



09.39 Planning and Conducting a Planned Burn SOP

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) To assist CFA members in planning and conducting planned burns effectively and safely, and to ensure positive outcomes for CFA, the community and environment.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure applies to all CFA members involved in planning and conducting planned burns.

(3) This includes the ability of CFA Vegetation Management Staff who can be involved in planned burns with the delivery and application of planned burns, by providing support to the Planned Burn Operations Officer and observing burn conduct in order to improve future burn planning.

(4) This procedure does not apply to burning off or bushfire response/suppression operations such as back burning or burning out. Refer to the SOP 9.40 Burn Offs for more information.

Section 3 - Procedure

Nominating a Planned Burn

(5) All proposed planned burns require approval by the District Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and nominated for inclusion in a relevant strategic plan (for example, a joint agency fuel management program or municipal plan).

(6) Planned Burns for purposes include, but are not limited to, fire prevention and risk reduction, cultural practices, training and capacity building, or community engagement. In limited circumstances, a planned burn may be approved at the discretion of the relevant Deputy Chief Officer or delegate without inclusion in a strategic plan when urgency requires.

Planning a Planned Burn

(7) All planned burns must have a Burn Plan developed by an appropriately endorsed Burn Planner.

(8) All Burn Plans must:

- a. Conform to a current approved template (e.g. Fuel Management System (FMS)) and/or process appropriate for the risk and complexity of the burn.
- b. Comply with relevant legislation.

(9) Burn Plans will be approved by the District Assistant Chief Fire Officer or a delegate on endorsement of the Manager Community Safety (MCS) prior to any CFA members commencing pre-burn works.

- a. In some cases, complex burns may be approved by the Regional Deputy Chief Officer.

(10) Prior to the burn occurring, the Planned Burn Operations Officer is to notify their Region's Vegetation Management Team (VMT) or nominated delegate (e.g. CFA State Planned Burn Coordinator) to allow for systems to be updated.

(11) For guidance on roadside burning operations and traffic management, please refer to the Chief Officer's SOP 11.09 Traffic Management.

Planned Burn Delivery

(12) On the day/s of the burn the Planned Burn Operations Officer must be in possession of:

- a. A valid, appropriate permit if burning during the declared Fire Danger Period.
- b. The current approved Burn Plan.

(13) The Planned Burn Operations Officer will ensure:

- a. All requirements in the Burn Plan are complied with, including necessary pre-burn works and notifications. Notifications include Triple Zero Victoria or Fire Permits Victoria, and the District Assistant Chief Fire Officer/District Duty Officer or State Duty Officer (or as outlined in local arrangements).
- b. All burn personnel are briefed and wearing appropriate bushfire Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) and Protective Equipment (PE) before commencing work.
- c. Required records and results are recorded in the Burn Plan and logbook as per SOP [9.13 Keeping Logs and Documents](#).
- d. Before the last crew leaves and with consideration of forecast weather, the burn must be assessed as secure, and/or the responsible landholder assume responsibilities for control outlined by the Planned Burn Operations Officer.
 - i. For more detailed guidance, refer to the Chief Officer's SOP 9.11 Handing over the Incident
- e. The Planned Burn Operations Officer is responsible for management of the planned burns in accordance with the approved burn plan.
- f. Any fire escape from the planned burn area must be reported to the relevant State Duty Officer / District Duty Officer.
- g. Any fire escape threatening assets or fire beyond any identified contingency areas must be reported immediately as a fire call to FireCom and additional resources requested as required.

Ignition Authorisation

(14) Once approval of the Burn Plan has been given and all preparatory works have been accepted by the District Assistant Chief Fire Officer (or delegate), the burn ignition can be scheduled in the adopted record-keeping system, e.g. FMS.

(15) If all appropriate steps have been taken and the pre-ignition documents have been completed, then the District Assistant Chief Fire Officer (or delegate) can provide ignition authorisation.

(16) Ignition authorisation will be recorded in the Planned Burn Aide Memoire and reflected in the adopted record-keeping system, e.g. FMS.

(17) Ignition approval may be requested/required by the District Assistant Chief Fire Officer (or delegate), the method

of confirmation will depend on local arrangements and should be outlined in the Burn Plan.

(18) If conditions as per Burn Plan are met and ignition approval is not required, then the Planned Burn Operations Officer may proceed with the burn.

Post-Burn Activity

(19) The Planned Burn Operations Officer will ensure:

- a. Post burn patrol is arranged and is appropriate based on forecast weather and fire potential.
- b. Post-burn works required by the Burn Plan are carried out or responsibility is clearly transferred to the responsible landholder and recorded in the logbook.
- c. The completed Burn Plan report along with any other associated materials is sent to the Region's Vegetation Management Team for reporting and filing.

