



# Your guide to bushfire safety

**PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.**



Government  
of South Australia

Bushfire Information Hotline  
**1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)**  
[www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

**PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.**



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## If you live, work or travel where bushfires may happen, you must:

<b>PREPARE</b>	<b>ACT</b>	<b>SURVIVE</b>
<b>weeks and months before the bushfire season</b>	<b>on the daily Fire Danger Ratings</b>	<b>during a bushfire</b>
<p>You must make important decisions and preparations before the season starts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know and understand your bushfire risk.</li><li>• Prepare yourself, your family, your house and business.</li><li>• Prepare and practise a Bushfire Survival Plan.</li></ul>	<p>The higher the Fire Danger Rating, the more dangerous the conditions.</p> <p>Be prepared to act without receiving an official warning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know the daily Fire Danger Rating for your area and what you need to do.</li><li>• Stay alert to your surroundings and stay informed.</li><li>• Act decisively the moment you know there is a fire in your area.</li><li>• Put your plan into action.</li></ul>	<p>Your survival and safety depends on the decisions you make.</p> <p>The safest place to be is away from the fire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor conditions and keep up-to-date.</li><li>• Know what the different warnings mean</li><li>• Know what to do if you are caught by fire with little or no warning.</li><li>• Make decisions and take action to protect you and your family.</li></ul>

The information in this book is just an introduction and only one of the tools you should use to make sure you are prepared for bushfire. For more information, CFS recommends:

- Attending a local Bushfire meeting in your area
- Joining or establishing a neighbourhood Community Fire Safe group
- Completing our online Bushfire Household Self-Assessment Tool
- Browsing our fact sheets online (a full list is on p25)
- Downloading our mobile phone app.

To find out more about these options visit [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)



# PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

## Bushfires happen every summer. They can start suddenly and without warning. They can destroy properties and lives.

It's not just the big fires like Black Saturday, Ash Wednesday and Wangary. Every year there are thousands of incidents and homes lost to bushfire.

**There is a real chance that you will experience a dangerous bushfire at some time in your life.**

While fires are inevitable, they are also survivable. You can increase the chances of survival for yourself, your loved ones, your home or business by taking simple steps to plan and prepare. The better prepared you are, the better your chances of survival.

### Before summer starts you need to decide what you will do if a bushfire threatens.

This booklet is an introduction to help you plan to protect your home and the lives of you and your family. It explains ways of making your property more likely to survive a bushfire and will help you make better choices if a bushfire threatens.

#### Am I at risk?

- ☐ I live, work or travel outside the Safer Settlement of Adelaide
- ☐ I live in or near bush, grassland, forest, paddocks, scrub or heath
- ☐ My local area has a history of bushfires
- ☐ I have many trees and shrubs around my home
- ☐ My house is built on a slope
- ☐ To leave home, I need to travel through bushland
- ☐ My children go to school in a bushfire prone area, or travel through one on their way
- ☐ I don't have a Bushfire Survival Plan, or it is more than one year old

**If you answered 'Yes' to one or more of these, then you and your family may be at risk in the event of a fire.**

If your risk is low, think about making your home available to relatives or friends who've decided to take the safest option and leave early on a Total Fire Ban day, so they are not in a bushfire prone area at the time of highest risk.



CFS's online **Bushfire Household Self-Assessment Tool** will help you learn more about your risk. This quick assessment will help you make the decisions that are right for you and your family.

This tool can be found at [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

### Did you know?

- More than **35 suburbs** in Adelaide's fringes are in bushfire prone areas
- More than **75 towns** in the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island are in bushfire prone areas
- **75 towns** in other parts of rural South Australia are in bushfire prone areas
- Nearly **50% of people** living in bushfire prone areas don't understand the threat bushfires pose to them and their family

Visit the CFS website to find out if you live in a bushfire-prone area:  
[www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)



# Prepare



**Your main priority is to ensure that you and your family are safe. During a bushfire, you and your family's survival and safety depend on how prepared you are, and the decisions you make.**

- **Prepare** and **practise** your **Bushfire Survival Plan** well before the fire season
- **Prepare with your family** and think about the needs of your pets and livestock
- **Prepare your home and your property** to survive the fire front, ember attack and radiant heat
- If you don't feel able to stay and defend your property, then **plan to leave early**. Make this part of your Bushfire Survival Plan
- If you **prepare to leave early**, consider when you will leave, where you will go, how you will get there safely and what you will take with you
- If you are **planning to stay and defend**, prepare for a frightening experience
- Find out what **equipment** you need and figure out what you will do if things do not go according to plan
- Consider your **physical, mental and emotional** preparedness
- Prepare for those days when the forecast **Fire Danger Rating** is Very High, Severe, Extreme or Catastrophic
- Plan for **no electricity, no water** and **very little warning**
- Prepare for when a fire is close to you

## **Bushfire safety is a shared responsibility**

- Fires can start suddenly and without warning –there may be no-one to tell you what to do
- The more you prepare your home the better the chances are that it will survive a bushfire, even if you plan to leave well before a bushfire starts.
- Fires like Victoria's Black Saturday in 2009 and South Australia's Bangor and Eden Valley fires in 2014, and Sampson Flat in 2015 reminded us that there are some fires that are too big, move too fast or are too inaccessible for firefighters to stop before they impact people or property.
- During a major bushfire, most firefighters will be working to stop the fire – do not expect a fire truck or aircraft to be there to protect your property.
- Only you know the details of your personal situation. You must have a plan that works for you and your family and takes these details into account.
- CFS firefighters are volunteers who leave their own properties and loved ones to protect their fellow South Australians. You can make their job easier by being well prepared: a well prepared property is safer for them to defend, and if you have taken care of your own safety, they can focus on the fire.

“No one who was not there on the day could possibly have an idea of the sheer speed, force and total unexpectedness of this fire. We live in North Shields, for heaven's sake. There is no scrub or forest nearby. The beach is only 100 metres away from most houses. At the worst, we thought we might have to fight a bit of a grass fire. Instead the fire destroyed nine homes plus several permanent sites at the Caravan Park and took the life of one lovely lady - and that was just in our small township!”

**Gail Watherson,  
Wangary Survivor**

**Remember: the lives of you and your family are more important than any building.**

**Preparing yourself, your family and your home is your responsibility. The CFS will not always be able to protect each individual property threatened by fire. People who do not have a Bushfire Survival Plan are putting themselves and their families at risk.**

# Keys to survival

There are seven keys to bushfire survival. Consider them when deciding what you would do if threatened by a bushfire.

## Understanding bushfire behaviour

It is important to understand how bushfires behave and how they are influenced by vegetation, topography and climate.

**What do you know about bushfire behaviour?**



## Recognising fire danger days

Even if your Plan is to leave early, a well prepared home is more likely to survive a bushfire.

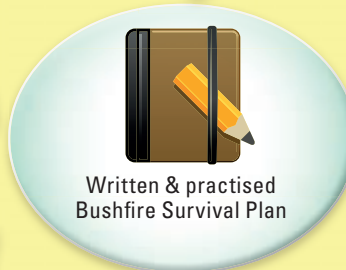
**Do you know the signs?**



## Preparing your home and property

Even if your Plan is to leave early, a well prepared home is more likely to survive a bushfire.

**How prepared is your property?**



## Creating emergency kits

Think about: what you need to help survive the day; what to take with you to safety; what you need for the 24–48 hours following a fire.

**What would you pack?**



## Considering your physical and emotional preparation

It's important to be realistic about what you can and can't do. You and your family need to understand the fear, stress and danger caused by bushfires.

**How prepared are you?**



## Acting on fire danger days

Put your preparation and plans into action on days of high fire danger.

**What will you do on a day of high fire danger?**



## Writing and practicing your Bushfire Survival Plans

Your plan is central to your survival. Have you got a Plan?



# Understand bushfire behaviour

## Every fire is different.

**Understanding how a fire behaves will help you to understand how to prepare your property.**

A more intense fire will generate more heat, be harder to control and cause more damage than a smaller or less intense fire. Fire intensity depends on three main factors: vegetation, weather and topography.

### Vegetation

Vegetation is fuel for the fire - the amount and type of vegetation will change how the fire behaves.

- Forest fires (filled with heavy undergrowth) will be very hot, but may not move quickly
- Grassland fires may not be as hot, but usually move very fast
- Coastal scrub fires burn very hot although not usually as fast as grass fires

While all these fires may burn differently, they all can - and have - claimed lives and destroyed property.

The best way to reduce the intensity of a fire is to manage vegetation: clear undergrowth, remove dead plants, and create breaks between trees and shrubs.

### Weather

Hot weather, low humidity, strong winds and low rainfall dramatically increase a bushfire's intensity and speed. Dry vegetation ignites and burns much more easily.

In South Australia, hot northerly winds pose the greatest danger. Fire direction is usually linked to wind direction – although a cool change may ease the fire intensity, it can increase the danger by moving the fire in a different direction and catching people unaware. Fires are most likely to come from a northern or western direction.

### Topography

Fires burn hotter and travel faster up slopes than on flat ground or downhill - the most dangerous home sites are on ridge-tops and steep slopes. North-facing slopes also get more direct sunlight which dries out vegetation and can result in more intense fires.

