

BRIGADE SUMMER INFORMATION KIT

2009/10 Season



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PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

FireReady 



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Introduction

Since the tragic events of February 2009 and in response to the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission interim findings, CFA has worked with the Victorian community and its partner agencies to enhance bushfire readiness and safety.

There have been a number of changes to our advice and information to the community. This has in turn led to an increase in demand for up-to-date, accurate and relevant information from the community.

CFA Brigades and volunteers play a key role in informing communities about bushfire preparedness. You play a vital role in helping Victoria to be fire ready.

The Brigade Summer Information Kit has been created as a simple to use, 'one-stop-shop' for everyone working in the field as a volunteer or staff member over the 2009/10 summer season.

Topics of community interest are divided into six sections and provide an easy-to-reference summary with references to further information.

This Kit is available on Brigades Online and there will be updates to this information as required.

We hope this Kit will assist you in responding to the many questions and queries the community have in relation to bushfire safety.

If you need further information on any of the subjects contained within this Kit or would like to contribute to an update, please do not hesitate to contact Community Safety on (03) 9262 8416 or email to hqcommsafe@cfa.vic.gov.au

CFA gratefully acknowledges the excellent contribution of the volunteer representatives on the Community Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) in preparing this material.

Messages to the Community 2009/10 – Prepare. Act. Survive.

Prepare. Act. Survive. is the overarching campaign line that CFA is using to provide information to the community this summer. All Victorians who live, work and travel in bushfire prone areas across Victoria need to prepare for bushfire and take action to survive the bushfire threat.

A list of bushfire safety messages for the community this season are as follows:

- Life is your first priority.
- All of Victoria is at risk of bushfire, including communities near bush, grassland and the coast particularly those in high risk bushfire zones. Suburban homes can be destroyed by bushfires.
- Bushfires kill. Individuals must make their own choices and take responsibility for their decisions and actions before and during the fire season.
- A written Bushfire Survival Plan is essential. It should be practised regularly.

- Fires can threaten lives and property within minutes of starting; you may not receive an official warning.
- Hot, dry and windy weather increases bushfire risk. Be aware of daily conditions, understand the Fire Danger Ratings and activate your Bushfire Survival Plan accordingly.
- The only sure way to survive a bushfire is to be well away from the threat.
- On a Code Red (catastrophic) Fire Danger day, the safest option is to leave early in the morning or the night before.
- The best prepared homes may not be defensible on a Code Red day.
- On an Extreme Fire Danger day, the safest option is to leave early in the day if you live in a bushfire prone area and your Bushfire Survival Plan is to leave. Only stay if your home is well prepared, well constructed and you can actively defend it.
- On a Severe Fire Danger day, the safest option is to leave early in the day if you live in a bushfire prone area. Only stay if your home is well prepared and you can actively defend it.
- Children, the elderly and vulnerable should leave at the beginning of the day with a declared Fire Danger Rating of Severe or Extreme, and early in the morning of the night before when conditions are predicted to be Code Red (catastrophic).
- Leaving as a fire approaches is extremely dangerous and could be fatal.
- Visitors and tourists travelling in forest, bush, grassland or coastal areas need to have high awareness of their surrounds and know how to protect themselves.
- Staying to defend a house involves the risk of death, injury and emotional trauma.
- Only those who have a Bushfire Survival Plan and are physically capable and mentally prepared should consider staying to defend their home.
- You should not rely on a fire truck to protect your home.
- Bushfires are frightening. There will be incredible noise, smoke, embers, flames and you may experience poor visibility.
- Working out if you have enough defensible space is a critical part of deciding your Bushfire Survival Plan.
- Defensible space is an area around your home where you have modified the vegetation and removed most of the flammable materials to reduce the bushfire's intensity.
- A defensible space could reduce the risk involved in defending your home and could increase your home's chance of surviving a bushfire if you choose not to stay and defend.
- CFA's Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool (HBSAT) will assist you in determining whether you have enough defensible space around your home. You'll find it at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or order a copy by calling the VBIL on 1800 240 667.



Section 1

Bushfire Warnings and Information

1.1 Fire Danger Ratings

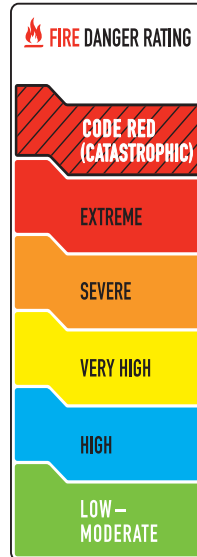
Overview of Fire Danger Ratings (FDR's) – Predictions

- Fire Danger Ratings are a prediction of fire behaviour, including how hard it will be to put out a fire once it starts.
- They are declared for each of the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) weather districts in Victoria.
- Fire Danger Ratings are part of weather forecasts and used to:
 - indicate the type of threat bushfires may pose on any day given the forecast weather conditions; and
 - provide the community with an indication of the sort of bushfire behaviour that could be experienced on that day.
- CFA and the Bureau of Meteorology will provide Fire Danger Rating predictions three days out for each of the weather districts. These daily predictions will include the actual day of the rating.
- Residents need to take note of the Fire Danger Rating information which will appear in the media this fire season, including on radio, television and in newspapers.
- The information is also available on the CFA website as a colour clickable map from the homepage, divided into Bureau of Meteorology **weather districts**. Each weather district will be the same colour as the corresponding Fire Danger Rating declared for that day. If you look in the bottom left hand corner of the CFA homepage, there is a map that is divided into these weather forecast districts.
- If you click on one of the districts, it will take you to the district weather forecast on the Bureau of Meteorology website. If you click on the 'Forecast' link above the map, it will take you to the Fire Danger Rating three day outlook.
- Each rating incorporates:
 - Expected fire behaviour;
 - Weather forecast;
 - Fuel load; and
 - Topography.
- The rating will describe the potential impact should a fire start.

Section 1

Bushfire Warnings and Information

- The following diagram represents the different categories on the Fire Danger Rating scale:



- The following diagram shows the advice to the community that should be given dependant on the Fire Danger Rating that is provided:

Note: the diagram below is available on the Understanding Fire Danger Ratings brochure from your Region office or from the CFA website.

Fire Danger Rating	Recommended Action
CODE RED (CATASTROPHIC)	If you live in a bushfire prone area the safest option is to leave the night before, or early in the morning.
EXTREME	The safest option is to leave early in the day if you live in a bushfire prone area and your Bushfire Survival Plan is to leave. Only stay if your home is well prepared, well constructed and you can actively defend it.
SEVERE	The safest option is to leave early in the day if you live in a bushfire prone area and your Bushfire Survival Plan is to leave. Only stay if your home is well prepared and you can actively defend it.
VERY HIGH	If you live in a bushfire prone area and your Bushfire Survival Plan is to leave, the safest option is to leave at the beginning of the day.
HIGH	Check your Bushfire Survival Plan.
LOW – MODERATE	Check your Bushfire Survival Plan.

Section 1

Bushfire Warnings and Information

- The Code Red (catastrophic) category days are the most dangerous that can be declared.
 - Under these types of weather conditions fires will be unpredictable, uncontrollable and fast moving. The fires on 7 February 2009 are an example of the types of fires under a Code Red (catastrophic) rating.
 - Advice to communities under these conditions will be that leaving early is the safest option for survival.

Fire Danger Signs

The old fire danger signs that are located in many towns and locations around Victoria are now redundant as they do not indicate the new Fire Danger Ratings.

The existing signs are being changed to be consistent with the new Fire Danger Ratings information.

Below are images of the new Fire Danger Rating signage that is currently being delivered to brigades.