(20) At the conclusion of the burn, all Brigade participation should be recorded in CFA's Service Delivery and Resource Centre (SDRC)/Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS) by each Brigade involved.

Supporting Other Agencies to Burn

(21) CFA will participate in planned burns as a support agency where:

- a. There is an established Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement allowing resource sharing with the lead agency.
- b. The District Assistant Chief Fire Officer/District Duty Officer or State Duty Officer approves all CFA participation.
- c. The lead agency has an approved Burn Plan.
- d. CFA members are adequately briefed prior to starting work.

(22) At the conclusion of the burn, all Brigade participation should be recorded in CFA's SDRC/FIRS by each Brigade involved.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Planned Burns Operation Officer	Responsible for overall management of the planned burn, including liaising with Regional Vegetation Management Teams, obtaining and implementing Burns Plans and valid permits (if required) and meeting the necessary notification and reporting requirements (including post-burn activities).
Burn Planner	Responsible for developing Burn Plans. This includes the identification of essential safety, environmental and cultural heritage information.
Regional Vegetation Management Team	Responsible for overseeing regional planned burn activity including Burn Plans.
Manager Community Safety	Responsible for endorsing Burn Plans.
District Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)	Approves burn plans and provides ignition authorisation and ignition approval. The District ACFO also approved CFA member's attendance to another agency's burn.

Safety Note

(23) When in the planning stage of a planned burn, Burn Planners should undertake a robust risk and complexity assessment.

(24) A contingency plan should be part of the planning process.

(25) During the planning process, Burn Planners should ensure safety issues are identified and mitigated or managed in accordance with the [Safe Work Procedure – Conduct Planned Burning Operation](#).

(26) Traffic management should be considered as part of any burn planning, refer to the Chief Officer's SOP 11.09 Traffic Management.

(27) Hazardous tree assessment should be conducted as part of the burn preparation and post-burn activities for any burn involving trees.

(28) When conducting burning operations Planned Burn Operations Officers should take notes of safety issues in the Burn Plan in accordance with clause 25 and conduct continual dynamic risk assessments.

(29) CFA members undertaking vegetation management activities and operating quadbikes or side-by-sides must wear the appropriate Personal Protective Clothing (PPC)/equipment (PPE) (e.g. quadbike helmet) in accordance with vehicle manufacturers' recommendations.

Environmental Note

(30) During the planning process, Burn Planners will seek advice from internal and, where necessary, external advisors on matters of heritage and biodiversity values checks and updated as required.

(31) Where necessary, identified values will be addressed in the Burn Plan and mitigation options identified if required.

(32) Herbicides should only be used by appropriately trained and endorsed contractors to the relevant industry standard.

(33) To minimise the spread of pest plants and virulent soil pathogens, vehicles and plant machinery should be decontaminated before travelling between sites.

(34) Class A Foam is to be used in accordance with SOP 9.07 Firefighting Foams and Retardants SOP.

(35) The planned burn should be managed to minimise the smoke impact on the community. Appropriate notifications should be made in advance.

(36) Plan control lines to minimise soil disturbance and ensure rehabilitation of control lines where necessary after the burn has been declared safe.

(37) CFA values the importance and protection of Victoria's historical and cultural heritage sites. CFA members in charge should be familiar with the identification and means of protection of cultural and historically significant 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.

Ignition authorisation refers to authorisation to burn received 1-3 days prior to the burn.

Ignition approval can be received on the day of the burn and can be provided based on current and forecast conditions.

Section 5 - Related Documents

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2009

Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act (Cth) 1999

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

Forest Act 1958

Land Act 1958

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Summary Offences Act 1966

[CFA Planned Burn Ignition Authorisation Process 2022 Memorandum](#)

[Safe Work Procedure – Conduct Planned Burning Operation](#)

9.11 Handing Over the Incident SOP

11.09 Traffic Management SOP

9.07 Firefighting Foams and Retardants SOP

[Burning out and back burning: what's the difference?](#)

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
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

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

"Dynamic Risk Assessment" - The continuous assessment and control of risk in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident. DRA is an intuitive thought process and is typically not recorded.

"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.

"Planned Burn Operations Officer" - The individual designated to have overall management of the burn and is responsible for the conduct of the burn. They must have CFA set training competencies and be endorsed to perform this role related to the complexity rating of the planned burn being controlled.

"Burn Plan" - The approved plan for the conduct of planned burning incorporating the location, specifications and conditions under which the operation is to be conducted.

"Burn Planner" - An individual with an appropriate level of competency and Chief Officer endorsement to develop Burn Plans for burns of specified complexity.

"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.

"Class A Foam" - An additive to water which improves and extends the fire extinguishing capacity of the water for

Class A fires (eg. wildfires).

"Manager Community Safety" - Ensures the management, coordination and initiation of Community Safety initiatives throughout the Region that is consistent with CFA corporate objectives

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

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