Topography can also affect road access – for example it may limit major roads to narrow streets that can make it difficult for residents to get out or fire trucks to get in.

**The biggest killer of people in bushfires is radiant heat.**

**The biggest destroyer of properties in bushfires are flying embers.**



For more info, see **fact sheet 2.1**

**Summer in Southern Australia brings conditions that are ideal for bushfires: hot, dry, windy weather and vegetation that quickly dries out.**

### FINE FUELS

You will sometimes hear the words "fuel" and "vegetation" used interchangeably because vegetation is a fire's main fuel source. However certain vegetation is more dangerous. "Fine fuels" such as grass, leaves, bark and twigs less than 6mm in diameter catch fire easily and burn quickly when dry. Fine fuels and dense undergrowth increase the risk and intensity of bushfires.

# Fire Danger Ratings

On certain days, bushfires that start will be much more dangerous.

## Fire Danger Ratings are your early warning.

The rating is forecast each day during the Fire Danger Season to predict how a fire would behave if one started - including how difficult it would be to put out and what impacts it might have on the community.

The higher the Fire Danger Rating, the more dangerous the fire conditions.

It should be used as an early indicator to trigger your plans.

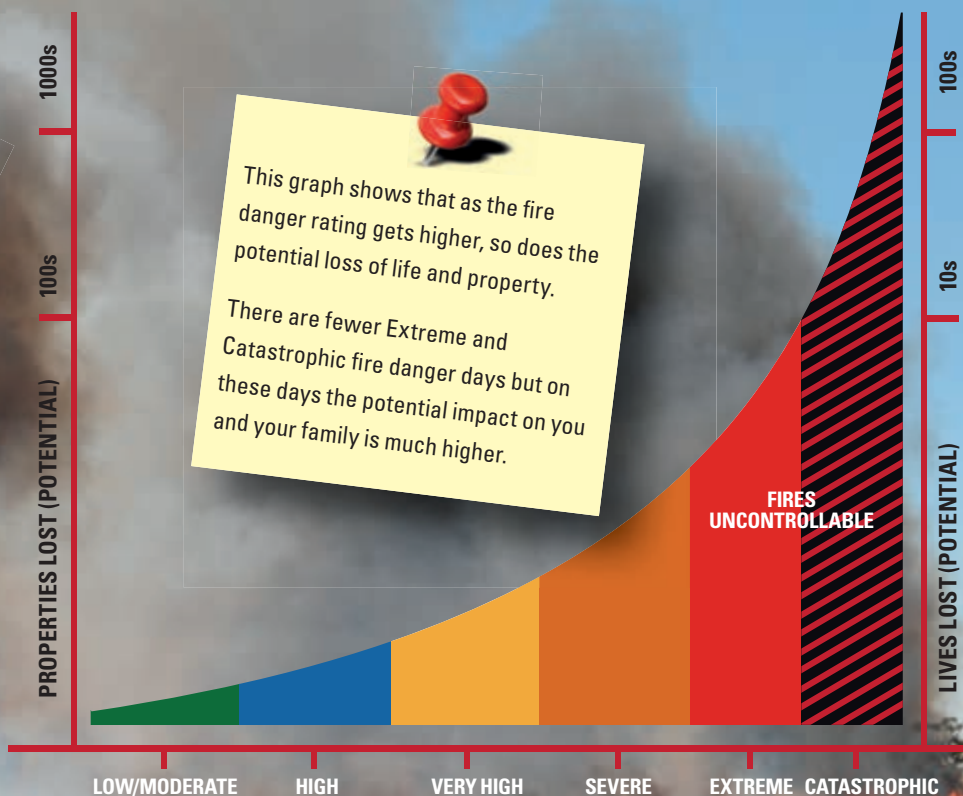
Find tomorrow's Fire Danger Rating from around 4:30pm:

- As part of nightly news weather reports
- Online:  
Bureau of Meteorology: [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)  
CFS: [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)
- On the CFS phone app
- CFS Facebook and twitter feeds
- By calling the Bushfire Information Hotline: 1300 362 361

Know your Fire Danger Rating, monitor local conditions and keep informed.

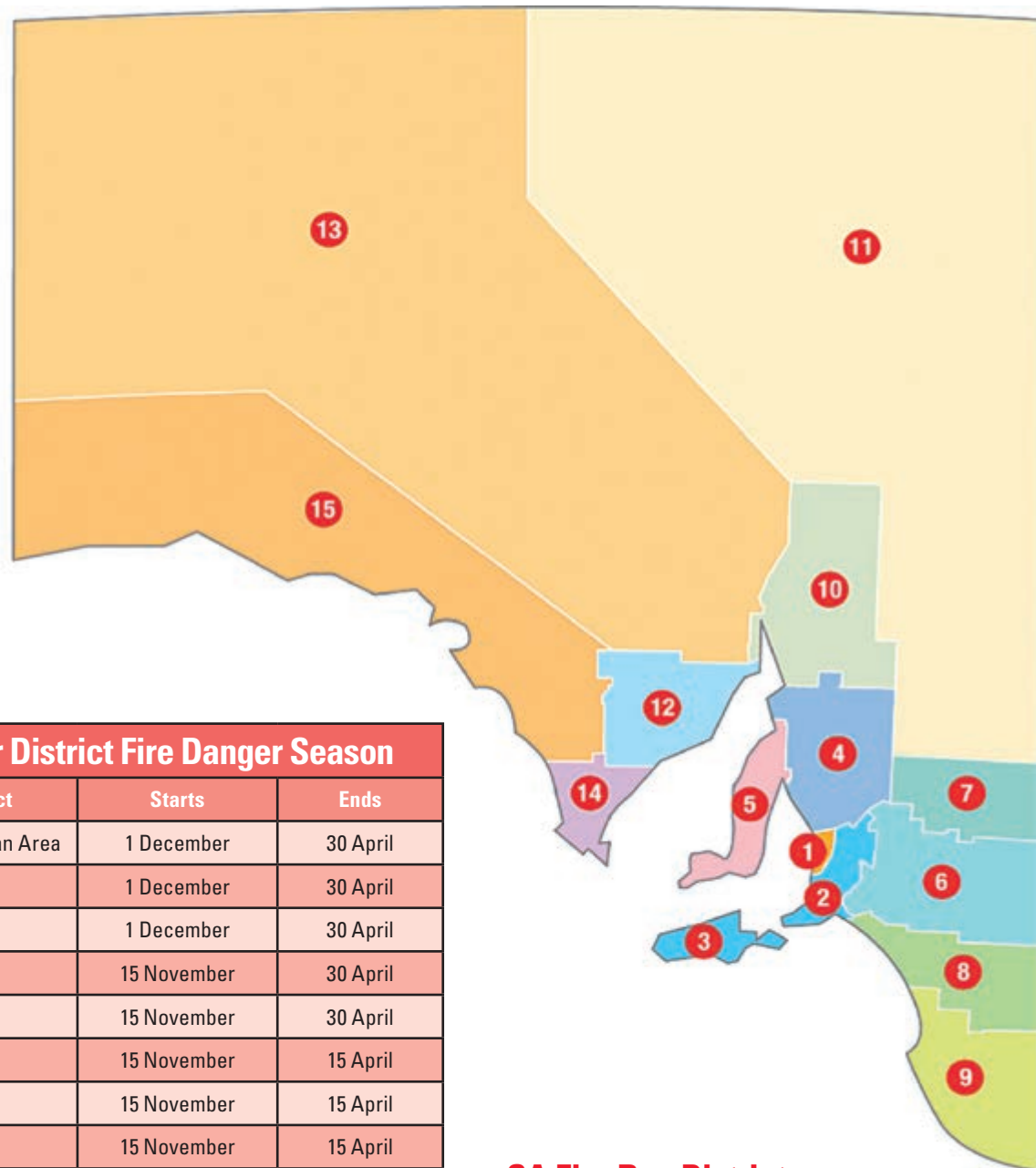
	FIRE DANGER RATING	WHAT SHOULD I DO?
<p><b>Fires can threaten suddenly and without warning</b></p> <p><b>Watch</b> for signs of fire, especially smoke and flames</p> <p><b>Know</b> the Fire Danger Rating in your area and be aware of local conditions</p> <p>Have your Bushfire Survival Plan and kit ready</p> <p>Call 000 to report a fire</p> <p>To seek information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ listen to local radio</li> <li>■ go to <a href="http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au">www.cfs.sa.gov.au</a></li> <li>■ call the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)</li> </ul>	<b>CATASTROPHIC</b> TOTAL FIRE BAN	<p><b>YOU NEED TO ACT NOW</b></p> <p>For your survival, leaving early is the only option.</p> <p>Leave bushfire prone areas the night before or early in the day – do not just wait and see what happens.</p> <p>Make a decision about when you will leave, where you will go, how you will get there and when you will return.</p> <p>Homes are not designed to withstand fires in catastrophic conditions so you should leave early.</p>
	<b>EXTREME</b> TOTAL FIRE BAN	<p><b>YOU NEED TO GET READY TO ACT</b></p> <p>Leaving early is the safest option for your survival.</p> <p>If you are not prepared to the highest level, leave early in the day.</p> <p>Only consider staying if you are prepared to the highest level – such as your home is specially designed, constructed or modified, and situated to withstand a fire, you are well prepared and can actively defend it if a fire starts.</p>
	<b>SEVERE</b> TOTAL FIRE BAN	<p><b>YOU NEED TO BE AWARE</b></p> <p>Leaving early is the safest option for your survival.</p> <p>Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety – but only stay if you are physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</p> <p>If you're not prepared, leave early in the day.</p>
	<b>VERY HIGH</b>	Review your Bushfire Survival Plan with your family.
	<b>HIGH</b>	Keep yourself informed and monitor conditions.
	<b>LOW-MODERATE</b>	Be ready to act if necessary.