Design A

These have been distributed to municipalities to cover the fan type fire danger indicator panels previously in use.



Section 1 Bushfire Warnings and Information

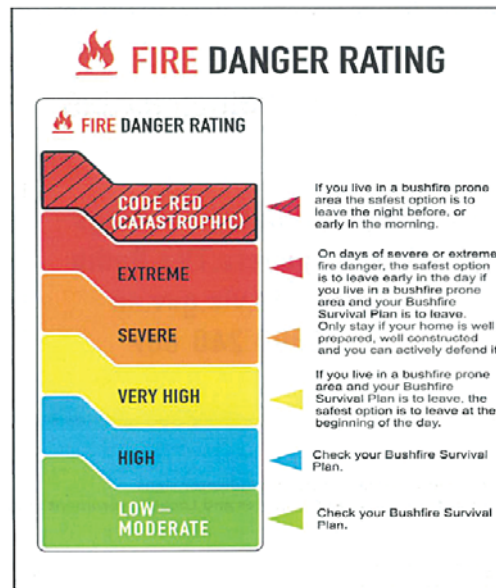
Design B & C

Each brigade will receive a package of 3 signs incorporating both designs.

Design B



Design C



Distribution will start in the north of the state and will progressively work across the state over December.

Section 1

Bushfire Warnings and Information

1.2 Warnings and Information

Warning Categories, Information Levels and Messages – During a Fire

- If bushfire warnings are issued during a fire there are three levels each increasing in importance:

Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means a fire has started. • Could be a planned burn.
Watch and Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents a heightened level of threat. • Conditions are changing. You need to start taking action to protect you and your family.
Emergency Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are in danger and need to take action immediately. • You may be impacted by fire. • Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) may be used.

- You may hear a distinctive siren sound that will be played prior to an emergency warning being broadcast. This is known as SEWS (Standard Emergency Warning Signal).
- Warnings will appear on the CFA and DSE websites, and broadcast on ABC Local Radio, commercial radio and Sky TV News.
- Warnings on the radio and websites may include information about:
 - the level of warning;
 - the status of the fire;
 - which direction the fire is moving and toward what area;
 - possible time to impact;
 - which towns may be affected; and
 - what actions you may have to take.

Further Information

This information is available in the *Bushfire Warnings and Information* fact sheet available from your Region office or CFA website.

Section 1

Bushfire Warnings and Information

1.3 Emergency Alert System

- Emergency Alert is the national telephone based emergency warning system that sends messages via landlines based on the location of the handset and mobile phones based on an individual's billing address.
- The system was previously known as the National Emergency Warning System but has been changed after community consultation indicated that **Emergency Alert** is the preferred name.
- This system may issue warning messages via landlines based on the location of the handset and mobile phones based on an individual's billing address.
- You may receive a warning via a text message to your mobile phone or a voice message to your landline telephone.
 - If you live in an area that has minimal mobile coverage, consider installing a landline telephone so you can receive a message. The landline phone should not be cordless as cordless phones do not work in a power black out.
 - Don't rely on receiving a message – individuals and communities must still prepare themselves in case of an emergency. There is no guarantee this system will be used for every bushfire.
- Warnings received on your phone will alert you to the level of warning and direct you to seek further information or take action.
- You will also be advised to activate your Bushfire Survival Plan.
- Not all townships or suburbs may be mentioned in a warning. It may instead cover a broader area.

Frequently Asked Questions

I have an unlisted number – will I still get calls?

Yes, all phone numbers can be sent warning messages.

How will I know if the message/call is legitimate and not a hoax?

Caller ID number and message header will display the number 0444 444 444. The message will reference where to go to get further information. Checking/validating through other sources e.g. radio, websites, neighbours to confirm the authenticity of the message.

Can I call 0444 444 444 if I missed the original message?

No – this number can only send messages, it cannot receive incoming calls.

My child sometimes picks up the phone when it rings – how can I replay the call/message?

There is currently no call back option.

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Bushfire Warnings and Information

What happens if my phone is engaged when the call goes out? Will they call back? How many times will it try?

The system is configured to have three attempts at getting the message through.

I have a fax on my phone line – will it keep dialling my fax?

On the first attempt it recognises that it is a fax machine number and will no longer continue to try to send the message.

Can I 'opt out'?

No.

How many times will a telephone ring before the system assumes that there will be no answer?

45 seconds.

Will I be billed for the Emergency Alert message?

No, communities receiving messages will not be billed.

I frequently travel overseas with my mobile, will I get these messages while overseas or interstate?

If the phone has international roaming the message will be sent and received providing the handset is turned on.

The advertising campaign has a website – will that website have information on what I should do in the emergency?

The Emergency Alert website has general information about the system, no warning information or emergency information. The actual text or phone message will direct people on where to seek further emergency information. The website is www.emergencyalert.gov.au

Will the system be able to send messages to prepaid mobile phones?

Emergency Alert is able to send messages to you if you have a prepaid mobile phone. However, there is no obligation to update your address once you have purchased a prepaid mobile phone. The address that you provided when you bought the phone, which is typically the address on your driver's licence, is the address that remains with that phone if you do not update it. You should contact your service provider to update your address.

When will the system be in place?

The system went live at the start of December 2009.

Further Information

Emergency Alert website

www.emergencyalert.gov.au

Section 1

Bushfire Warnings and Information

1.4 Sirens

Following the 2009 fire season and the subsequent Royal Commission, discussion regarding the use of sirens to alert the community has renewed.

In Summary

- CFA sirens have been used for many years to alert members to respond to the Fire Station.
- CFA recognises the increasing interest in using both CFA and community-owned sirens to alert the local community to possible danger.

CFA Sirens May Be Used to

- Alert CFA members to respond to the Fire Station for emergency incidents, training or other purpose; and
- Where prior arrangements are in place, alert the community to possible danger and trigger the community to seek further information.

Use of CFA Sirens to Alert the Community to Possible Danger

- CFA sirens may be used to alert the community where this is part of a Municipal Emergency Management Plan developed to meet the needs of a specific community.
- Such arrangements should maintain the Brigade's requirements for member alerting.

Community Sirens as Part of a Community Alerting System

- CFA recognises that where communities and/or brigades determine that existing CFA sirens are not suitable, communities may decide to establish a community siren as part of a Community Alerting System, independent of the operation of any CFA siren.
- Currently the CFA funds, manages, maintains and activates sirens that it owns and uses as part of local CFA Brigade membership call-out procedures. The CFA will continue to undertake this level of service and testing of CFA owned sirens at its discretion. The CFA does not agree to provide fund management, or maintenance for community alert sirens owned by another party.
- CFA involvement in this partnership is contingent upon appropriate community involvement.
- Any plan to use a CFA or community siren to alert the community must include a comprehensive community education program, designed to ensure that upon hearing the siren, people will be triggered to actively seek further information.
- CFA in conjunction with the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC) have completed a six-step model that determines how and when a siren might be used as a component of community alerting processes.

Section 1

Bushfire Warnings and Information

Important Information

- The siren sound used for community warnings should differ from the standard Brigade member alert to respond to station.
- It is recommended that all community alerting sirens should sound the same across the state to prevent confusion. A statewide policy has now been finalised between CFA and Office of Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC) to provide statewide guidelines for community alerting systems.
- It is imperative that any siren (CFA or community owned) is maintained and tested regularly.
- Any community who expresses interest in the establishment of a community siren must consult and adhere to the following documents:
 - CFA Policy and Guidelines – *Interim Policy of CFA Sirens 2009*; and
 - Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC) policy on sirens. *Draft copy October 2009*.
- Further communication will occur from CFA shortly and both the above documents will be made available.



Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

2.1 Leaving Early or Defending a Well Prepared Property

The following information is a summary only of the points that need to be considered whether:

- staying and actively defending your home; or
- leaving early before threatened by fire.

For more information about creating a Bushfire Survival Plan, residents are strongly encouraged to:

- Call VBIL and obtain a Fire Ready Kit
- Attend a *FRV* street corner meeting and/or a *Bushfire Planning Workshop*
- Join a *Community Fireguard* Group

Call the Community Education Coordinator at your local Region office for more details.

Bushfire Survival Plan

- **Everyone must have a Bushfire Survival Plan, even if you plan to leave early.**
- Anyone who lives, works, travels or holidays in a bushfire prone area must understand the risks and accept responsibility for developing their own Bushfire Survival Plan.
- A written Bushfire Survival Plan helps you to remember what to do in the event of a bushfire.
- Practising your plan helps you to learn what to do.
- Ensure family and/or neighbours are aware of your plan.
- If you intend to be out of the area, your Bushfire Survival Plan for leaving early lists what to take, where to go, what to do with pets, who to call, and what to do after there has been a bushfire, etc.
- Although you have a legal right to defend your property, you must have adequate defensible space, be well prepared and have a Bushfire Survival Plan: to stay and actively defend involves risk of emotional trauma, injury and death.
- Certain weather conditions will compromise the defendability of your home.
- Bushfire Survival Plans require back-up plans to take into consideration any changing circumstances.
- Each Bushfire Survival Plan requires options for different times of the day and days of the week, e.g. if kids are at school or on holidays, if it's a weekend or weekday etc. Many schools will now close on days with a FDR of Code Red (catastrophic) – check your school's policy for closure on fire risk days.
- Go to the register of all high risk schools/children's services on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) website to monitor any planned school closures.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

What Leaving Early Means

- Leave well before any bushfire threatens your area.
- Know what your trigger to leave will be, such as a FDR of Very High, Severe, Extreme or Code Red (catastrophic).
- If your plan is to leave, the safest option is to leave at the beginning of a day with a declared Fire Danger Rating of Severe or Extreme. You should leave the night before or early in the morning when conditions are declared as Code Red (catastrophic).
- You need a written, practised plan if your plan is to leave early.
- You must have a back-up plan if you are unexpectedly caught, e.g. a fire starting locally on a day when the FDR is High, rather than Extreme etc.
- Families with children and the vulnerable should always plan to leave early in the morning with a FDR of Severe and Extreme, and the night before or early in the morning on a Code Red (catastrophic) day.
- Do not rely on receiving a warning.
- Leaving when the bushfire has arrived is extremely dangerous and potentially life threatening.
- You must leave according to your Bushfire Survival Plan.
Do not be tempted to wait and see what a fire will do.

I've Decided to Leave – Where Should I Go?

The only sure way to survive a bushfire is be well away from the threat, so you will need to relocate somewhere where there is no chance of a bushfire occurring.

Consider:

- Staying with family or friends who live in a low fire risk area. Ask around and make tentative arrangements now;
- Staying somewhere you are able to carry on with your day-to-day activities such as going to work or school, and a place where pets can be safe;
- Think about catching up with friends, going shopping or enjoying a movie; or
- Visit neighbours who have a well-prepared house.

If you don't have family or friends you can stay with, another option is to go to a relief centre. Your local municipality may open a relief centre if there is a fire in the area.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

It would be useful to contact your municipality before the fire season to find out about the potential relief centres and what facilities they have.

Consider:

- When will they become available?
- How will you access them?
- What services and standard of accommodation will be offered?
- Will the accommodation be appropriate for you, your family and your pets?
- Should you plan to relocate elsewhere?

Defending Your Home – the Risks

- Staying to actively defend your home is extremely dangerous and involves risk of injury, emotional trauma and death.
- You are advised to use the online Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool to assess whether you would have the necessary defensible space to plan for home defence.
- In the event of having to actively defend your home, adequate resources, equipment, preparation and practise are essential.
- You might not get assistance from fire-fighting agencies. It is extremely dangerous for someone to actively defend a home by themselves.
- There may not be mains power, water, or phone lines during a fire.
- Certain weather conditions will reduce the defendability of your house, placing you and your family in even greater risk.
- Identify possible places to shelter, as a last resort, if your home is destroyed or you are caught - this may be a neighbour's house, a bare paddock, or another well-prepared building close by, or a Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort.
- **On a Code Red (catastrophic) FDR the safest option is to leave the night before or early in the morning.**
- Children and the vulnerable should leave early in the morning on a declared FDR of Severe or Extreme.
- Children and the vulnerable should leave the night before or early in the morning with an FDR Code Red (catastrophic).

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

2.2 Help with Bushfire Planning

CFA is often approached for assistance and advice with regard to bushfire planning and emergency management planning from individuals, groups and organisations.

CFA can provide information around the local risk but must not endorse or approve any plans for others.

Below are some of the more common questions asked and where people should be directed for advice and/or further information.

Residents – Bushfire Planning

- CFA does not write or endorse bushfire plans.
- Templates to help people write a Bushfire Survival Plan are part of the new Fire Ready Kit. Call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line for a Fire Ready Kit or obtain one online from CFA website.
- Look on the CFA website for information under *Residents* in the *Summer Fire Safety* section.
- Attend a *Fire Ready Victoria* street corner or community meeting, or join a *Community Fireguard* group. Meetings can be searched for on the CFA website using Community Meetings Online or by contacting your local CFA Region office.
- Use the online Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool on CFA website to determine your defensible space requirements. If residents still need further assistance, they can call 1800 068 611 or send an email to hbsat@cfa.vic.gov.au for assistance.
- Attend a Bushfire Planning Workshop. These sessions are not run in every CFA Area and Region so please contact the Community Education Coordinator at your local Region office for more details.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

Advice to Property Owners

- In conjunction with the establishment of the Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool, CFA has hired and trained some new staff to carry out site visits on individual properties. They will be available to assess the defendability of individual properties.
- The following benefits are expected to be achieved as a result:
 - CFA will have additional resources located strategically throughout the State with the capacity to assess the defendability of individual properties to meet the demands of the community.
 - These services are available on request after a resident has completed the Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool.
 - Residents need to call 1800 068 611 or send an email to hbsat@cfa.vic.gov.au for assistance.
 - The community will be provided with site specific advice on how to understand and mitigate their bushfire risk and enable them to make an educated Bushfire Survival Plan.
 - Property owners undertaking construction or renovation of an existing property will have access to bushfire experts to assist them in meeting the requirements of planning and building legislation cognisant of their bushfire risk.
 - CFA will have additional capacity at Area and Headquarters level to assist Fire Safety Officers with the increased workload associated with changes to legislation.
 - CFA will have limited capacity to ascertain and report on compliance with appropriate planning and building requirements.

See Section 5.1 for information on bushfire planning for schools and other organisations.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

2.3 Defendable Space

- Defendable space is an area surrounding a building where vegetation is modified and managed to reduce bushfire intensity.
- Having a defendable space assists in reducing fire intensity. The environment around you including the slope of the land and the amount and nature of the vegetation you have within the boundary of your residence are factors which affect your defendable space.
- Defendable space must be clearly established and well-maintained, before you can even consider defending your property under threat of bushfire .
- Defendable space is made up of two zones: the Inner and Outer Zones.

