



Is your farm bushfire ready?



Farm Safety

Bushfires and grass fires are a serious threat to farmers. A fire can wipe out years of hard work in a moment.

While it is impossible to eliminate the risk of fire, farmers can introduce measures to reduce the threat.

A Bushfire Survival Plan should be an integral part of an overall business management plan, and should include regular fuel reduction and adherence to good farming practices.

Fact sheets containing further information on farm protection are available from your local council and the South Australian CFS website cfs.sa.gov.au

BE BUSHFIRE READY.

Prepare and plan straight away. Look and listen every day.



**WHY RISK IT?
ACT NOW.**

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Reduce your bushfire risk by preparing your property and equipment

Fuel reduction

Reduce the fuel and the threat is reduced - this simple rule should be central to all fire safety plans.

All assets, including buildings, stock, crops, fences, hay stacks and fodder reserves, need wide areas free of dry grass, undergrowth and fallen branches, to protect them from the impact of fire.

Fuel breaks should be a minimum of four metres wide, although up to 20 metres is recommended for homesteads, haystacks and fuel storage areas.

Grazing, ploughing, harrowing, slashing and mowing are all effective methods of clearing the land. Maintaining the breaks should be an ongoing commitment, particularly as summer approaches.

If concerned about the bushfire risk from native vegetation close to your home, you should obtain a copy of the "Guide to Management of Native Vegetation to Reduce the Impact of Bushfire" to work out what you do to manage the risk. The Guide and application forms for obtaining clearance approval are available from cfs.sa.gov.au

Burning off

Farmers need to manage burning off with care as the practice can present a major fire risk.

You must obtain a council permit from your Local Council for burning off during the Fire Danger Season. When burning off farmers should:

- Have a four metre wide fuel break
- Give adequate notice to neighbours (stipulated on the permit)
- Have adequate personnel, water and firefighting equipment
- Light the fire on the leeward side and use a strip-burning pattern to control the fire.
- Adhere to all other conditions listed on the permit

Farm machinery maintenance

Sparks from machinery such as mowers, slashers, welders and metal cutting tools can cause bushfires during the Fire Danger Season. Many of these fires are caused by inappropriate use or faults with machinery.





During the Fire Danger Season when operating machinery and equipment always have an extinguisher, water, rake or shovel on hand and make regular checks for fire.

Farmers are reminded that causing a bushfire could lead to prosecution with severe penalties if the fire was caused by inappropriate use or faulty machinery and equipment. The following tips can help reduce the risk significantly:

Firefighting equipment

Investing in firefighting and safety equipment and keeping it well maintained should be a priority for farmers.

Recommended equipment includes:

- A mobile firefighting water supply with its own pump, hoses and water tank such as a farm fire unit.
- Personal protective clothing comprising of cotton or natural fibre long sleeve work shirt and trousers.
- Safety equipment including sturdy leather work boots, helmet, gloves, eye protection and dust mask (P2).
- A UHF CB radio.

CHECK WEATHER REPORTS.

Check radio, the CFS website, social media and news updates to stay informed this bushfire season.

**WHY RISK IT?
STAY INFORMED.**

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The Private Farm Fire Unit Handbook (cfs.sa.gov.au) provides further information regarding farm fire units and the wearing of personal protective clothing and safety equipment when firefighting.

Grain Harvesting Code of Practise

The CFS has developed a voluntary Code of Practise to provide solutions to reduce the fire risk when grain harvesting in the Fire Danger Season. The Code of Practise stipulates parameters to suspend harvesting when the actual local weather conditions start to deteriorate. When the Grass Fire Danger Indicators (GFDI) exceed 35 if a fire broke out it could be too difficult to control.

To reduce the risk of fires, prior to and during harvesting operations, farmers should be:

- Monitoring the actual local weather conditions and check media for Total Fire Ban information,
- Minimising the crop residue build up on machines,
- Paying attention to areas of heat build-up including engines, exhausts, brakes, wearing parts and bearings to reduce the risk of fire,
- Have access to UHF CB radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services in case of fire,
- Have a mobile water supply available such as a farm fire unit for firefighting,
- Have fuel breaks around the crops.

This Code of Practise should be applied to any broadacre harvesting of flammable crop.

Activities outside of the fire danger season

The number of fires which get out of control outside of the gazetted Fire Danger Season in South Australia is of concern to the CFS and the rural community.

In an attempt to reduce the fire risk the CFS provides guidelines to landholders that define simple measures and actions that should be considered whenever these activities are being undertaken. The activities of concern relate to the use of metal cutting tools and welders and broad acre stubble burning.

Check the CFS website (cfs.sa.gov.au) for more information.

Article kindly provided by SA Country Fire Service.