The Fire Danger Rating does not predict how likely it is for a bushfire to start, but how dangerous a fire that starts could be.





# Fire Ban Districts



## Know Your District Fire Danger Season

	Fire Ban District	Starts	Ends
1	Adelaide Metropolitan Area	1 December	30 April
2	Mount Lofty Ranges	1 December	30 April
3	Kangaroo Island	1 December	30 April
4	Mid North	15 November	30 April
5	Yorke Peninsula	15 November	30 April
6	Murraylands	15 November	15 April
7	Riverland	15 November	15 April
8	Upper South East	15 November	15 April
9	Lower South East	22 November	30 April
10	Flinders	1 November	15 April
11	North East Pastoral	1 November	31 March
12	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	1 November	15 April
13	North West Pastoral	1 November	31 March
14	Lower Eyre Peninsula	1 November	15 April
15	West Coast	1 November	15 April

***These dates may change due to seasonal conditions.***

Contact the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677),  
or visit [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

## SA Fire Ban Districts

South Australia is divided into 15 Fire Ban Districts. Each district has its own fire danger season dates, so it is important to know which district you live, travel or work in. The CFS website ([www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)) and mobile phone app can help you locate your Fire Ban District.

## The Fire Danger Season

The Fire Danger Season generally runs from November to April. During the season, restrictions are placed on lighting fires to reduce the chance of bushfires starting.



# Total Fire Bans

## Total Fire Bans can be declared to prevent the outbreak or spread of fires

On certain days, it's even more important than others to reduce the chances of bushfires starting by restricting risky activities through a Total Fire Ban. On a Total Fire Ban day, fires cannot be lit in the open, apart from very few exceptions.

A Total Fire Ban day can be declared at any time of the year and for any Fire Ban District. The Ban is declared with the Fire Danger Ratings and stays in place for 24 hours.

Penalties of fines up to \$10,000 and two years' jail can be imposed if you break the law. On-the-spot fines of up to \$315 may also apply.

**More information on what you can and can't do on a Total Fire Ban day is on pages 14-15**

### National Parks

On certain fire danger days, the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) may close certain national parks or reserves in the interest of public safety. Parks and reserves may also have their own fire restrictions.

Check the DEWNR website for more information:  
[www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)

### Schools

**Some schools, preschool or day-care centres may close, or bus routes be cancelled on fire danger days.**

- Ask your school about their bushfire plan
- Find information for Government schools here: [www.crisis.sa.edu.au](http://www.crisis.sa.edu.au)
- Contact the DECD Parent Bushfire Hotline, which provides advice about government school closures and the cancellation of school bus runs. The hotline will be available until 7:00pm on the night before the closure and from 7:00am the following day. Phone: 1800 000 279
- Find out what your school would want you to do if a bushfire starts in the area while your children are at school.

You will probably want to go to your children, but travelling during a bushfire could put you and them at greater risk.



### BUSHFIRE READY BONUS

*Knowing tomorrow's Fire Danger Rating can help you organise your family if your local school's plan is to close on certain fire danger days.*





# PREPARE your home and property

A well prepared home is more likely to survive a bushfire than one that hasn't been prepared.



## A well prepared home:

- is more likely to survive, even if you're not there
- can be easier for you or firefighters to defend
- is less likely to put your neighbours' homes at risk
- will give you more protection if a fire threatens suddenly and you cannot leave and have to take shelter

## Why houses burn down

There are several ways in which a house can burn during a bushfire – radiant heat ahead of the fire front, burning debris and embers falling on the building, and direct flame contact.

Research has shown that the biggest cause is sparks and embers landing on or near your home that can trigger a fire well before and for hours after the bushfire has passed.

Sparks and embers enter a home wherever there is a gap, such as under roofing tiles, under the floor in crevices, window sills and vents and under verandahs.

## Ways to protect your home:

- ✓ **Starve the fire** by clearing vegetation and rubbish away from your home, and using non-flammable building materials
- ✓ **Create a fuel reduced area** by carefully managing trees close to your home, and reducing vegetation for 20 metres
- ✓ **Fill the gaps** where embers might enter or catch
- ✓ **Protect your assets** with adequate home and contents insurance



For more info, see **fact sheets 4.1 to 4.12**



# Actions in and around the home

Some basic measures to improve your home safety are:

## ■ Smooth surfaces

Paint or refurbish dried exterior timber, repair nooks or crannies where leaves and debris can gather. Design pathways, driveways and lawns around your home to keep a clear area immediately around your home

## ■ Roofing

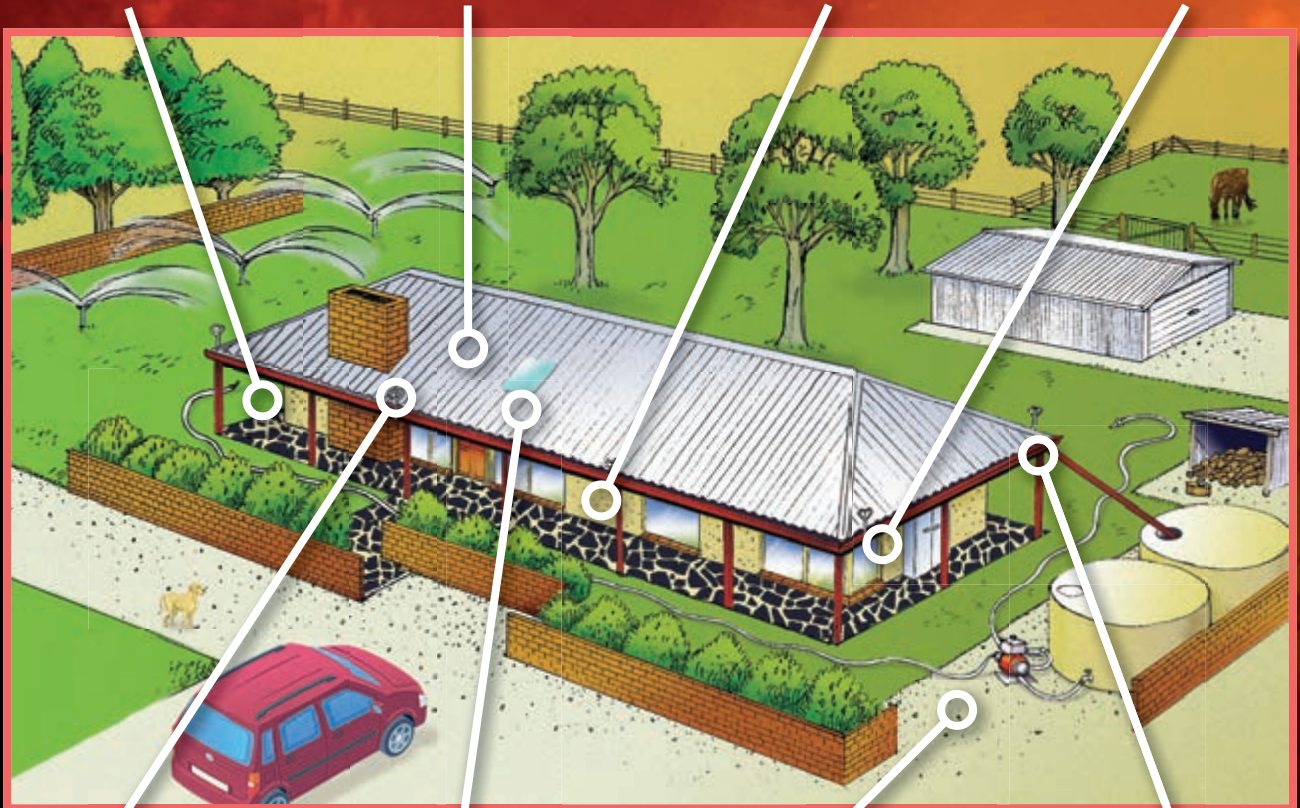
Well-secured metal roofing is preferable. A tiled roof needs to be well fitted with fire-resistant sarking (fibreglass-based aluminium foil).

## ■ Walls

Choose non-flammable wall materials such as brick, mud brick and fibre cement. Vinyl weatherboards, rough timber and other cladding can warp or catch fire. Gaps in external roof and wall cladding need to be sealed.