10 metre Inner Zone	<p>10 metre area immediately around the building where vegetation is required to be maintained to a minimum set of requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass must be no more than 100 mm (10 cm) high • Fallen leaves must no more than 10 mm (1 cm) deep • No shrubs over 1 metre next to or below windows • No trees overhanging the roofline.
Outer Zone	<p>The remainder of the defendable space distance between the Inner Zone and unmodified vegetation. This could be over 100 metres around a house. To determine the exact number of metres for the Outer Zone residents need to use the Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool (see Section 2.4). Vegetation management requirements for the Outer Zone are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass must be no more than 100mm (10 cm) in height • Fallen leaves must be no more than 20mm (2 cm) deep • There must be no shrubs or hanging dead material (detached branches or bark) on at least 50% of the Outer Zone • Clumps of shrubs need to be isolated from one another by at least 10 metres.

- **Not all homes are defendable under all conditions, despite good construction and careful preparation.**

Further Information

CFA Fire Ready Kit – obtain from CFA website, Victorian Bushfire Information Line or local CFA Region office.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

2.4 Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool

The Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool has been developed to help residents work through the steps required to create a defensible home.

The tool has six key steps:

1. **ASSESS** – This calculates the minimum defensible space around a home. The home owner inputs information on five important factors; vegetation type, property boundary, type of slope, degree of slope and flammable objects in the vicinity of the house. The tool provides the home owner with the required minimum defensible space in metres for the Northwestern and Eastern Zones of the house.
2. **DECIDE** – This assists home owners to make a decision to leave early or prepare, stay and defend based on the outcome of the defensible space calculation.
3. **REDUCE** – This provides information on how to reduce the risk of ember attack on a house.
4. **CONSIDER** – This allows people to consider whether they have the minimum recommended resources and equipment to actively stay and defend their property.
5. **DETERMINE** – This helps people to understand whether they have the personal capacity required to stay and defend including physical and psychological factors.
6. **DEVELOP** – This helps residents develop a Bushfire Survival Plan and links to the Fire Ready Kit where templates are provided for further assistance.

Brigades can refer people to this online tool on CFA's website, if queries are received about home defensibility. If people do not have access to the Internet they can order a hard copy of the tool by phoning the VBIL on 1800 240 667.

Further Information

CFA Fire Ready Kit – obtain from CFA website, Victorian Bushfire Information Line or local CFA Region office.

Online Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool on CFA website.

Household Bushfire Site Assessment Workbook (hard copy version of the online tool)

Call VBIL on 1800 240 667 to request a copy.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

2.5 Vegetation Removal Around Your Home

The Government has announced interim planning provisions to simplify residents' entitlements to clear native vegetation around their homes as part of their preparations for the 2009/10 fire season. These provisions are now in effect.

Some of the more common frequently asked questions are included below, but for detailed information, see the links at the end of this sheet.

What Does the '10/30 right' Mean?

This simple new '10/30 right' allows residents on their own property to:

- Remove, destroy or lop any vegetation within 10 metres of a building used for accommodation
- Remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, except for trees (ie. ground fuel), within 30 metres of a building used for accommodation
- Remove, destroy or lop any vegetation for a combined maximum width of four metres either side of boundary fences. You need to have prior written permission from the landowner if it is not your property.

CFA acknowledges the '10/30 right', but residents need to be aware that managing vegetation under this legislation may not create the minimum defensible space required for some properties. Over 100 metres of vegetation management may be needed depending on the type of vegetation around the property and slope of the land. Residents are encouraged to use the *Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool* to work out the required amount of defensible space for their circumstances, whilst accepting that some houses may not be defensible at all.

Where Does the '10/30 right' Apply?

The changes will be introduced to planning schemes in Victoria by Ministerial amendment. They will apply state-wide, including in areas under planning overlays, except for in 20 metropolitan municipalities and the Port of Melbourne area where existing planning permit requirements will continue to apply.

What are the 20 Metropolitan Municipalities where the '10/30 right' Will Not Apply?

Banyule, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Darebin, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Hobsons Bay, Kingston, Knox, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Melbourne, Monash, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse, Yarra. Existing controls will also continue to apply in the Port of Melbourne area.

Can I Clear Vegetation on Public Land under the New Measures for Bushfire Protection?

The '10/30 right' and property boundary fence rights apply to land which you own. You will require the written consent of the landowner to clear vegetation on neighbouring land including roadsides.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

What are the Current Penalties for Illegally Clearing Vegetation from Private Land?

The maximum penalty for clearing of native vegetation without a permit and outside the scope of an exemption, such as the '10/30 right' is 1200 penalty units or approximately \$140,000.

What if my Neighbour or Landlord Won't do Anything?

Local councils, through their Municipal Fire Prevention Officer, can assess vegetation fuel hazards on private property and issue Fire Prevention Notices to private land holders where reduction of vegetation fuel hazards on a property is considered necessary. If a resident is concerned that there may be a significant fire hazard on adjoining private property they should contact the Council who will be able to assess the fire risk and take appropriate action.

How will these Measures Affect the Building of New Homes?

The interim measures do not directly affect the building of new homes.

When siting new buildings it is expected that every effort is made to avoid native vegetation removal and to provide a 10 metre separation between native vegetation and the new dwelling.

The interim measures apply to the rebuilding of houses destroyed in the 2009 bushfires and is covered by the new rules if they are within the relevant municipalities.

Further Information

Go to DSE website www.dse.vic.gov.au for the following fact sheets:

- Making Victoria Fire Ready – Preparing for Bushfire;
- Making Victoria Fire Ready – Managing Erosion and Landslip Risk; and
- Making Victoria Fire Ready – Frequently Asked Questions.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

2.6 Fire Ready Kit (also known as Bushfire Survival Kit)

- The Fire Ready Kit is a new publication developed to help residents prepare their Bushfire Survival Plan.
- The Kit replaces the 'Living in the Bush' publication and incorporates a strong emphasis on survival. It provides updated advice about leaving early, staying to actively defend and emphasises the consequences of not being adequately prepared.
- The Kit contains several linked publications:
 - Understanding Your Risk;
 - Household Bushfire Site-Assessment Workbook (**Not included in Kit**) – see note below;
 - Preparing Your Property;
 - Leaving Early and planning template;
 - Defending Your Property, and planning template;
 - ◆ Plus the Kit contains three smaller brochures:
 - *Understanding Fire Danger Ratings;*
 - *Radiant Heat* fact sheet; and
 - *Community Fireguard: A Bushfire Safety Program.*

Note: Publication 2 'Household Bushfire Site Assessment Workbook' is not included in the Kits. Residents are advised to use the online version or order a hard copy from the VBIL.

- The Kits were mailed to residents registered to vote on the electoral role in the 52 communities identified for Township Protection Plans throughout November. This mail out was organised by the Department of Justice with support from CFA.
- Kits are available to all Victorian residents by calling the Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL) on 1800 240 667.
- Brigades are able to order copies of the Kit by contacting the Community Education Coordinator (CEC) at the relevant Region office.



Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

2.7 Pets and Livestock

What To Do With Your Pets

- The safest place for your pets is to relocate them to somewhere with little or no bushfire risk, well away from a potential bushfire area. Arrange to agist, kennel or board pets with family, friends or a commercial facility.
- If you are unable to or choose not to relocate your pets you need to move them inside the house well before fire impacts. Your pets should shelter from radiant heat with you as the fire front/s passes.
- Animals suffer from heat stress the same as humans do so ensure your pets have access to plenty of water.

