



09.40 Burn Off SOP

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) To guide CFA members facilitating and conducting burn off activities and to ensure compliance with relevant legal requirements for the protection of the community and the environment. This includes both burn offs conducted on CFA managed property and on private land at the request of the land manager/owner.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure applies to CFA members conducting burn off operations as part of an approved CFA activity.

Section 3 - Procedure

Identifying Burn Offs

(3) The Burn Off Controller is responsible for ensuring that the proposed burn meets the criteria for a burn off. If any of the criteria are not met, then the burn is considered a planned burn and must follow the appropriate SOP 9.39 Planning and Conducting a Planned Burn.

(4) Burn offs are specifically for the purpose of the removal of Class A materials such as paper, timber, logs, leaves, and other green waste. Any other material cannot be burnt within this SOP.

- a. Burn offs must not include building materials or potentially hazardous substances.
- b. Responsible Landholders should declare the contents of the burn off materials to ensure there are no hazardous substances present. The burn should not be conducted until materials can be confirmed.
- c. To conduct a burn that does not include vegetation, for example, uninhabited structures or vehicles, refer to the Chief Officer's SOP 6.03 Derelict Structures - Burning of.

Planning a Burn Off

(5) The Burn Off Controller is responsible for ensuring that all local, state, and federal laws are complied with when undertaking the burn off. This includes:

- a. Obtaining a Permit to Burn if proposed to be undertaken within the Fire Danger Period.
- b. Obtaining a Local Laws Permit, if required by the municipality.
- c. Identifying whether other environmental and heritage permits are required, including:
 - i. Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998.
 - ii. Environmental Protection and Biosecurity Conservation Act 1999.
 - iii. Planning and Environment Act Victoria 1987.
 - iv. Victorian Heritage Act 2017.
- d. Engaging with the Regional Vegetation Management Team for assistance in the determination of these requirements.

- e. Obtaining authorisation from the Catchment Commander, Deputy Chief Officer, or Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO). The authorising officer is to have regard for:
 - i. The quantity, distribution, and type of materials to be burnt.
 - ii. The burn period.
 - iii. Whether the burn should be broken into multiple smaller burns.
 - iv. The skills and suitability of the Burn Off Controller to manage the burn.
 - v. The assurance of containment.
 - vi. The impact of the smoke produced.
 - vii. Any potential exposures.
- f. Undertaking a risk assessment of the burn and of the surrounding area. Including implementing any requisite mitigation to ensure the safety of the crews.
 - i. For example, SMEACS-Q (Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration/Logistics, Command/Communications, Safety, and Questions) format gives priority to safety and must include appropriate reference to communications plans, escape scenarios, contingency plans, site hazards, and mitigating actions.
- g. Undertaking a contingency assessment to ensure that there are no further exposures from the burn. This includes:
 - i. Overhanging or nearby trees.
 - ii. Other materials in the immediate vicinity including grass.
 - iii. Materials downwind are at risk of ember ignition.
 - iv. Smoke impact on roads, businesses, or properties.
 - v. Other community activities occurring within the area that may be negatively impacted by the smoke plume.
 - vi. Attending crews should take all possible actions to ensure that any hazardous materials are not contained within the burn off.

Note: Any permit obtained by a responsible landholder is specific to work undertaken by the responsible landholder and does not cover the Brigade. CFA must seek and be issued their own permits.

(6) Notifications of burn offs must be made to Triple Zero Victoria or Fire Permits Victoria and the District Duty Officer or State Duty Officer

Prior to Ignition

(7) The District Duty Officer (DDO) or State Duty Officer must authorise ignition on the day of the burn, at least 2 hours prior to when ignition is planned to occur.

(8) All burn offs should meet the requirements of the Permit to Burn.

(9) CFA members should conduct a size-up and consider the materials and contents of the burn.

(10) Sufficient resources, equipment, and supplies should be ready to be deployed to control and suppress the burn.

(11) All CFA vehicles are to notify FireCom of their attendance and availability.

(12) Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) is to be worn by all CFA members.

During the Burn Off

(13) CFA has an obligation to remain on-site with the sufficient resources (including vehicles and appliances) at any fire that is lit or attended by CFA until the burn is deemed safe and the scene is handed over to the responsible landholder.

(14) The Burn Off Controller is responsible for the management of the fire at all times.

(15) If the fire escapes the burn area, FireCom is to be notified and a fire report is created.

(16) The Burn Off Controller should ensure that the burn always remains within control and that they have access to the resources required to extinguish the burn should it be required.

After the Burn Off

(17) The Burn Off Controller must ensure that:

- a. The fire is fully extinguished prior to departure, with consideration of forecast weather, the burn must be assessed as secure and/or the responsible landholder must clearly assume responsibilities for control outlined by the Burn Off Controller.
- b. Any post-burn patrol activities are organised and coordinated.
- c. At the conclusion of the burn, all Brigade participation must be recorded as a 'controlled burn' in CFA's Service Delivery and Reporting Centre (SDRC)/ Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS) by each brigade involved.

(18) For more information please refer to 9.11 Handing Over the Incident SOP

Burn Off Controller/CFA Member in Charge Responsibilities

(19) Having a minimum of Crew Leader endorsement. Crew Leaders undertaking Burn Off Controller activities should be approved by the Brigade Captain.

(20) Ensuring that all required pre-ignition tasks and notifications have been completed prior to ignition.

(21) Being in possession of authorisations and permits as applicable for that burn off prior to or at the time of ignition.