## ■ Windows, crevices and vents

Spark-proof your home with bronze or stainless steel flywire screens on windows and doors, or install fire resistant metal shutters. Cover all wall cavities in fine wire mesh. Enclose areas under decks and floors. Screen vents in the roof space with fine wire mesh.



## ■ Sprinkler system

A home bushfire sprinkler system that directs water over the roof, windows, doors and underfloor areas is one of the most effective ways of protecting against radiant heat, direct flame and ember attack. Seek professional advice for design and installation.

## ■ Skylights

Install wire-reinforced glass or a thermo-plastic cover on skylights as plastic can melt and glass can break in intense heat.

## ■ Property access

Gateways should be at least 3 metres wide and there should be clear access with a turnaround point for firefighting vehicles. A prominent property number will help emergency services find you.

## ■ Gutters

Regularly clean gutters and remove leaves and bark from any areas where they can become trapped.

**REMEMBER**  
even the best prepared home is not designed or constructed to withstand fires under Catastrophic fire conditions



# In the garden

**Reducing the amount of vegetation on a property is one of the most important parts of preparing for bushfires.**

## Reduce a bushfire's fuel:

- Remove dead branches, leaves and undergrowth from around your home especially under trees.
- Prune tree limbs that are lower than two metres above the ground or overhanging your home.
- Reduce, remove and manage vegetation such as long grass within 20 metres of your home and within five metres of any sheds and garages.
- Remove bark, heavy mulch, wood piles and any other flammable materials close to your home and sheds.
- Plant lower flammability vegetation, including plants and trees with low oil and high water and salt content.
- Plant trees and shrubs with space between them so they do not form a continuous canopy.

## Landscape for protection:

- Use a stone wall, earth barrier, or fence close to your home as a radiant heat shield.
- Develop a well-managed vegetable garden - it can act as an excellent fuel break.
- The use of trees and plants in landscaping the property can reduce fire risk by:
  - ~ decreasing fire intensity
  - ~ reducing wind speeds and turbulence
  - ~ catching flying embers and sparks
  - ~ shielding from radiant heat

## Get the right equipment:

- Install a sprinkler system to wet down your home and garden to reduce the impact of radiant heat, sparks and embers. (All fittings should be metal, as plastic melts).
- Have an independent water supply such as a tank, dam or swimming pool of at least 5,000 litres.

**Do not rely on mains water being available during a fire.**

- Install a generator or petrol/diesel-driven water pump.
- Make sure hoses are long enough to reach around your home.



## BUSHFIRE READY BONUS

*A Bushfire Ready property with excess vegetation removed or reduced creates a larger and more attractive entertaining space*



**Trees are not your enemy: they can trap embers, reduce wind speeds and act as radiant heat shields**





# PREPARE your property

## Season by Season

### Winter



#### Take advantage of the cooler weather to clean up your property and ember proof your home

- Clear all gutters and create as much fuel reduced area as possible around your home.
- Remove dead vegetation from around your home and prune lower limbs of trees.
- Check with your council to see if a permit is required to burn off garden waste, or dispose of the material through mulching or at a council rubbish tip. Also check the Codes of Practice on the CFS website.
- Ember-proof your home: seal gaps and areas under your home, verandahs or balconies; repair any loose tiles or gaps in your roof; cover windows, crevices and vents with fine wire mesh or flywire; repair or fill nooks and crannies where leaves or embers could gather.

### Spring



#### Get ready for the impending Fire Danger Season

- Slash or mow long grass and remove cut material (unless it can rot down before summer).
- Remove weeds.
- Cut back trees overhanging your home.
- Remove fallen branches and other debris.
- Remove leaves from gutters.
- Check and service all mechanical equipment, including grass cutters, water pumps, sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers.
- Prepare / check your emergency kit.
  - Check your fire clothes still fit.
  - Review, update and practise your Bushfire Survival Plan.

#### **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

*Clean gutters are also less likely to overflow into your roof cavity and electrical sockets during heavy rain*

### Summer



#### Maintain your preparedness through the Fire Danger Season

- Maintain fuel reduced area of up to 20 metres around your home (greater if on a slope) and 5 metres from sheds and garages.
- Clear around trees.
- Remove leaves from gutters.
- Slash stubble near sheds/buildings (following regulations for Total Fire Ban Days).
- Check reserve water supplies.
- Practise your Bushfire Survival Plan with your family.
  - Ensure you have a portable battery-powered radio and spare batteries to listen to bushfire warnings.
  - Monitor daily Fire Danger Ratings.



#### **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

*Properties with reduced vegetation are less likely to harbour snakes.*

### Autumn



#### Clean up after Summer

- Remove undergrowth and dead vegetation.
- Check with your council to see if a permit is required for a burn-off. Also check the Codes of Practice for vegetation pile burnoffs on the CFS website.
- Check for any fire hazards and remove.

# PREPARE emergency kits

Emergency kits should be prepared **before the fire season.**

## They should include:

- What you need to help survive the day of a bushfire;
- What to take with you to safety;
- What you need for up to four days following a fire.

## Kit basics checklist:

- Battery powered AM/FM radio plus spare batteries
- Waterproof torch
- Woollen blankets
- Clothing to protect you during a bushfire (see below)
- First aid kit with manual
- A can opener
- Emergency contact numbers
- Equipment you might need if you plan to stay and defend



## Before you leave with your kit, add:

- Money, key cards and credit cards
- Medications, toiletries and sanitary supplies
- Special requirements for infants, elderly, injured, or those with disabilities
- Important documents (e.g. Insurance papers, wills, passports, IDs), valuables and photos
- drinking water (three litres per person per day) and food for at least 72 hours
- A change of clothes for everyone
- Mobile phone & charger
- Blankets
- Children's toys

## For your pets

- Basket/cage/leash
- Medications, food, drinking water and bowls
- Familiar item (toy, bed, treats) to help reduce stress

**You should keep your Emergency Kit/s in waterproof storage containers in a location that is easy to get to and that the whole family knows about.**

## What to wear to protect yourself

**Despite the heat, it is important you do not wear summer clothes during a fire. To protect from radiant heat in the event of fire everyone involved should wear:**

- Natural fabrics such as cotton, denim or wool (synthetics can melt or burn).
- A long sleeved shirt to prevent burns to the upper body and arms.
- A pair of heavy cotton pants or overalls to shield your legs.

- Sturdy leather work boots and a pair of wool socks to prevent burns to the feet.
- A wide brimmed hat to stop embers from dropping on your head or down your back.
- Work gloves to protect your hands.
- A pair of goggles to safeguard your eyes against smoke, embers and debris in the air.
- A smoke mask or moist cloth to cover your nose and mouth to protect you from inhaling smoke and embers.

**You must also drink water regularly to avoid dehydration**



For more info, see **fact sheet 3.3**



# PREPARE your Bushfire Survival Plan

**If you live in a bushfire prone area you must have a Bushfire Survival Plan. Your plan will help you take action and avoid making last minute decisions that could prove deadly during a bushfire.**

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.

A written and practised plan helps reduce confusion, panic and time-wasting.

**A template to complete your plan is included in this guide.**

**PREPARE yourself and your family physically, mentally and emotionally.**

Being in a bushfire may be the most traumatic experience of your life.

A bushfire can be a terrifying situation. Strong gusty winds, intense heat and flames will make you tired quickly. Thick, heavy smoke will sting your eyes and choke your lungs. It will be difficult to see and breathe. The roaring sound of the fire approaching will deafen you. Embers will rain down, causing spot fires all around you. Power and water may be cut off. You may be isolated. It will be dark, noisy and extremely physically and mentally exhausting.

**You need to realistically consider the overwhelming physical and psychological demands of facing a bushfire.**

**If you have any doubts about your ability to cope you should plan to leave early.**

## A good Plan

- ☒ is prepared well before the Fire Danger Season
- ☒ is written down so that the details are on hand when you need them
- ☒ has been practised, so you know how it will go on the day
- ☒ is created with the whole family and covers everyone, including the young, elderly, pets and livestock
- ☒ 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

“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**  
from her book *Future in Flames*



For more info, see **fact sheet 3.1**

# Understanding fire regulations:

**Regulations have been introduced throughout South Australia to protect lives and property during the bushfire season.**

**They apply to everyone, not just those living in bushfire areas.**

**It is essential that you are familiar with the regulations and understand what you can and cannot do, whether you are at home, on holiday or visiting a national park.**

Once the Fire Danger Season has begun there are strict controls on the lighting of fires and the use of certain tools in the open. The restrictions remain in place until the end of the season (see page 6 for the dates in your district).

## Notes

\* A Schedule 9 or Schedule 10 Permit refers to a permit issued under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*.

Your council fire prevention officer or CFS office can provide further advice.

\*\* An engine or vehicle exhaust system complies if:

- (a) all engine exhaust emitted by the engine or vehicle exits through the system; and
- (b) the system, or a device or devices forming part of the system, is designed to prevent the escape of burning material from the system; and
- (c) the system, or a device or devices forming part of the system, is designed to prevent heated parts of the system from coming into contact with flammable material; and
- (d) the system is in good working order.

\*\*\*domestic premises means a building or other structure that is fixed to the ground and connected to a reticulated or stored water supply and that is occupied as a place of residence but does not include a caravan.