The Lost Dogs' Home

- CFA in partnership with the Lost Dogs' Home are undertaking some work to improve the preparation for and safety of pets, primarily dogs and cats, in bushfires.
- The Lost Dogs' Home established a National Pet Register in 1989. It provides a secure register of pet microchip numbers and identification tags should your pet go missing. It operates a 24 hour a day, seven day a week pet recovery service.
- Everyone is encouraged to register their pets with the National Pet Register. They even provide free identification tags for those wanting to join. Joining is free and can be done by calling 1300 734 738 or visiting www.petregister.com.au

Horses Cope Better Than Most Other Animals

- Larger animals such as goats and horses are best placed in a paddock that has been well grazed. Horses should not be locked up in small areas or stables. Never turn them out on the road – they will be at danger from traffic and the fire.
- On high fire risk days move horses to an open paddock with little vegetation so they can move freely. Horses are good at moving themselves to safe open areas and suffer minimal burns if left to do so.
- The 'safe' area should be as large as possible and may be a closely grazed paddock or be created from several paddocks by opening gates. Ideally it should have a dam with clear access.
- An alternative 'safe' area might be a large well-fenced ménage, provided there are no trees or buildings nearby that will burn readily. Consider slashing a paddock to create a 'safe' area.
- All equipment including rugs, halters and fly veils should be removed from horses, as the plastic may melt and buckles may burn the animal.
- If you are unable to identify a 'safe' paddock for your horse, agist it out of the area, or make arrangements to temporarily relocate your horse on high fire risk days. Options may include local showgrounds, sale yards, parks, racetracks or pony club grounds.

Section 2

Personal and Community Preparedness

Managing Livestock During a Fire

- Sheep and cattle should be placed in paddocks with low fuel loads. Identify the safest areas on your property and use these paddocks when the weather is likely to be hot, dry and windy.
- On days of Severe, Extreme and Code Red Fire Danger, stock should be left in the lower risk areas.
- Listen to weather forecasts including predicted Fire Danger Ratings and observe your own environment to help you decide when to put your plan into action.
- Safe areas include paddocks with green summer crops, bare paddocks with no dry feed, or a ploughed paddock. Firebreaks are an imperative. They may be a bare laneway or a ploughed break.
- Stock can be held in yards with bare or ploughed surrounds. The surrounds can be wetted in advance, however the yards must be well defended after the fire front passes (if safe to do so).

Further Information

Refer to CFA's *On the Land* brochure available from your Region office or CFA website.

Australian Horse Industry Council

<http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/>

The Lost Dogs' Home

www.dogshome.com

Section 3

Personal and Community Shelters

3.1 Fire Bunkers and Fire Shelters

- The Victorian Government has introduced new interim regulations for bushfire bunkers and shelters constructed on private property.
- The new interim building regulations are now in place and will:
 - provide clarity to people considering building a private shelter or bunker until proposed new national regulations are introduced next year.
 - assist to improve consumer information about private bushfire shelters and help eliminate products that could be unsafe.
- All private bushfire shelters sold and constructed in the State of Victoria must now comply with the criteria set out in the regulations.
- The regulations cover areas such as fire resistance, structural stability, access and egress.
- You will need a building permit and may need a planning permit. Contact your local council about these matters.
- Those who have already installed a bunker are urged by the Victorian Building Commission to consider its safety in light of the regulations and may wish to contact a registered Fire Safety Engineer for advice.
- People should not rely on a private bunker or shelter to save lives – everyone must be encouraged to consider private bunkers and shelters as a part of an overall Bushfire Survival Plan – private bushfire shelters are a last resort.

CFA's Position on Fire Bunkers and Shelters

- CFA does not currently have a formal position on bunkers and shelters, but supports the introduction of regulations to govern the construction of bunkers and shelters.
- Any proposed fire shelter would need to be built to an approved national Australian Standard for fire shelters to have Emergency Services support.

Further Information

Go to Victorian Building Commission website www.buildingcommission.com.au for the following information:

- Interim Regulations Nov 2009 – Private Bushfire Shelter Construction;
- Debunked – Fact Sheet on Interim Regulations; and
- Media Release – Wed 11 November: Bushfire Shelters to Require Building Permits.

Section 3

Personal and Community Shelters

3.2 Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort

- Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort are areas or premises that may, **as a last resort**, provide some sanctuary from the life-threatening effects of a bushfire (i.e. direct flame contact or radiant heat).
- A place of last resort (Neighbourhood Safer Place) is designed to give people in bushfire-affected areas a place to go if their bushfire plans fail. These are places of last resort, not first resort.
- Neighbourhood Safer Places are not an alternative to planning to leave early or staying to defend your property – they are not inherently ‘safe’ places.
- Neighbourhood Safer Places should only be accessed when personal bushfire survival plans cannot be implemented or have failed.
- They may afford some protection from radiant heat, the biggest killer during bushfire.
- Travelling to a Neighbourhood Safer Place is inherently dangerous. Traffic congestion, fire activity, accidents or fallen trees may block the route there.
- There is no guarantee that emergency services will be present. No amenities, such as food or drinks, or provision for pets will be provided.
- The only sure way to survive a bushfire is to be well away from the threat.
- Not all townships will have Neighbourhood Safer Places identified in their Township Protection Plans.
- It is important to understand that places of last resort (Neighbourhood Safer Places) are not to be confused with Fire Refuges, Relief Centres, Recovery Centres, Assembly Centres, or Informal Places of Shelter – each has a different and specific purpose.
- A list of designated Neighbourhood Safer Places can be found on the CFA website along with the Assessment Guidelines CFA has used to assess each site.
- Local Government is required by legislation to designate such places where possible, subject to certification.

Further Information

Neighbourhood Safer Places Interim Assessment Guideline Oct 09 is available on CFA website.

Section 3

Personal and Community Shelters

3.3 Fire Refuges

- Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC) are currently reviewing fire refuges as part of the Royal Commission recommendations.
- A list of currently designated fire refuges can be found on the CFA website below the list of Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort.

Section 3

Personal and Community Shelters

3.4 Emergency Relief and Recovery Centres

The council is responsible for managing and coordinating municipal resources for responding to, and recovering from emergencies. Municipal resources include those owned by the council and those under its control if sourced from other agencies.

- **Relief Centre** – A location (such as a hall or community centre) that may be opened during an emergency to provide relief to the community. The opening of relief centres will be finalised and communicated to communities once the location of an emergency is known. A relief centre is **not** a location that people can go to on a high risk day in case a fire occurs.
- **Recovery Centre** – A location (such as a hall or community centre) that may be opened after an emergency to provide for the needs of affected people. Recovery centre location(s) will be finalised and communicated to communities by Council.

Section 4

Guidelines and Legislation

4.1 Township Protection Plans (TPP's)

52 Victorian communities have been identified as most at risk this fire season. TPP's have been developed for each of these identified communities.

What is a Township Protection Plan?

A Township Protection Plan provides a planned response (for both emergency services and the community) to a bushfire within close proximity to a township with the potential to impact on the local community.

The plan addresses specific needs of the town's people, property, assets, environment and economy.

Typically a TPP will be in three parts:

- **Community Information:** A stand alone section that the community (permanent and tourists/visitors) may freely access throughout the year to enhance their knowledge of key locations and facilities. This section includes an easy to read map. The map shows key elements of the Township Protection Plan, such as hospitals, fire stations, roads in and out of the township, information sources to obtain the latest fire and weather information and important contact information to help residents develop their own Bushfire Survival Plan. The maps are available online on the CFA website.
- **Township Planning Factors:** Sets out the initial operational response activities in the event of a wildfire impacting the area, as well as an overview of township/locality, including maps.
- **Fire Prevention:** Provides a graphical representation of the fire prevention works (completed and planned) for the area.

What Can the Community Expect for the 2009/10 Fire Season?

Each Township Protection Plan will include a community handout for permanent residents and visitors (Part 1 only). The handout will be mailed to homes, available from local businesses, accommodation providers and available electronically on the CFA website.