(22) Making sure all CFA members are briefed prior to commencing burn off operations.

(23) Ensuring all burning off is carried out in a safe and responsible manner.

(24) Confirming that the burn off is properly extinguished before the last crew leaves or ensuring management and responsibility for the burn off is effectively passed onto the responsible landholder before leaving.

Safety Note

(25) The safety and welfare of all crew and the public is of principal concern. Any activity that may endanger other people should be controlled or ceased.

(26) The Burn Off Controller shall ensure that all personnel involved are wearing Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) and Protective Equipment (PE) appropriate for wildfire suppression operations.

(27) When there is a known presence of hazardous substances and materials (HAZMAT) CFA members should not undertake the burn off.

(28) Prior to the burn off determine and consider the impact on roads, properties, or the community.

Environmental Note

(29) During the preparation process, the CFA member in charge must consider the potential impact on the environment if undertaking the burn.

(30) CFA values the importance and protection of Victoria's Cultural Heritage. CFA members in charge should be familiar with the identification and means of protection of cultural artifacts, especially those that are significant to the heritage of the first peoples and broader historic legacies.

Section 4 - Definitions

Commonly defined terms are located in the CFA [centralised glossary](#). Document-specific definitions are listed below.

Burn off: The controlled application of fire for the purpose of removing accumulated Class A type flammable material. Works are only deemed to be a burn off when all the following conditions are met:

- a. Does not include living native vegetation.
- b. The expected time taken to actively burn is less than six hours (not including patrol / mop-up time).
- c. Compliance with municipal local laws and relevant legislation, including environmental and cultural requirements.
- d. Burn area is less than 0.1 hectare (1000m²).
- e. For the expected duration of the burn, there will not be issues from heat or smoke affecting neighbours, roads, or other assets.
- f. For the expected duration of the burn, no issues are expected regarding the weather.
- g. Examples of fires that could be considered a burn off are burning off heaps and burning small windrows. This does not include a planned burn.

Burn Off Controller: Responsible for ensuring that the burn meets the criteria for a burn off and is in charge of the burn off operation. The Burn Off Controller is a CFA endorsed Crew Leader that should have also completed level 1 Incident Controller training, responsible for the management of the burn off. The member must be approved to manage each burn off by the Brigade Captain, Catchment Commander, Deputy Chief Officer, or Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) as outlined in clause 5.e. point iv (4). This role does not relate to endorsed Planned Burn Operations Officers as identified in SOP 9.39.

Section 5 - Related Documents

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (Cth)

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

Forest Act 1958

Land Act 1958

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

9.11 Handing Over the Incident SOP

DRAFT

Status and Details

Status	Not Yet Approved
Effective Date	To Be Advised
Review Date	To Be Advised
Approval Authority	
Approval Date	To Be Advised
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Jason Heffernan Chief Officer
Responsible Officer	Alen Slijepcevic Deputy Chief Officer Fire Risk, Research & Community Preparedness
Author	Emma Pollard
Enquiries Contact	Fire Risk, Research & Community Preparedness

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"CFA member" - Refers to all CFA volunteers, volunteer auxiliary workers, officers, employees and secondees.

"CFA vehicle" - All vehicles owned or operated by CFA or any Group or Brigade. This includes FRV vehicles being driven by an FRV Secondee.

"Risk Assessment" - Overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation. This involves the process of identifying internal and external threats and vulnerabilities, identifying the likelihood and impact of an event arising from such threats or vulnerabilities, defining critical functions necessary to continue the organisation's operations, defining the controls in place necessary to reduce exposure, and evaluating the cost of such controls.

"Crew Leader" - Crew Leader is the person designated to have responsibility for the management of the crew.

"FireCom" - The callsign for day to day / normal radio communications to CFA vehicles and aircraft.

"Personal Protective Clothing (PPC)" - Includes clothing used to provide protection to CFA members from the risks associated with performing a specific operational task for which they are competent and endorsed

"Protective Equipment (PE)" - An object that is utilised during the execution of CFA operational activities and training, which includes breathing apparatus, gas suits, gas monitoring equipment, oxygen resuscitation equipment, safety harnesses and all technical rescue equipment.

"Fire Danger Period" - The Fire Danger Period is when CFA restricts the use of fire in the community. This is to help prevent fires from starting.

"FIRS" - Fire and Incident Reporting System.

"Brigade Captain" - The Captain is the highest ranking officer of a volunteer brigade. Where the position of Captain is currently vacant these responsibilities are carried out by next highest ranking officer.

"Hazardous Substances" - Hazardous substances are substances that can harm people's health. They may be solids, liquids or gases. In the workplace, they are often in the form of fumes, dusts, mists, and vapors. Hazardous substances broadly fall under chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear waste and include biological contaminants, hydrocarbons, chemicals, and asbestos.

"Planned Burn" - The controlled application of fire under specified environmental conditions to a predetermined area and at the time, intensity and rate of spread required to achieve a planned objective.

"SMEACS-Q" - A briefing format incorporating: Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration and logistics, Command and Communications, Safety, and Questions.

"Responsible Landholder" - A person who owns or occupies the land where the incident has occurred.

"HAZMAT" - The term hazardous materials includes dangerous goods, hazardous substances, scheduled poisons, listed wastes, radioactive substances and environmental pollutants. Hazardous materials are any substances that are assessed by an emergency service (based on information gathered) as likely to endanger people, property or the environment.

DRAFT