More questions and their answers can be found on the CFS website: [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

**If in any doubt, phone the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361.**

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**Q Can I light a fire in the open air for burning off grass, stubble, weeds, undergrowth or other vegetation?**

---

**Q Can I burn off rubbish or grass cuttings?**

---

**Q Can I light a campfire, bonfire or light a fire for warmth or comfort?**  
(See special provisions for gas or electric barbeques below)

---

**Q Can I use a gas or electric barbeque?**

---

**Q Can I drive a vehicle off road?**

---

**Q Can I have a fire in a National Park Reserve or a forest reserve?**

---

**Q Can I use fireworks?**

---

**Q Can I use a grinder or welder outside?**

---

**Q Can I use a chainsaw, grass trimmer, lawn mower or slasher?**

---

**Q Can I use a pizza oven?**

---



# Your questions answered

## FIRE DANGER SEASON

## TOTAL FIRE BAN

<b>NO</b>	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 9 permit * from your local council.	<b>NO</b>	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit * from your local council.
<b>NO</b>	<p>Unless you have received permission from your local council, and burn in a properly constructed incinerator. You must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A four metre cleared space around and above</li> <li>■ A responsible person must be in attendance at all times with water or an extinguisher</li> <li>■ All incinerator doors and openings must be closed and screens and guards in place</li> </ul> <p><b>If you want to burn on the ground you will require a Schedule 9 permit * from your local council.</b></p>	<b>NO</b>	<p>Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit * from your local council.</p> <p><b>The lighting of incinerators is banned on a Total Fire Ban day.</b></p>
Check with your local council and the Environment Protection Authority, which also have control over the lighting of fires. Some councils have totally prohibited the use of incinerators and open fires for waste disposal on domestic premises.			
<b>YES</b>	<p>But only if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In a properly constructed fireplace; <b>or</b></li> <li>■ In a portable cooking appliance; <b>or</b></li> <li>■ The fire is in a 30cm deep trench and no more than one metre square in area <b>and</b></li> <li>■ You have a four metre cleared space around and above the fire</li> <li>■ A responsible person is in attendance at all times</li> <li>■ An adequate agent to extinguish the fire is at hand</li> </ul>	<b>NO</b>	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit * from your local council.
<b>YES</b>	<p>Providing you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A four metre cleared space around and above the gas fire or electric element</li> <li>■ A responsible person is in attendance at all times</li> <li>■ An adequate agent to extinguish the fire is at hand</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>	<p>Providing it is gas or an electric element and used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Within 15 metres of domestic premises ***, <b>or</b></li> <li>■ On a coastal foreshore</li> </ul> <p>Providing you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A four metre cleared area around and above the barbeque</li> <li>■ A responsible person is in attendance at all times with water or an extinguisher at hand</li> </ul>
Some councils allow gas or electric barbeques in caravan parks or cleared picnic areas. Look for the signs or contact the council for advice.			
<b>YES</b>	You can drive a vehicle within 2 metres of flammable bush or grass provided that the engine is fitted with an exhaust system that complies with the requirements listed left. **	<b>YES</b>	You can drive a vehicle within 2 metres of flammable bush or grass provided that the engine is fitted with an exhaust system that complies with the requirements listed left. **
<b>YES</b>	Although strict regulations apply to all fires (including barbeques) in government reserves, and bans apply during declared dates. For further information contact the relevant government office.	<b>NO</b>	Fires are NOT permitted.
<b>NO</b>	Private use of fireworks is banned. Licensed pyrotechnicians can conduct firework displays providing a Schedule 9 permit * has been obtained.	<b>NO</b>	Private use of fireworks is banned. Licensed pyrotechnicians can conduct firework displays providing a Schedule 10 permit * has been obtained.
<b>YES</b>	<p>Providing you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A four metre cleared space around and above the area</li> <li>■ A responsible person is in attendance at all times the appliance is in use</li> <li>■ A portable water spray in good working order is at hand</li> </ul>	<b>NO</b>	Unless you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit * from your local council.
<b>YES</b>	<p>Provided that the engine is fitted with an exhaust system that complies with the requirements listed left ** <b>and:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ You have a four metre cleared space around the area <b>or</b></li> <li>■ The operator has a shovel or rake and a portable water spray in good working order.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>	<p>Provided that the engine is fitted with an exhaust system that complies with the requirements listed left ** <b>and:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ You have a four metre cleared space around the area <b>or</b></li> <li>■ The operator has a shovel or rake and a portable water spray in good working order.</li> </ul>
<b>YES</b>	<p>Provided it is a gas or electric - see above for barbeques.</p> <p>If wood fired, it must comply with CFS code of practice for wood fired pizza ovens or you must obtain a Schedule 9 permit* from your local council.</p>	<b>NO</b>	Unless it is gas or electric - see above for barbeques - or you have obtained a Schedule 10 permit* from your local council

# ACT to protect yourself and your property

Fires can threaten suddenly and without warning. Be prepared to enact your Bushfire Survival Plan without receiving any emergency warning.

**The CFS cannot guarantee a fire truck will be there to protect your property so you need to:**

- Know what the bushfire dangers are for your area
- On a daily basis, know the Fire Danger Rating for your area and what you need to do
- Act decisively the moment you know there is danger
- Watch for signs of fire, especially smoke and flames
- Put your Bushfire Survival Plan into action (avoid a 'wait and see' response)

*Do not drive towards a fire to see what it's like – use safer, more removed ways of getting your information.*

## ACT with information

Look and listen for information on television, radio, internet, mobile phones and by speaking with neighbours.

- CFS website [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)
- CFS email updates; RSS feeds, Facebook and Twitter
- CFS smartphone app
- Bushfire Information Hotline 1300 362 361
- National Relay Service for deaf, speech or hearing impaired persons and TTY 133 677
- ABC Local Radio (across Australia)
- Our other Emergency Broadcast Partners:  
FIVEaa Radio, Sky News Television, Commercial Radio Australia (full list available on our website)
- Don't forget your own senses: sights, sounds and smells

## Bushfire 'Watch and Act' & 'Emergency Warning' Messages

There are three types of Bushfire Messages that will alert you to a bushfire:

### Advice message

A fire has started. There is no immediate danger, or the danger has eased. This is general information to keep you up-to-date with developments.

### Watch and Act message

A fire is approaching you, conditions are changing. You need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.

### Emergency Warning message

You are in danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted by fire. This message will be preceded by an emergency warning signal (a siren sound).

## Emergency Alert telephone warning system

Emergency Alert is the national telephone warning system used by emergency services. The system sends voice messages to landline telephones and text messages to mobile telephones within a defined area, about actual or likely emergencies such as fire, flood or extreme weather events. The message will provide information on the current emergency, what action to take and where to find further information.

Emergency Alert is not used in all circumstances. In an emergency you should use a range of information sources and check them continuously to stay aware of local conditions.

Remember that power failures will prevent cordless phones from working and fires may damage telephone infrastructure in your area or prevent mobile reception. The fire may be travelling too fast to get a warning out.

For more information on Emergency Alert please visit [www.emergencyalert.gov.au](http://www.emergencyalert.gov.au)

Do not wait for a warning message before you act.



**Do not rely on one single source for emergency warning information.**



For more info, see fact sheets 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 & 2.9



# ACT on Fire Danger Days

Fires can threaten suddenly and without warning, and can travel very fast. It's important that you use triggers to warn you of the potential for danger before a bushfire even starts.

## Know your trigger:

Finding out tomorrow's Fire Danger Rating is the best trigger and should be the first step in activating your Bushfire Survival Plan, whether that be to leave early or stay and defend. You may have different plans for different Ratings.

**If your plan is to leave, it's important to know where to go.**

**HESITATION CAN BE DEADLY**  
If you wait and see 'what happens' you could be putting your life at risk. On Black Saturday in 2009, at least 26% of the people that died were going to 'wait and see' before deciding what to do.

## Where to go: Bushfire Safer Places in SA

Least Safe ↑ Safest	<b>BUSHFIRE SAFER SETTLEMENT</b>	Inner Adelaide Metropolitan suburbs	Suitable for use during forecast bad fire weather or during bushfire.
	<b>BUSHFIRE SAFER PRECINCT</b>	Designated within outer suburbs and rural settlements.	Suitable for use during forecast bad fire weather or during bushfire. May be subject to spark and ember attack and smoke.
	<b>LAST RESORT REFUGE</b>	Designated ovals and buildings in rural areas.	Not suitable for extended use and may provide only limited protection during bushfire.

CFS has developed a hierarchy of places that can offer relative safety from bushfire. It is important that you know what each of these are, where they are, and what risk you may be exposed to if you use one of these options during a bushfire.

More details and designated places can be found on the CFS website: [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au) or in the CFS mobile phone app.