Township Protection Plan's have been distributed to the following locations:

- Relevant CFA Brigades and Groups;
- Relevant DSE depots;
- Relevant Incident Control Centres;
- Region CFA and DSE Headquarters;
- Municipal Emergency Coordination Centres (MECC's);
- Police Divisional Operational Command Centres; and
- CFA HQ.

Section 4

Guidelines and Legislation

Which Townships are On the List?

In 25 Local Government Areas the 52 locations were identified as:

Region	Township Name	
2	Junortoun Kangaroo Flat Bendigo Maiden Gully	Castlemaine St Arnaud Eaglehawk
4	Bolwarra	Nelson
5	Peterborough	Dunkeld
6	Barongarook Barwon Downs Kawarren Laver's Hill	Forrest Marengo Carlisle River Wye River townships
7	Airey's Inlet townships Angelsea Jan Juc Lorne	Breamlea Deans Marsh Dereel Steiglitz
8	Blairgowrie Cockatoo Rye/St Andrews	Upper Beaconsfield Gembrook
9	Anderson's Inlet townships Noojee	Sandy Point
10	Loch Sport	
11	Bemm River Mallacoota	Cann River
13	Dandenong Ranges	Warrandyte/North Warrandyte
14	Macedon Mount Macedon	Woodend
15	Hepburn Blackwood Mt Helen/Mt Clear Creswick	Daylesford Trentham Greendale
16	Halls Gap	

Section 4

Guidelines and Legislation

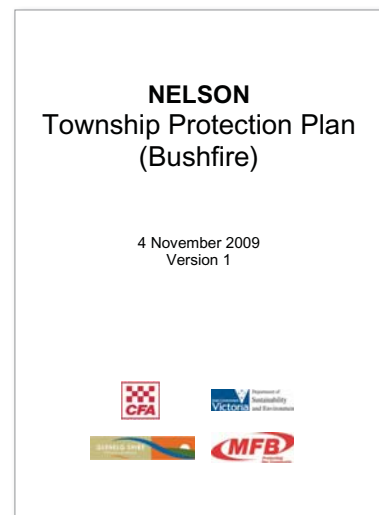
What Do Individuals Need to Do?

Residents need to develop a Bushfire Survival Plan. They can use the information contained in the Fire Ready Kit to help develop a plan. It is also recommended they attend a community meeting or join a Community Fireguard group.

Further Information

The Township Protection Plan template will be reviewed following the 2009/10 fire season and a revised version may be released prior to the 2010/11 fire season to incorporate any feedback from the field.

Township Protection Plan Community Maps are available on CFA website.



Section 4

Guidelines and Legislation

4.2 Roadside Vegetation Clearing

What Changes are Happening to Roadside Clearing?

Local councils and VicRoads will be able to reduce fuel on roadside reserves through burns conducted by CFA. These burns will only apply to roadside reserves selected by Road Management Authorities in consultation with the CFA and The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) because of an identified fire risk and low biodiversity impacts. People will also be able to remove fallen firewood without a permit for personal use from the nominated roadside road reserves for two weeks before the burns.

Which Roadside will be Prioritised for Roadside Fuel Reduction Burning?

The CFA identified 52 locations in 25 Local Government Areas as needing immediate attention prior to the 2009/10 fire season. Initially roadside fuel reduction burning will be prioritised for sections of roadsides within these areas. The CFA continue to work with Local Councils, Road Management Authorities and DSE to undertake roadside fuel reduction burning on other roadsides as part of their normal roadside fuel reduction programs.

How will the Public know when the Planned Burns are going to Happen so they can Collect the Firewood Beforehand?

Roadside burns will be advertised with a sign on the site and in local papers. Where this advertises that a 'no written consent' period for fallen firewood collection for personal use has been provided, the public will be able to collect firewood from that section of roadside reserve prior to the burn without obtaining further permits. The 'no written consent' period for fallen firewood collection for personal use will last for two weeks in advance of burning.

What are the Current Penalties for Illegally Removing Firewood from Roadsides?

Where the removal of firewood is controlled by a local law the maximum penalty under the Local Government Act for breaching the local law is 20 penalty points or approximately \$2300.

Will the Penalties Change under the New System?

No.

Section 4

Guidelines and Legislation

Are there Safety Risks involved in Collecting Firewood from Roadsides?

The safety of residents is the primary motivation behind these changes. Signs will be posted on the selected roadsides to ensure the community is aware of the size, timing and location of roadside fuel reduction activities. Firewood collection will not occur on sites where there are road and pedestrian safety issues.

Do I still need a Permit from Councils or DSE to take Firewood from Roadsides?

The 'no written consent' period for fallen firewood collection for personal use will only occur for the two weeks prior to a planned burn on a selected roadside. Outside of this time normal permit requirements apply.

Further Information

Go to DSE website www.dse.vic.gov.au for the following fact sheets:

- Making Victoria Fire Ready – Preparing for Bushfire;
- Making Victoria Fire Ready – Managing Erosion and Landslip Risk; and
- Making Victoria Fire Ready – Frequently Asked Questions.

Section 4

Guidelines and Legislation

4.3 Traffic Management Points/Road Blocks

- The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Interim Report recommended improving access levels through Traffic Management Points (TMP). As a result CFA and DSE, in conjunction with Victoria Police, have revised the TMP Guidelines issued prior to the 2008/09 fire season.
- The main change from the previous guidelines is the introduction of 'access levels' that clearly show the groups that may be permitted access.



- The Incident Controller will determine the appropriate level of access depending on the fire status and a risk assessment. The new guidelines provide police with:
 - More flexibility at TMP's to allow entry to:
 - ◆ Residents returning to their homes;
 - ◆ People delivering relief and aid to residents and animals; and
 - ◆ Essential services crews; and
 - A method to accelerate access through a TMP for people whose identity has been established.
- To ensure that the guidelines facilitate movement through TMP's for all end users including CFA and DSE personnel, 'wristbands' will be introduced. Once a resident is issued with a wristband the wearer will be able to access the TMP without the need to provide further identification other than the wristband.
- Further to this, during this fire season a number of options for the identification of CFA volunteer's private vehicles will be trialled. CFA members with a legitimate need to pass the TMP may be granted access using any of the following means of identification:
 - Your identification card (where supplied); or
 - Your CFA helmet.
- The Traffic Management Point Guidelines – are available online through the IMT toolbox under the *Incident Control* section.

Section 4

Guidelines and Legislation

4.4 Building Regulations in Bushfire Prone Areas

Building Amendment (Bushfire Construction) Further Interim Regulations 2009

- The Building Commission has advised of further changes to the Building Regulations, as a result of the February 2009 bushfires.
- These changes will **only** be applicable to reconstruction of Class 1a buildings destroyed in bushfires between 1 January 2009 and 31 March 2009, located in a WMO and relate to:
 - requirement for a dedicated fire-fighting water supply; and
 - access for emergency vehicles.
- The detail stated within these Regulations is a direct lift from the Wildfire Management Overlay applicant kit on these matters.
- These two new requirements are addressed by new Regulations 808 and 809.
- In addition, Regulation 309A has been introduced which will require consent from the Chief Officer where an application does not comply with these minimum provisions. This will ensure that CFA is a reporting authority for these matters where variations to the specified requirements in Regulations 808 and 809 are proposed.
- This process will ensure that building permits within the bushfire affected areas appropriately capture the water supply and access provision requirements that were previously contained within the Wildfire Management Overlay, that now no longer apply for bushfire reconstruction.

