



# Bushfire Survival Plan

Thinking "I will leave early" is not enough.

**Your plan will help you take action and avoid making last minute decisions that could prove deadly during a bushfire.**

## Reasons for having a Bushfire Survival Plan

- The majority of people who die during bushfires in South Australia are caught fleeing their homes at the last minute.  
**Preparing your Plan allows you to identify the triggers to leave early or prepare to actively defend your property**
- Bushfires can be scary and overwhelming. This is not the time to be making major decisions.  
**Preparing your plan allows you to make major decisions in advanced and will help keep you focused and make better decisions in the event of a bushfire threat.**
- During a bushfire, you will most likely be worried about your loved ones.  
**A prepared and *practised* Bushfire Survival Plan will help family members know where others are and what they'll be doing.**
- You might find at the last minute that you don't have the clothing, equipment or resources to enact your plan to leave early or stay and defend.  
**A prepared and *practised* Bushfire Survival Plan will help you to identify the resources you need.**
- Bushfires can be unpredictable and the best laid plans can go wrong.  
**A well prepared Plan will include contingencies and back-ups if your primary plan fails.**

## A good plan:

- is prepared well before the Fire Danger Season and reviewed each year
- is written down, so that the details are to hand when you need them
- has been practiced, so you know how it will go on the day
- is created with the whole family and covers everyone, including the young and elderly
- includes what to do:
  - before the Fire Danger Season
  - on a Total Fire Ban day
  - during a bushfire
  - after a bushfire
- can adapt to unforeseen circumstances.

**Remember: Certain properties are undefendable, and certain fires unsurvivable. Make sure you understand your capacity and the meaning of Fire Danger Ratings before making a decision to stay.**

## Where to next? / more information:

- Download our [Guide to Preparing for and Surviving the Bushfire Season](#) for further information to assist you in developing your household Bushfire Survival Plan
  - See our [information for businesses](#) to help you plan your organisation's Bushfire Survival Plan
  - Contact the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677) if you need more information or have questions
  - Joining a Community Fire Safe group will help you develop a bushfire survival plan that suits your household, with help from your neighbours and the CFS.
  - Find out more about [Fire Danger Ratings](#)
  - Download a [Bushfire Survival Plan template](#) (Microsoft Word)
  - [Order DVD and brochures](#)
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Your Bushfire Survival Plan outlines what you need to do to help safeguard your property and, most importantly, what actions each member of your family will take on fire risk days and if a fire threatens.

**Making a choice when a bushfire threatens is too late.** The majority of people in bushfires die fleeing their homes at the last moment. Leaving late is a deadly option.

## What will you do?

It is difficult to make a single decision - whether you intend to stay and defend your property or leave early - as circumstances can vary. It is important to recognise that in an emergency, unexpected things are likely to occur so you will need to adapt to changing circumstances and have a plan that will work in different situations.

Your plan should alter according to the forecast Fire Danger Rating and may need to take into account questions like: will it need to be different weekends to weekdays? What if the children are at school? What if we have house guests or someone is home sick?

You may also decide to have different plans to suit the daily Fire Danger Rating and enact one plan on days where the Fire Danger Rating is forecast to be Severe and a different plan when the Fire Danger Rating is forecast to be Catastrophic.

**Regardless of your decision, you'll need to have a backup plan in case unexpected things happen on the day.**

## Practice makes perfect...

### Advantages of a practised Bushfire Survival Plan

#### Provides purpose and motivation

- Your preparation accomplishments are built on a series of small steps.

#### Provides specific direction

- you know where you are going, what to do and what your family will be doing.

- A written and practised plan will help you focus on what you have to. If you have practised your plan, it will be easier for you to cope and your responses will be more automatic.

### Irons out the kinks

- There may be things you have planned that prove to be impractical, or for which you need extra resources. Practising your plan will help you to identify the things you need to change, or the resources you need to source.

As we come across great examples of bushfire preparedness and planning, we'll share them with you here. In the meantime, here are some stories from fire survivors.

## Max and Jean's Story

"It seemed that 40 years of CFS training and working with volunteers helped us to survive, but nothing could have stopped the inferno that engulfed everything in its path on that fateful day. Many lessons were learnt on how we must prepare for this sort of once-in-a-lifetime event. Reflecting on our actions, it would seem that we could have done no more when the fire was upon us but could have done plenty before the fire season started."

*Max and Jean Hitch, Black Tuesday Survivors*

## Paul's story

Being proactive is the way Paul O'Brien protects his property and in the face of a recent fire threat, that attitude and diligence held him in good stead.

Faced with the news of the massive fire, Paul had less than an hour to put his plan into action and he wasted no time.

Turning on sprinklers, filling the bath, plugging the gutters and using his firefighting pump to wet everything down before the fire arrived... and yet even though the grass was wet, it didn't stop the fire completely.

"But it slowed it down enough for me to fight the fire myself with a shovel and buckets of water from the bath" he said.

"I was pretty confident that I was prepared, because I'd been keeping my fuel load down."

**"If people think it can't happen to them, as sure as the sun comes up tomorrow there will be a fire. People who don't take precautions are stupid."**

## Danielle's story

When we first moved here, my eldest daughter was four and my youngest was a slowly expanding bump. It was very soon apparent that in the event of a fire, Mike would be out on the truck. There was no guarantee he would be able to get home to help me if a fire

threatened our area. Staying and defending our home on my own in my condition simply wasn't an option.

*Danielle Clode in her book "Future in Flames"*

## Jodie's story

"...Then it was all go preparing the house. Our fire-fighting pump is always set up to our cement tank; so Damien started it up and we wet down the house, filled up the gutters, put covers over our windows in case they blew in, filled up the bath and all the buckets we could find. While Damien was on the roof blocking the gutters, he felt the wind change and knew we were in trouble. Outside it was so eerie, and raining ash. Inside I tried to keep it as normal as possible for the kids, putting all the lights on. Then we lost power....

The kids and I didn't return until 6pm. I tried to picture what we were in for, but you just can't. As soon as we got to where the fire started, so did the tears. We had only lived on our property for three and a half months when the fire came. We bought at Greenpatch as we thought it was one of the prettiest places on the planet."

*Jodie Curtis, Black Tuesday Survivor*