## BUSHFIRE READY BONUS

*Leaving early gives you the chance to spend a nice planned day somewhere safe, rather than worrying about the possibility of panicked relocation.*

**On fire danger days, your safest option is to visit friends, family or attractions in a Bushfire Safer Settlement or Precinct.**

For more info, see **fact sheets 1.6 & 2.4**

**Remember, people will always be more important than houses.**  
**Your main priority is to ensure you and your loved ones are safe and survive.**  
**You need to know what to do if you are caught in a fire - you may be threatened by a fire without any warning**

## Preparation is the key to surviving a bushfire.

### Whatever happens:

- Make a plan and stick to it – don't wait and see.
- Monitor conditions and know the daily Fire Danger Rating.

**On Total Fire Ban days, it's recommended that you relocate if you have no plan to stay and defend, or if you are caring for vulnerable, young or elderly people.**

If it is forecast to be Catastrophic, leave as early as possible whatever your initial plan.

- Keep up-to-date through the CFS website, our mobile phone app. and local radio (see our website for a full list of our Emergency Broadcast Partners).
- The safest place is away from the fire – your life and survival is the highest priority.
- You and your family's survival and safety will depend on the decisions you make now and acting on these decisions. Put your safety first.

“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**



For more info, see **fact sheet 3.2**

## Why do people die in bushfires?

### Leaving late

Many people who die in bushfires do so because they leave just before the fire arrives and:

- are overrun by the fire in their cars or on foot,
- are trapped by fallen trees, power lines, or traffic jams,
- crash due to poor visibility.

If leaving, leave early, well before fire threatens your home and your escape route.

### Lack of planning

Fires can be very frightening and may make it hard to think clearly or make good decisions. Sometimes people find out too late they don't have essential resources for their plans. It is vital that you have a written and practised Bushfire Survival Plan.

### Radiant Heat

Radiant heat is the heat you feel radiating from a fire. In major bushfires, this heat can be so intense that it can kill people from hundreds of metres away without a flame ever touching them.

#### Protecting yourself from radiant heat

- **Distance** – the best protection is being as far away from a fire as possible
- **Shield** – solid walls or buildings can create a barrier between you and the heat
- **Clothing** – as a last resort, protective clothing can reduce the impact of radiant heat

### Heat-related illness

Heat stress and dehydration are dangers during bushfires

#### Protecting yourself from heat-related illness

- Drink lots of water
- Cool yourself by loosening clothing and encouraging airflow
- Rest (when it is safe to do so)



# SURVIVE on holiday and on the road

**Travellers and holidaymakers are also at risk during the Fire Danger Season and need to take precautions.**

**If travelling through bushland areas, make sure you take appropriate fire protection clothing and equipment and identify the local Fire Ban District. Be aware of the Fire Danger Rating for the area.**

## Bushwalking

**It is advisable not to go bushwalking on fire danger days, but if you are caught in a bushfire you should:**

- Never try to outrun the flames.
- Head for a natural fire break, e.g. streams, clearings or rock outcrops.
- Keep away from high ground in the path of the fire. Never shelter in an above ground water tank.
- Cover yourself or shelter behind a solid object such as a rock, to protect against radiant heat.

## On the road

**Cars are a dangerous place to be during a bushfire, as they offer little protection from radiant heat and driving conditions are often difficult and stressful.**

A drive that would normally take five minutes could take two hours during a bushfire. Road closures, traffic jams, collisions, smoke, fallen trees and embers are all real possibilities.

Bushfires often jump roads so find an alternative route if you are confronted by a bushfire. If you become trapped, try to find clear ground away from any dense vegetation and stay in your vehicle.

Wind up your windows, close vents and turn your engine and air-conditioning off.

Shelter on the floor of your vehicle and cover yourself with woollen blankets to protect from radiant heat.

Stay in your vehicle until the bushfire has passed.

You can prevent your car from starting fires by parking away from long grass, and by regularly clearing dried grasses from under your car when driving off-road.

## Camping and houseboats

**People on camping and houseboat holidays must ensure they are familiar with local fire restrictions.**

If camping or staying in a caravan park, ask if a safe refuge area has been designated (informally by the park, or formally by the CFS as a Bushfire Safer Place).

A brick toilet building or shower block might be an option.

Be careful using generators and make sure you are familiar with restrictions applying to fires and barbecues.

If visiting a national park, ask the rangers about the local fire and barbecue regulations as they can vary.

This also applies to houseboat users when lighting fires along riverbanks.

## Travelling outside SA?

**Local ABC radio stations across Australia broadcast emergency information, advice and updates.**

In South Australia, tune into your local ABC or one of our other Emergency Broadcast Partners: FIVEaa Radio, Sky News Television, Commercial Radio Australia (full list available on our website).

**Visit the fact sheets section of our website to find more information especially for holiday-makers and travellers.**

# Bushfire Survival Plan

Thinking “I will leave early” is not enough.  
You must **PREPARE** to **ACT** and **SURVIVE**.

The decision about whether you should leave early or stay and defend your property is up to you and others in the household and needs to be made well before a bushfire threatens your home – in fact, well before the Fire Danger Season arrives.

## What will you do?

### Only consider staying to defend if:

#### Your home can be defended

- It is constructed to meet the latest Building Code for building in bushfire prone areas.
- It is not in a location that puts it at higher than normal risk or makes it difficult to defend - such as on a steep slope or in close proximity to bushland.
- It has a fuel reduced area with at least 20 metres cleared of flammable materials and vegetation.
- You have the right equipment and resources to actively defend e.g. sufficient water supply (minimum of 5,000 litres), petrol or diesel pump, generator, appropriate clothing.
- Your property is prepared and maintained for bushfires.

#### You are able – physically and mentally – to defend it

- There will be enough people home to actively defend without the support of fire fighters.
- You are all physically fit to fight spot fires in and around your home for up to 10 hours or more. (Even physically fit people can be affected by heat, smoke, dehydration and firefighting).
- Everyone has the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively fight a fire.
- You are all mentally and emotionally able to cope with the ferocity, violence and traumatic effect of a bushfire, while remaining calm and following your plan.

### You should plan to leave early if:

- The questions on this page make you doubt your ability, the preparedness of your property, or if you are for any reason unsure.
- You are on your own: defending a house requires at least two able-bodied, fit and determined adults.
- You know you cannot defend your property. For example, you do not have the right equipment or you are sick.
- There are children, older people or people with special needs or disability in the home.
- You are not physically or mentally prepared.
- The Fire Danger Rating is Severe and your property is not well prepared.
- The Fire Danger Rating is Extreme and your property is not constructed and prepared to the highest level.
- The Fire Danger Rating is Catastrophic, regardless of any preparations you have made.

## Leaving early is always the safest option

#### Don't forget to consider:

- Could some people leave early while others stay to defend?
- Do your friends, family and neighbours know the details of your plan?
- What will you do with your pets and animals?

**REMEMBER**  
Even people who are extremely well prepared can die fighting fires at home. The safest option is always to leave early.



For more info, see **fact sheet 1.3**



# What does “leaving early” mean?

## “Leaving Early” means:

✓ moving away from high-risk areas before there are any signs of fire.

✓ leaving before your escape route is blocked by fire and smoke, or by strong winds that may bring down trees and power lines well before the fire arrives.

✓ On fire danger days, leaving early is a precaution you take just in case there is a fire – because in those conditions, any fire that starts is likely to be uncontrollable.

✗ **Leaving early does not mean** waiting for a warning or a siren. It does not mean waiting to see or smell smoke. And it definitely does not mean waiting for a knock on the door.

## When you decide to leave is the most important decision you will make

Because fires can start and spread very quickly in some conditions, many people have died trying to leave their homes at the last minute.

**Don't wait and see:** You should never wait and see what happens during a bushfire. Leaving late means you will be on the road when conditions are at their most dangerous or you may not be able to get out at all. The longer you wait to leave, the greater the risk to your life.

**The only way to guarantee your safety is to leave before a bushfire even starts – the night before or early in the day of a forecasted fire danger day.**

*It is as important to have a written and practised plan if you decide to leave as it is if you decide to stay.*



For more info, see fact sheets 1.3 to 1.5

## In planning to leave early, decide:

- When will you leave – what will be your trigger?
- Are all members of your household going to leave early?
- Where will you and your family go to ensure you are all safe? (Do we have friends, relatives or fun activities in a nearby Bushfire Safer Settlement or Precinct?)
- What route will you take to get there? How long will it take to get there?
- What will you take when you leave early? (see page 12 for some suggestions)
- What will be your trigger to return?
- Do you have a contingency plan if it is unsafe to leave?

## In planning to stay and defend, understand:

- Staying to actively defend your home involves the risk of psychological trauma, injury and death.
- There may be no power, no water and no-one to tell you what to do.
- Your property must be well prepared if you intend to stay and defend.
- The more prepared your home is, the more likely it is to survive a bushfire.
- **On days where the Fire Danger Rating is forecast to be Catastrophic, leaving early is the only way to guarantee you and your family's survival.**

## Back-up plans

**It is important to recognise that in an emergency unexpected things are likely to happen, so you will need to adapt to changing circumstances and have a plan that will work in different situations.**

- Will your plan need to be different on weekends from weekdays?
- Will you have different plans for different Fire Danger Ratings (e.g. 'stay and actively defend' up to Severe, but 'leave early' for Extreme and Catastrophic)?
- What if your children are at school?
- What if you have house guests or someone is home sick?
- What if a fire starts quickly and you don't have time or it is unsafe to leave?
- What if your plan is to stay, but conditions make it too dangerous?
- What will you do if there are many fire risk days in one week?

