigger to leave?

Where will you and your family/household go?

What will you take with you? (eg. survival kit, personal documents, personal items, medications and mobile phones)

How will you get to your safer place?

What will you do with your pets and/or livestock?

What will you do if someone is at school or work?

Who have you told about your bushfire survival plan and your intention to leave?

List any actions that you need to take that are specific to your home: (that may not be outlined in the leaving for a safer place checklist)

Who will you call when you arrive at your safer place?



BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

LEAVING FOR A SAFER PLACE

List the items of protective clothing you will need: (everyone should have protective clothing in case they are unable to leave)

Where will you store your protective clothing?

WHAT IS YOUR BACKUP PLAN?

You and your family planned to leave but it is too late. What will you do?

What might go wrong with your plan to leave?

How safe is your home if leaving is no longer an option?

PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY

What will you do as the fire front approaches? (ie. closing all doors and windows, filling buckets with water, turning off your evaporative air conditioner)

Identify potential fire risks around your home: (gaps in roofing and structure, evaporative air conditioners, vents, chimneys etc.)

List equipment you will need: (hoses, rakes, shovels etc.)

Where is your alternate water supply and how will you access it?

What will you do if your home catches on fire while the fire front is passing? Where will you go to be safer?



CHECKLIST - LEAVING FOR A SAFER PLACE

AT THE START OF THE BUSHFIRE SEASON:

- ☐ Complete the checklists on page 12 and 14.
- ☐ Consider what you will do if you cannot leave for a safer place (have a backup plan).

ON THE DAY THE BUSHFIRE THREATENS:

- ☐ Keep updated with bushfire information.
- ☐ Leave early - what is your trigger to go.
- ☐ Move livestock to a safe area and put your pets in a safe place.
- ☐ Put your survival kit including drinking water, food and medications to last four days into your car.
- ☐ Pack personal items such as a change of clothing for everyone, cash and credit cards, medications, mobile phone and toys for children. Put them in the car.
- ☐ Remove any material that could burn easily from around your house, on decks, verandahs and pergola areas. This includes mats, outdoor furniture and wood piles.
- ☐ Make sure everyone is wearing protective clothing - long pants, long sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes. Clothes should be loose fitting and made from natural fibres like pure wool, heavy cotton drill or denim. Do not wear synthetics.
- ☐ Close all doors, windows and shutters.
- ☐ Turn off the mains gas supply to the house and any LP gas cylinders.
- ☐ Don't forget to lock your home, shed and garage securely before you go.
- ☐ Let someone know where you are going, when you are going and how long you will be there.

RETURNING HOME:

Listen to the radio, check FESA's website or with local police for when it is safe for you to return home. Roads may be closed for some time while the area is made safe.



CHECKLIST - LEAVING FOR A SAFER PLACE

YOU AND YOUR FAMILY PLANNED TO LEAVE BUT IT IS TOO LATE:

- ☐ Bring your pets inside.
- ☐ Turn off your evaporative air conditioner but leave water running through the system if possible.
- ☐ Close all doors, windows and shutters.
- ☐ Fill basins, sinks, bath, troughs and buckets with water.
- ☐ Locate mops and other equipment.
- ☐ Soak towels and rugs in water, and lay along the inside of external doorways.
- ☐ Soak blankets and keep them handy for protection against radiant heat.
- ☐ Take down curtains and push furniture away from windows.
- ☐ Place a ladder and torch close to the manhole so you can regularly check the ceiling space for embers.
- ☐ If people are expecting you to leave, let them know you were unable to and are now staying.
- ☐ Keep electricity on but be aware of electrical safety at all times.
- ☐ Take all hoses, hose fittings (including plastic tap attachments) and equipment inside.
- ☐ Move everyone into the house when you see flames or it is too hot and smoky to stay outside.
- ☐ Frequently check the roof cavity (through the manhole inside the house) for any spot fires.
- ☐ Stay inside the house while the fire front passes. This normally takes between five and 15 minutes. Check for any spot fires inside the house.
- ☐ Drink plenty of water to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- ☐ Tune into ABC radio for fire information.



BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

PLANNING TO ACTIVELY DEFEND

Use this guide to develop a bushfire survival plan that is suitable for your family and personal situation. You may wish to sketch a plan of your house and property to help you identify hazards and plan actions to reduce these risks.

FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

This bushfire survival plan is for: (list all household members)

Who will leave for a safer place? (consider very young children, elderly and ill family members)

Where will they go and how will they get there?

What will be the trigger for them to leave?

What will you do if someone is at school or work?

What additional items do you need to add to your survival kit and where will it be stored?

PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY

Identify potential fire risks around your home: (gaps in roofing and structure, evaporative air conditioners, vents, chimneys etc.)

List any modifications you need to make and when:

List equipment you will need and where you will store it: (hoses, rakes, shovels etc.)

Where is your alternate water supply and how will you access it?



BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

PLANNING TO ACTIVELY DEFEND

PERSONAL SAFETY

Issues to be considered:

How many people will you need to actively defend your home?