Further Information

Go to Victorian Building Commission website www.buildingcommission.com.au for the following information:

- Building Commission Fact Sheet – Building Controls for Bushfire Safety – Interim; and
- Practice Notes – Fact Sheets on Various Topics.

Section 4

Guidelines and Legislation

4.5 Fire Restrictions, Fire Danger Period and Council Laws

Total Fire Bans

- Total Fire Bans will still be declared by the Chief Officer when necessary.
- The aim of Total Fire Bans is to restrict or eliminate activities that may result in accidental ignition.
- Total Fire Bans may be declared within the entire spectrum of Fire Danger Ratings and do not align to one rating.
- Total Fire Bans are no longer being publicised by fire agencies as a trigger for activating a Bushfire Survival Plan, although people may still wish to use Total Fire Bans as a personal trigger.

Fire Danger Period and Fire Restrictions

- Fires in the open air are restricted throughout the summer as soon as the Fire Danger Period is declared in a particular municipality.
- It will depend on the season and the amount of rain and fuel build up as to the timing of fire restrictions. Generally, restrictions begin in December, however sometimes they are brought forward to the start of October or November.
- You need to check with your local municipality or look on the CFA website at the link below as to whether restrictions have come into force. Restrictions stay in place until 30 April, unless stated otherwise.

Lighting Fires During the Fire Danger Period

- Extreme caution is necessary throughout the Fire Danger Period because dry vegetation and hot weather increases the risk of fires accidentally igniting and spreading.
- If you are planning to light fires in the open air, you must do this well before the fire restrictions come into force.
- Local councils have bylaws that must be adhered to when lighting fires in the open. Contact your local council for details of these laws in your area.
- You can apply for a permit to burn during the Fire Danger Period and it is generally issued by your local municipality.

Note: *Permits become invalid on a Total Fire Ban day.*

Further Information

CFA website – Fire Restrictions web page

Can I or Can't I? brochure – available on CFA website or from your local Region office.

Section 5

Special Target Groups

5.1 School, Kinder and Child Care – Closures and Help with Planning

Closures on Code Red (catastrophic) Days

- Where a school or children's service has been identified as being at high or extreme risk in the event of a bushfire, the school/children's service will be closed if the weather district experiences a Code Red (catastrophic) Fire Danger day.
- A register of all high risk schools/children's services has been published on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) website so parents will know in advance that their school/children's service will close if their weather district experiences a Code Red Fire Danger day.

What about Non-Government Schools?

- Non-Government schools are included on the register of schools at risk of bushfire.
- DEECD is working with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and the Association of Independent Schools Victoria - this will ensure a seamless approach across all schools.

How will Parents Know if Their School is Likely to Close?

- Parents will be told in advance if their school or children's service is considered at risk and included on the register, so they can be prepared for their school to close.
- Schools and children's services will directly contact parents to confirm arrangements.
- Parents will also be able to access further information via the Department's website www.education.vic.gov.au or by calling the Department's Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834.

Where Should Children Go if Their School is Closed?

- Schools and children's services will only be closed on days that are determined to be of the most serious risk – if the school is not considered a safe place for children on these days, being at home unattended is also not considered a safe option.
- Families should enact their Bushfire Survival Plans on such days, which should include alternative care arrangements for children.
- Children should never be left at home unattended on such days.

Section 5

Special Target Groups

Schools Self-Assessment Survey

- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has developed a self-assessment survey for all schools and children's services to help them:
 - Develop a more detailed understanding of the school's bushfire risk
 - Review and reflect on the school's emergency management preparedness
 - Document the school's current level of preparedness for emergencies.
- If CFA staff or volunteers receive requests for assistance in the completion of the DEECD self-assessment survey or the development of an Emergency Management Plan, they should refer the schools or children's service on to the relevant DEECD Regional office – there is no obligation upon CFA to assist in this area. This information can be found online on the DEECD website at www.education.vic.gov.au

Businesses/Organisations/Schools Requiring Assistance with Emergency Management Planning

- Private contractors are available to assist businesses, organisations and schools with emergency management planning. Contact the Fire Safety Officer at your local CFA Region office for assistance in this area or refer people on to Fire Protection Association Australia (FPAA) requesting Certified Practitioners who are experienced in this area.

Further Information

Fire Protection Association Australia

www.fpa.com.au

Phone: 1300 731 922

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Website

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/>

Section 5

Special Target Groups

5.2 Tourists

- CFA is working in partnership with Tourism Victoria to increase fire safety information for tourists.
- The project is designed to build capacity within the tourism sector by increasing bushfire safety knowledge of Operators, Marketers, Visitor Information Centre staff and Tourism Managers. It will also enhance their understanding of the role they play in fire safety.
- Tourists enjoy a relaxed 'holiday mode' attitude that is switched off from the demands of everyday life and may not engage as readily with usual fire safe messages. Additionally, many Tourism Operators are worried that fire safe information sends a potentially negative message about their area, and are therefore reluctant to promote CFA messages.
- The project provides:
 - A range of specially designed materials (such as brochures, door hangers) to tourism venues and Visitor Information Centres;
 - Education to Operators and tourism sector staff;
 - Support to Operators in developing Emergency Management Plans; and
 - Support to CFA staff in engaging better with this hard to reach community.
- Initially the project will focus in the tourism areas designated as high fire risk in the Township Protection Plan process.

Summer Briefings for Visitor Information Centres

- Many CFA Areas are undertaking briefings with staff in Visitor Information Centres as part of the Summer Preparedness Program.
- Visitor Information Centre staff are being encouraged to actively advise visitors to:
 - Tune to local radio for updated information about Fire Danger Ratings and fire activity in their area.
 - Plan daily activities appropriate to the Rating, for example on days with a Fire Danger Rating of Severe or Extreme, visit towns rather than go hiking or camping.
 - Always carry a 'Go Bag' in the car when they leave accommodation on day trips in case there is an event which means they are unable to return that day. This contains drinking water, personal medications and protective clothing (long sleeved cotton clothing, sturdy footwear, a towel).

Section 5

Special Target Groups

Fire Safety Information for Tourists

- Specific brochures are being developed for distribution through Tourism Victoria shortly for people travelling or holidaying in bushfire prone areas.
- Contact the Community Education Coordinator at your Region office for the availability of these brochures.

The key advice for tourists is:

Before you leave on a trip

- Check the Fire Danger Ratings for the period and the area in which you will be travelling.
- Be prepared to change your itinerary on hot, dry and windy days to avoid areas where bushfire may occur.
- Check for any fire restrictions that may be in force including Total Fire Bans.
- Consider taking picnic food and drinks that do not require cooking or heating.
- Have a woollen blanket in the car.
- Inform a friend or family member about where and when you are going and keep them informed if your plans change.

Away from home

- Always avoid travelling in areas where bushfires are burning.
- Stay alert. Do not expect an official warning.
- If you see or smell smoke you will need to source more information about whether a bushfire could threaten you – tune into ABC local radio.
- Even with the best preparations and plans it is possible you may get caught out on the road or you may get caught while travelling on holiday or to work. This is a threat to life as your car offers very little protection from radiant heat.

If you are on the road when fire threatens

- Driving during a bushfire is extremely dangerous. If you find yourself in this situation:
 - Always u-turn to safety if you can; or
 - If you can't, stay in the car. It offers better protection from radiant heat than being outside. Do not get out and run.

Section 5

Special Target Groups

To increase your protection from radiant heat

- Park behind a solid structure to block as much heat as you can.
- If this is not possible, pull over to the side of the road into a clear area, well away from debris that may ignite.
- Wind up your car windows, close the vents, put on your hazard lights and headlights.
- Cover exposed skin as much as possible with natural fibre clothing such as cotton. Do not wear synthetic.
- Get down as low as possible below window level.
- Cover up with a woollen blanket until the fire front passes.
- If you have water, drink it.
- Get out of the car once the fire has gone.
- Be prepared before you leave on a trip. Being caught on the road during a bushfire could be fatal.