*Fires are unpredictable. Leave or stay, you should always have a back-up plan in case things change*

**Your plan (or plans) should have contingencies for different situations.**

# If it's a fire danger day tomorrow....

## Fire danger day predicted

**Know your risk, check and follow your plan, stay informed**



### Months and weeks before

- Know your risk (see page 1)
- Prepare your property (see pages 8-11)
- Prepare yourself and your family (see page 18)
- Prepare your kits (see page 12)
- Prepare and practise your plan (see p20-21)

### Night before or early in the morning

- Check the Fire Danger Rating
- Remind everyone of the plan and check that they understand their role
- Check your kit
- Let family or friends know what you intend to do
- Keep pets inside with sufficient drinking water and food
- Move stock to well cleared area with plenty of drinking water
- Check your pump and generators
- Water garden
- Block down pipes and fill gutters with water
- Move flammable items away from the house; shut off gas at meter or bottle

### If leaving early, pack car and leave now

### If staying to defend or unable to leave:

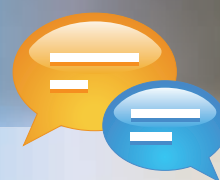
- Prepare water buckets, a torch and ladder ready to check the ceiling space
- Prepare for the possibility that no power and/or no phone lines will be available

### Daytime

- **Stay informed** (see page 16)
- Keep hydrated
- If no fire, keep monitoring

## Fire starts in the area

**Follow your bushfire survival plan, stay informed, stay alert**



### It may already be too late to leave safely

- Call neighbours
- Get into fire clothes (see page 12)
- Turn on sprinklers
- Shut doors / windows
- Put tape across the inside of windows so they remain in place if broken
- Watch out for embers
- Prepare yourself mentally for the coming fire
- Stay informed (see page 16)

### Don't:

- Stand on your roof with your hose: often more people are injured falling from roofs than suffer burn injuries
- Waste water wetting down roofs and walls at this stage. Use the water only for extinguishing burning material

This table is a good basis for your Bushfire Survival Plan. Add your personal information, tasks and triggers into the plan at the back of this book, or download template from the CFS website

**Through all stages of a fire, it is important to stay informed**



## Fire coming

**Stay calm, check for embers, extinguish spot fires**



### What to Expect

- Flying embers and sparks can light spot fires hours before the fire front arrives
- Smoke will reduce visibility
- You may be without power and water

### What to do

- Fight spot fires
- Wet vegetation near your house with a hose or sprinkler (now that the fire is closer)
- Shut all windows and doors and place wet blankets and towels around windows and door edges to keep out smoke and embers
- Prepare inside your house (e.g. remove curtains, move furniture away from windows)
- Stay close to the house, drink water and check welfare of others
- Patrol the inside of the home as well as the outside for embers or small fires
- Stay informed (see page 16)

### Don't:

- Try to outrun the fire in a car. It is likely too late to leave and a car offers little shelter from in a bushfire

## Fire arrives

**Seek shelter and actively defend from inside**



### What to Expect

- It will be dark, and very loud
- There will be smoke, embers and flames
- Radiant heat is the biggest killer

### What to do

- Take all firefighting equipment inside such as hoses and pumps as they may melt during the fire
- Move inside the house until the fire front passes. If possible shelter in a room that it is on the opposite side of the house to the approaching fire and has two exits
- Patrol the inside of the home - including checking the ceiling space - for embers or small fires
- Continue to drink water

### Don't:

- Shelter in a dam, swimming pool, or tank - radiant heat and smoke can still damage your face, head and lungs
- Shelter in a room without two exits - you may need to leave the burning building once the fire front passes

**A single fire front normally passes within 5 to 15 minutes, after which it may be safe to return outside.**

## After fire has passed

**Actively defend your property, return home when safe, look after yourself and loved ones**



### What to Expect

- Embers and spot fires are still a threat for many hours - even days - after a fire front has passed

### What to do

- Remember to put on any protective clothing you removed while inside
- Go outside and extinguish small spot fires and burning embers
- Hose down the house, paying special attention to the roof space, window frames and under-floor areas
- Patrol the property inside and out, including the ceiling space and extinguish any fires. Sparks and embers will continue to fall and smoulder, so keep checking for several hours
- Let everyone know that you are okay
- Monitor the radio for updates
- Stay with your home until you are sure the surrounding area is clear of fire
- If you have left, make sure it is safe to return before coming home

**There is more information on surviving after the fire – returning home, treating injuries and your emotional health – over the page**

**Page 16 has a list of ways to get information, including warning messages and what they mean.**

# Survive: after the fire

**Survival isn't just about what happens during the fire, it's also about how well you recover in the days, weeks and years after the fire.**

## Returning Home



Look and listen for information on television, radio, the internet and other information sources to find out when an all clear advice has been issued and if it is safe to return home.

**Be careful travelling home:** watch out for downed power lines; fallen trees; low branches and burning debris; wandering animals; damaged infrastructure including walls, bridges, roads and footpaths; emergency services, who may still be working in the area.

A fire can be very destructive and selective, leaving one home untouched and destroying the next. If your home has been badly fire damaged and you need a place to stay, seek help from welfare agencies.

**You need to be mentally and emotionally prepared when returning to your property.** If you live alone, you may want to bring someone with you when you first return. It is best that you prepare mentally, have support and offer support to others during this time.

**Access to your home should be limited to adults initially for safety reasons.** When you arrive home you should be very cautious and aware of the following potential hazards: live electricity; leaking gas (odour or hissing); septic or sewage leaking; hot embers; trees and over hanging branches; major structural damage. Wear protective clothing.



## BUSHFIRE READY BONUS

**Research shows that those who have prepared for a bushfire recover better than those who were not prepared.**

## Treating burns and injuries:

- Follow DRSABCD (Danger, Response, Send for help, Airway, Breathing, CPR and Defibrillation).
- Remove the patient from danger — do not become a casualty yourself.
- If a person's clothes catch on fire, stop the person moving or running around, as this will fan the flames. Remember: STOP-COVER-DROP-ROLL to extinguish the flames
- Hold the burnt area under cool running water until the injury has returned to normal body temperature (up to 20 minutes)
- Only remove jewellery and clothing if it is not stuck to the burnt area
- Cover the burn with a non-adherent burns dressing, plastic wrap (e.g. Cling wrap) or sterile non-stick dressing, but not over a head / face burn
- If the casualty is conscious and thirsty, give frequent small sips of water
- Alleviate extreme pain by gently pouring cool water over the dressing
- Calm patient
- Seek medical aid urgently

**This information is not a substitute for first aid training. Whether you plan to leave early or stay to actively defend, first aid training can help you survive a bushfire.**

## Do not:

- Apply any lotions, ointments or oily dressings
- Prick or break blisters
- Give alcohol to drink
- Overcool the patient, particularly if very young, or if the burnt area is extensive
- Use towels, cottonwool, blankets or adhesive dressings directly on the wound
- Remove clothing stuck to burnt area

*With thanks to RAH Burns Unit and St John Ambulance Australia SA Inc*

## How to look after your emotional health

Being in a bushfire may be the most traumatic experience of your life. It is as important to look after your emotional recovery as it is to treat physical injuries.

- Make sure you and your family are safe
- Follow your normal routine if you can
- Get information about how people feel after an emergency and how long it takes to feel better
- Spend time with people you care about
- Talk about what has happened to you
- Talk to your family - especially your children - about how they feel
- Take time to rest and do things you enjoy
- If you are not feeling better, seek help from a mental health professional, doctor, or recovery worker



## 1. Planning to Survive a Bushfire

*Your guide to bushfire safety (this booklet)*

- 1.1 Prepare. Act. Survive.
- 1.2 7 keys to survival
- 1.3 Plan now to stay and defend or leave early
- 1.4 Planning to leave early
- 1.5 Planning to stay and defend
- 1.6 Bushfire Safer Places (where to relocate on days of severe, extreme and catastrophic fire weather)
- 1.7 On the day of a bushfire
- 1.8 What to do in the event of a bushfire

## 2. Understanding Bushfires and Warnings

- 2.1 Bushfire behaviour in detail
- 2.2 SA Fire Ban Districts and Fire Danger Season
- 2.3 Fire danger rating
- 2.4 Fire danger days
- 2.5 Bushfire Warning messages
- 2.6 Emergency broadcast partners (where to listen for warning and alert messages)
- 2.7 Ways to stay informed
- 2.8 Aerial firefighting
- 2.9 Emergency Alert Fact Sheets / FAQs

## 3. Preparing Yourself

- 3.1 Preparing yourself for bushfire
- 3.2 How people die or survive in bushfires
- 3.3 Bushfire survival kits
- 3.4 After the fire