Who will be there to help you?

List the items of protective clothing you will need: (everyone should have protective clothing in case they are unable to leave)

Where will you store your protective clothing?

What is your backup plan if:

One person is home alone?

You are unable to return to your home to actively defend your house (roads blocked)?

ON THE DAY OF A BUSHFIRE

List what you need to do before the fire front arrives that are specific to your property: (that may not be listed in the Planning to Actively Defend checklist)

What do you need to do to make your pets and livestock safe?

If you plan to relocate some family members, pets or livestock and then return to your house, when will this be done and how long will this take?

What will you do if your home catches on fire while the fire front is passing? Where will you go to shelter?



CHECKLIST - PLANNING TO ACTIVELY DEFEND

AT THE START OF THE BUSH FIRE SEASON:

- ☐ Complete the checklists on page 12 and 14.
- ☐ What you will do if you cannot actively defend your home (have a backup plan).

ON THE DAY THE BUSHFIRE THREATENS:

- ☐ Find out what the Fire Danger Rating is for your area.
 - If it is **CATASTROPHIC** leaving for a safer place is your best option. This is because homes are not built to withstand such dangerous fires.
 - If it is **EXTREME** leaving is the best option for your survival.
 - If you have not maintained your property or are in doubt, leave.

BEFORE THE FIRE FRONT ARRIVES:

OUTSIDE

- ☐ Use a moistened mask or cotton cloth to help protect against ash.
- ☐ Move large animals and livestock to a safe location (as identified in your bushfire survival plan).
- ☐ Check your water supplies around the house, fill any additional containers that might be available.
- ☐ Bring outdoor furniture, mats and any other loose items that may burn inside.
- ☐ Wet down the side of the house and surrounding garden area that is facing the fire. If you have power leave reticulation running.

- ☐ Block downpipes and fill gutters with water.
- ☐ Regularly patrol for spot fires around your home and put them out with your rake or knapsack spray.
- ☐ Turn off the mains gas supply to the house and any LG gas cylinders.

BEFORE THE FIRE FRONT ARRIVES:

INSIDE

- ☐ Put your bushfire survival plan into action.
- ☐ Safely relocate young children and elderly family members.
- ☐ Everyone remaining needs to put on protective clothing.
- ☐ Bring your pets inside.
- ☐ Turn off your evaporative air conditioner but leave water running through the system if possible.
- ☐ Fill basins, sinks, bath, troughs and buckets with water.
- ☐ Locate mops and other equipment.
- ☐ Soak towels and rugs in water, and lay along the inside of external doorways.
- ☐ Soak blankets and keep them handy for protection against radiant heat.
- ☐ Take down curtains and push furniture away from windows.
- ☐ Place a ladder and torch close to the manhole so you can regularly check the ceiling space for embers.
- ☐ Keep electricity on but be aware of electrical safety at all times.



CHECKLIST - PLANNING TO ACTIVELY DEFEND

AS THE FIRE FRONT APPROACHES AND DURING THE FIRE:

- ☐ Take all hoses, hose fittings (including plastic tap attachments) and equipment inside.
- ☐ Move everyone into the house when you see flames or it is too hot and smoky to stay outside.
- ☐ Frequently check the roof cavity (through the manhole inside the house) for any spot fires.
- ☐ Stay inside the house while the fire front passes. This normally takes between five and 15 minutes. Check for any spot fires inside the house.
- ☐ Drink plenty of water to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- ☐ Tune into ABC radio for fire information.

AFTER THE FIRE FRONT HAS PASSED:

- ☐ Ensure everyone continues to wear protective clothing.
- ☐ Check the house thoroughly for spot fires both inside and outside when safe to do so.
- ☐ Check for embers or signs of smoke in places such as the roof cavity, under house spaces and around verandahs, wooden decking, stairs, window sills and doorways. Also check sheds, carports and fences.
- ☐ Patrol your home for several hours for small fires and burning embers.
- ☐ If your house catches fire as the fire passes and you are unable to extinguish it. Leave immediately after the fire front has passed.

- ☐ Move onto a fuel free area such as a driveway, lawn or onto already burnt ground.
- ☐ Beware of any hazards such as burning logs or materials.
- ☐ Do not return inside the house for any reason.

IF YOUR HOUSE CATCHES FIRE:

- ☐ If your house catches fire as the fire front passes and you are unable to put it out. Leave immediately after the fire front has passed.
- ☐ Move on to a fuel free area such as a driveway, lawn or on to already burnt ground.
- ☐ Beware of any hazards such as burning logs or materials.
- ☐ Do not return inside the house for any reason.

LEAVING AFTER THE FIRE FRONT HAS PASSED:

Leaving immediately after the fire front has passed can be dangerous, there may be hazards such as fallen powerlines, trees and other risks. You need to listen to the radio or check with local police for when it is safe to leave.







Government of Western Australia
Fire & Emergency Services Authority



www.fesa.wa.gov.au