Section 5

Special Target Groups

5.3 Languages Other than English and Special Needs

- CFA is increasing accessibility to bushfire safety and preparedness information for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and people with special needs, and improving the delivery of this information to these target groups.
- Accessibility for the CFA public website is being improved in collaboration with Vision Australia.
- The Fire Ready Kit is currently being developed into Easy English in collaboration with SCOPE (disability service). When completed, copies will be made available to all disability service organisations in Victoria. Additional copies will also be available for other relevant organisations and will also be available via VBIL.
- The Fire Ready Kit is also being produced in audio format for people who are blind and vision impaired (in a set of 3 CD's and single DAISY CD format) in collaboration with Vision Australia. This will be directly mailed to all people who are registered on the Vision Australia library database, and who live in high risk bushfire areas (approximately 1,200 people). Copies will also be made available through Centrelink (having links to many people with vision impairments), libraries/ municipalities and other relevant organisations.
- Vicdeaf is producing a short video clip in Auslan that will be made available on major websites that are accessed by the Deaf and hearing impaired. This clip will promote the need for people to be safe from bushfire, the Fire Ready Kit and how to access a copy, and direct people to the CFA Public Website for further information.
- CFA is providing expertise and leading the development of a project that will result in a checklist for Home and Community Care (HACC) workers who are prompting people to develop a personal Bushfire Survival Plan. Training will be delivered in targeted high risk areas for assessment staff who will be working with isolated and impaired HACC clients to help them develop personal Bushfire Survival Plans.
- Several brochures are translated into other languages. *Can I or Can't I?*, which gives information on what restrictions are in force during the Fire Danger Period and on Total Fire Bans is translated into 20 languages.
- A small DL brochure called *Essential information for the fire season no matter where you live* contains some key safety advice for this season and is translated into 18 languages.
- Brochures in translated languages can be accessed from the homepage of the CFA website, on the bottom of the scrolling bar.

Further Information

Go to CFA website for translated brochures.

Contact your local Region Community Education Coordinator for specific CALD or special needs resources for individuals or groups.

Section 6

Further Information

6.1 CFA Community Education Programs – Bushfire

CFA, DSE, MFB and DHS have implemented *Living with Fire – A Community Engagement Framework* to increase awareness of bushfire risk and preparedness of the Victorian community.

As part of the framework, each summer CFA runs educational programs to inform residents of the need to be prepared and how to get started. These are delivered free of charge in high bushfire risk areas.

The programs include:

- Local community and street corner meetings (*Fire Ready Victoria* or FRV);
- *Community Fireguard* (CFG);
- *Brigades in Schools* (BIS) bushfire lessons;
- *Bushfire Planning Workshops* (BPW).

Please contact the Community Education Coordinator at your local Region office for more information about these programs.

Fire Ready Victoria Community and Street Corner Meetings

Fire Ready Victoria meetings are interactive community meetings held on street corners, in local halls and fire stations, that focus on basic bushfire behaviour, personal safety, house survival and recognition of local risk.

Meetings are advertised through flyers, local newspapers, sign boards and on the CFA website.



Community Fireguard (CFG)

Community Fireguard is a community development program designed by CFA to help reduce the loss of lives and homes in bushfires. It assists community groups to develop bushfire survival strategies that suit their level or risk, lifestyle, environment and values.

The Program

Community Fireguard encourages residents to work together to improve bushfire safety. By planning ahead of the fire season and actively participating in CFG, residents are able to develop strategies for themselves that have local ownership and support, whether they are planning to leave early, well before the fire threatens, or stay to actively defend their well-prepared property.

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Further Information

The following topics are addressed as part of the core *Community Fireguard* program.

- Introduction to the program and fire behaviour;
- Understanding personal survival;
- Understanding house survival; and
- Developing personal and household bushfire survival plans.

How to start a group

Community Fireguard groups are formed when residents of a local area choose to participate in the program. Ideally, the groups are small and made up of neighbours or residents living in a shared bushfire risk environment. Contact your Community Education Coordinator for further details.

Registering for FRV Street Corner and Community Meetings

- The Victorian community are now able to search for and book community meetings online. Community members can also register their interest in starting up a *Community Fireguard* group in their area.
- The new system allows people to register and log on, manage their own account, register for a specific meeting or interest in a program or request further information.

Bushfire Planning Workshops (BPW)

Bushfire Planning Workshops are locally-organised sessions about bushfire planning. They are targeted:

- at people who have attended a FRV street corner or community meeting and want to take an additional step to develop their bushfire survival plans; and
- to encourage residents to begin working on their own bushfire plan and to start them on the process to do this.

The sessions run for approximately two hours and are suitable for people interested in preparing for bushfire but needing to take an additional step before being part of a neighbourhood group such as *Community Fireguard*.

These sessions are delivered by presenters who have been trained in the delivery of both *Fire Ready Victoria* community/street corner meetings and the *Community Fireguard* program.

These sessions are not run in every CFA Area and Region. Please contact the Community Education Coordinator at your local Region office for more details.

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Further Information

Brigades in Schools (BIS) – Bushfire Lessons

There have been some additional lesson plans developed for the *Brigades in Schools* program that are specific to bushfire.

They include:

1. Bushfire awareness (Years 3 – 4)
2. Houses and bushfires (Years 3 – 4)
3. Bushfire awareness, prevention and preparation (Years 5 – 6)
4. Bushfires and the natural environment (CFA/DSE) (Years 5 – 6)

These new lessons replace the current lesson plan numbers 11, 16, 17 as well as the CFA/DSE developed lesson 'The Natural Place of Fire in the Environment'.

These four lessons will be supported by extension worksheets, follow-up activities, support materials (glossary, useful links, other resources on the topic), and online resources which cover the key concepts in further detail and reinforce the messages presented.

Review of Brigades in Schools program

- The *Brigades in Schools* program was reviewed in 2008.
- There are some changes being undertaken to the program to address the recommendations from the review process.
- The lesson plans for bushfire were addressed in the first instance to link in with the findings from the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Interim Report.
- The program will be undertaken and promoted under the *Brigades in Schools* banner until the beginning of the school year in 2011.
- The revised program will be known as *Fire Safe Kids* and launched at the start of the 2011 academic year.

Please contact the Community Education Coordinator at your local Region office for more details.

Section 6

Further Information

6.2 Further Sources of Information

CFA

CFA

www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Local CFA Region office

CFA Connect

www.cfaconnect.net.au

2009/10 Pre-Season Update Part 1 and 2

Part 1 sent to all CFA members and Part 2 in Summer 2009 Brigade magazine.

Contact Community Safety at CFA Headquarters on (03) 9262 8416 or email hqcommsafe@cfa.vic.gov.au for queries or feedback about anything contained in this Kit.

Other

DSE

www.dse.vic.gov.au

DSE Customer Service Centre

136 186

Building Commission of Victoria

www.buildingcommission.com.au

Phone: (03) 9285 6400

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

www.education.vic.gov.au

Department of Human Services

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Department of Planning and Community Development

www.dvc.vic.gov.au

CSIRO

www.csiro.com

Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)

www.bushfirecrc.com

Victorian Bushfire Information Line

1800 240 667

Lost Dogs' Home

www.dogshome.com

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FireReady The 'FireReady' logo, with 'Fire' in red and 'Ready' in black, followed by the Victorian state emblem and the word 'Victoria' in a small blue box.