## 4. Preparing your Property

- 4.1 Preparing your property
- 4.2 How houses burn
- 4.3 Identifying hazards around your home
- 4.4 House siting and design
- 4.5 Landscaping to minimise the impact of bushfire
- 4.6 Fuel breaks
- 4.7 Creating asset protection zones (KI)
- 4.8 Firefighting equipment
- 4.9 Sprinkler systems
- 4.10 Bushfire shelters and bunkers
- 4.11 House fires
- 4.12 Bushfire information for renters
- 4.13 Natural Gas and Bushfires
- 4.14 Burning Off
- 4.15 Chaff Pile/Stubble Dump Burning

## 5. Pets, Horses and Livestock

- 5.1 Care of pets and livestock
- 5.2 Horses and bushfires
- 5.3 Protection of fodder reserves

## 6. Machinery, Storage, Permits and Restrictions

- 6.1 Use of machinery
- 6.2 Maintenance of machinery
- 6.3 Storage of flammables
- 6.4 LP gas safety
- 6.5 Permits
- 6.6 Restrictions
- 6.7 Building and using pizza ovens

## 7. Preparing Your Business

- 7.1 Bushfire safety: for organisations and business (fact sheet)  
Bushfire Safety for Business and Organisations (full guide and templates)

## 8. Preparing with Others

*Brochure: Community Fire Safe*

*Booklet: Making a Bushfire Survival Plan? Involve your Kids!*

- 8.1 Fire safety strategies for community groups
- 8.2 Telephone trees
- 8.3 Carer's information

## 9. Surviving While Travelling and on Holidays

- 9.1 Campfires and barbecues

*Brochure: Holiday & Travellers*



### **BUSHFIRE READY BONUS**

*Our brochures are also available in other languages, audio books, large print and Easy English.*

# Bushfire Survival Plan Checklist

This plan was last updated on:

## Pre-season checklists

**Before the bushfire season, it is important to prepare your property and your family.**

☐ Know your risk ☐ Prepare your property ☐ Prepare your kits ☐ Prepare and practise your plan



You can download a more detailed version of this plan in an editable format from [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

## Important phone numbers

Fire, Police, Ambulance: 000 (TTY 106)	Insurance Company: Policy number:	Local Council:
Doctor:		Family / Friends:
School:	Water Supplier:	Family / Friends:
Vet:	Electricity Supplier:	Family / Friends:
Bank:	Gas Supplier:	Family / Friends:

## Bushfire Information Hotline 1300 362 361 TTY 133 677

The frequency of our local ABC and /or other radio station broadcasting emergency warnings and information:

Other ways we will stay informed:

Our nearest Safer Settlement or Precinct:

Our nearest Last Resort Refuge (if all plans fail):

## Leave early – who is going to leave early? Who is going to leave early? (list names and complete the leave early plan)

Name	Phone Number
Name	Phone Number
Name	Phone Number
Name	Phone Number

## Stay and defend — Who will stay and defend? (list names and complete the stay and defend plan)

Anyone who is going to stay and defend must be involved in completing the plan, so that they know what to do

Name	Phone Number
Name	Phone Number
Name	Phone Number
Name	Phone Number

**Remember to include your entire household in your plan, including pets, animals and anyone else who might be relying on you for their safety**



# Leaving Early Plan

## It is recommended that you leave early if:

- There is a **Catastrophic** Fire Danger Rating.
- There is an **Extreme** Fire Danger Rating and your home has not been specially designed and constructed.

## It is a Total Fire Ban and:

- Your **property** has not been well maintained, you don't have the right **equipment** or you don't have a **practised plan** to stay and defend
- The **people** who will be at home are not able to help actively defend the property – e.g. they are not emotionally prepared and physically fit or are young, elderly or have a disability.

## We will follow this plan when:

The declared Fire Danger Rating is ☐ Very High ☐ Severe (Total Fire Ban) ☐ Extreme (Total Fire Ban) ☐ Catastrophic (Total Fire Ban)

Other triggers (e.g. family members being home alone, loss of water or power and the ability to leave your home safely) \_\_\_\_\_

## When to go

(This is the most important part of your plan. Plan to leave early enough to avoid being caught in smoke, the fire or on congested roads. E.g. the night before or morning of a fire danger day, a fire in the area, the smell of smoke)

## Where we will go and how we will get there:

(Choose places in Bushfire Safer Settlements or Precincts. Consider friends, relatives or activities in low fire danger areas. Plan several routes in case the road is blocked)

## We will take:

(Prepare your emergency kit as well as anything else you might need such as kids' favourite toy, medications, pet needs)

## We will tell: (Before and after)

## We will come back when:

(e.g. when the area is declared safe, when a lower Fire Danger Rating is released)

## Back-up plan if we don't get out before a fire:

(is there somewhere else you can go to shelter? Do you have a back-up "Stay and Defend" plan?)

# Stay & Defend Plan

Anyone who is not going to leave early must be involved in completing this stay-and-defend plan to ensure they know what to do. Every plan will be different depending on your circumstances. Use the headings below to list tasks to do.

## It is recommended that you **do not** stay and defend if:

- There is a **Catastrophic** Fire Danger Rating.
- There is an **Extreme** Fire Danger Rating and your home has not been specially designed and constructed.

It is a **Total Fire Ban** and:

- Your **property** has not been well maintained, you don't have the right **equipment** or you don't have a **practised plan** to stay and defend

The people who will be at home are not able to help actively defend the property – e.g. they are not emotionally prepared and physically fit or are young, elderly or have a disability

## Other triggers that mean we will not stay and defend are:

(e.g. family members home alone, house guests, power failure, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

## We will follow this plan when:

The declared Fire Danger Rating is ☐ Very High ☐ Severe (Total Fire Ban) ☐ Extreme (Total Fire Ban)

## Other triggers (e.g. a fire in the area, the smell of smoke)

## The night before or early the morning of a fire danger day, we will

(Fires can start suddenly and without warning. When bad fire conditions are forecast, what things will you do to prepare before a fire even starts in the area?)

## Before the fire approaches, we will:

(those leaving early should have already left the property, list the things you need to do in preparation)

## As the fire front passes, we will:

(when will you move inside to shelter? Stay safe by monitoring the fire from inside your home, check for embers, etc.)

## After the fire has passed, we will:

(patrol your property to extinguish burning embers. You may need to do this for several hours.)

## Our Back-up plan:

(what will you do if you can't follow your plan? Leaving late is deadly. Make sure you identify a safer location and safe route/s)



# Activating your Bushfire Survival Plan

Once the plan is completed, it is important that you practise and review the plan regularly. This will mean that if you need to activate the plan in a real bushfire, you will have already gone through the thought processes and be able to respond appropriately.

Follow these steps:

## Know the Fire Danger Rating

Find out and use the Fire Danger Rating for the day to guide which plan to follow.

## Follow your Bushfire Survival Plan

- Follow the plan that is relevant to the Fire Danger Rating.
- Someone must take charge and lead the family through the process by communicating clearly what needs to be done.
- Make sure you know who is doing what and when.

## Prepare Yourself

Retrieve your emergency kit and put on protective clothing.

### Prepare to Leave Early

Pack your relocation kit into the car and relocate to a Bushfire Safer Place. Make sure you have plenty of time to leave and do not return until it is safe to do so.

or

### Prepare to Stay and Defend

Ensure you have the necessary equipment ready and are mentally prepared to actively defend for an extended period of time

## Keep informed

Monitor Bushfire 'Watch & Act' and 'Emergency Warning' messages:

- CFS website [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)
- CFS mobile phone app for iPhone or Android.
- CFS Twitter and Facebook
- Through your local ABC Radio
- Through another emergency broadcast radio station (full list on the CFS website)
- Bushfire Information Hotline: **1300 362 361** (TTY 133 677).

**Bushfires are unpredictable and you need to be prepared for the unexpected.**

**Do not rely solely on one source for information about bushfire incidents.**

## Adelaide office

Level 7, 60 Waymouth Street  
(GPO Box 2468)  
Adelaide SA 5000  
Telephone: (08) 8463 4200

## Region 1

### Mount Lofty Ranges / Kangaroo Island

75 Gawler Street  
Mount Barker SA 5251  
Telephone: (08) 8391 1866

## Region 4

### Mid North & Pastoral

3 Main Street (PO Box 2080)  
Port Augusta SA 5700  
Telephone: (08) 8642 2399

## Region 2

### Mount Lofty Ranges / Yorke Peninsula / Lower North

8 Redbanks Road (PO Box 1506)  
Willaston SA 5118  
Telephone: (08) 8522 6088

## Region 5

### South East

46 Smith Street (PO Box 8)  
Naracoorte SA 5271  
Telephone: (08) 8762 2311

## Region 3

### Murraylands & Riverland

10 Second Street (GPO Box 1371)  
Murray Bridge SA 5265  
Telephone: (08) 8532 6800

## Region 6

### Eyre Peninsula & West Coast

32 Matthew Place  
Port Lincoln SA 5606  
Telephone: (08) 8682 4266

Hearing or speech impaired? Contact us via the National Relay Service (NRS) -  
by calling TTY 133 677 or through other contact options available at [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

Contact the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)  
Speak and Listen NRS users phone 1300 555 727  
or visit [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)



Bushfire Information Hotline 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)



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CFS fire app



[www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)



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PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

