



# Bush Fire Survival Plan

## WHAT WILL YOU DO TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE?

**The more prepared you are for a bush fire, the better your chances of survival**

- ☐ The middle of a bush fire is no time to start thinking about what you should do. Having a Bush Fire Survival Plan will help you avoid making last minute decisions that could be deadly.
- ☐ Your Bush Fire Survival Plan outlines what you need to do to prepare yourself, your family, your pets and what actions each member of your family will need to do to be safe.
- ☐ Everyone's Bush Fire Survival Plan will be different - the important thing is that it works for you and your family.
- ☐ A good plan will consider the different situations you may be faced with and what you will do if things go wrong. In a bush fire, the situation can change quickly and your plan should cover this.
- ☐ Make sure everyone in your family knows and understands your Bush Fire Survival Plan. Practice it regularly and keep it where you can find it.
- ☐ Download your Bush Fire Survival Plan today at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) and for more information please call 1800 NSW RFS.

*There are many benefits to completing a Bush Fire Survival Plan. Completing a Bush Fire Survival Plan will help you to...*

- ☐ Make an informed decision on whether you will leave early or stay and defend your property.
- ☐ Understand your level of risk. Knowing your level of risk means you will be able to make the safest decision for you and your family.
- ☐ Prepare your property. A well prepared property is more likely to survive a bush fire even if you leave early.
- ☐ Prepare a back up plan. Sometimes, no matter how well prepared you are, things don't go to plan. That's why, whether you plan to leave early or stay and defend, you need a back up plan.
- ☐ Check that you have adequate insurance to cover your property from damage from a bush fire.
- ☐ Act quickly. Some fires start and spread so quickly that there is no time for any waiting at all.
- ☐ Have a trigger to put your Bush Fire Survival Plan into action with little warning. Hesitating or adopting a 'wait and see' approach could have deadly consequences for you and your family.
- ☐ Ensure that you have thought about care options for your animals.
- ☐ **PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE.**

**YOUR BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN**  
*will help provide protection for you, your family and your pets.*





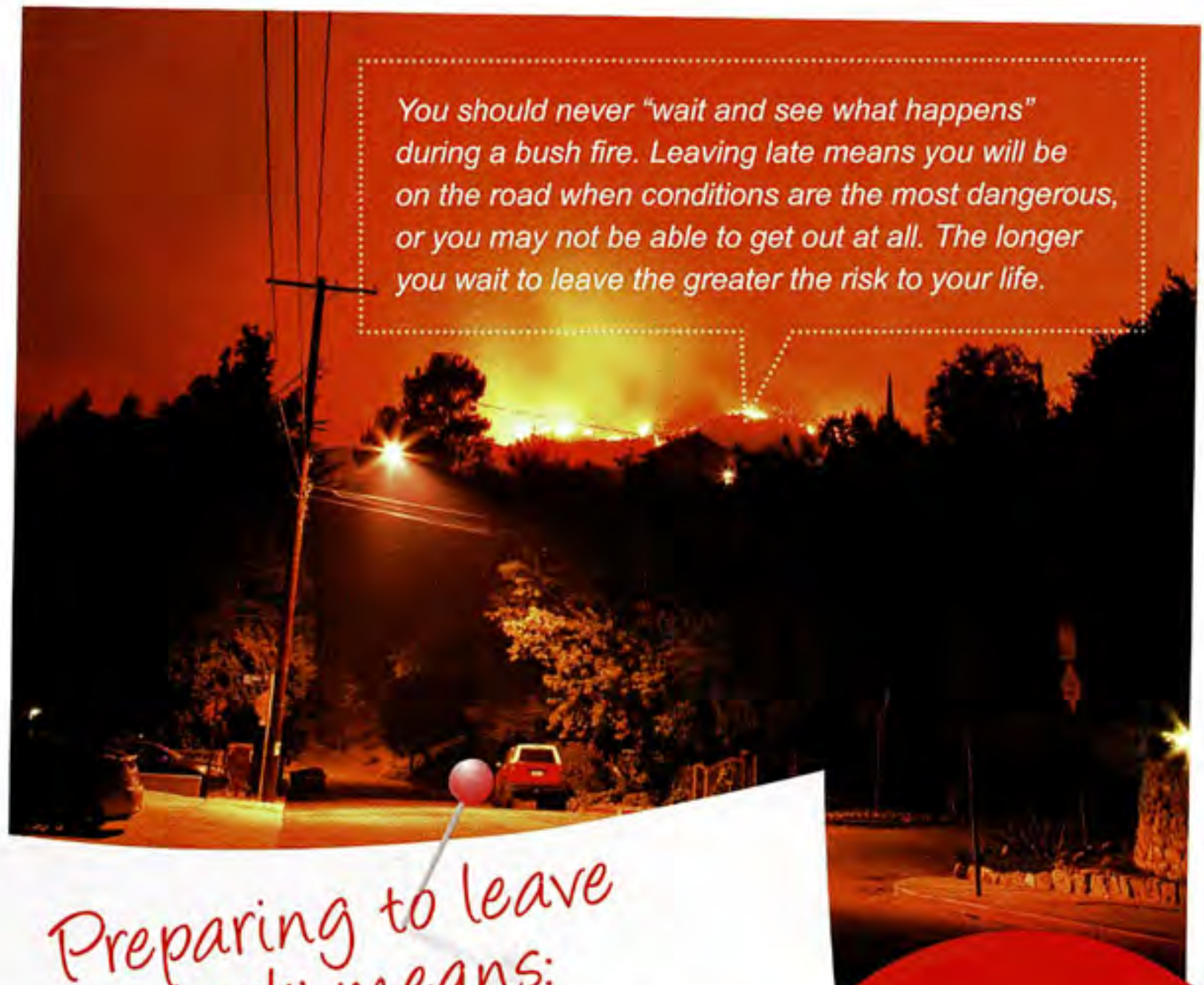


# Leaving Early

## LEAVE EARLY AND SURVIVE A BUSH FIRE

**The safest option in a bush fire is always to leave early, well before the fire threatens. You should leave if:**

- ☐ **The Fire Danger Rating is Catastrophic.** On these days fires will be so intense it is not safe to defend any home - no matter how well prepared. Extreme and Severe days are also very dangerous and leaving early will always be the safest option.
- ☐ **You have not prepared** yourself or your property to give you and your home the best level of protection from a fire.
- ☐ **There are children, elderly, or disabled people in your home.** People who are vulnerable due to age, health or any other reason should always leave early.
- ☐ **Your house is not defensible.** Some houses, because of their location, construction, or surrounding vegetation are not safe to defend. The NSW RFS Bush Fire Household Assessment Tool ([www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)) can help you assess your home's level of risk and make an informed decision. On some days no properties will be defensible.



*You should never "wait and see what happens" during a bush fire. Leaving late means you will be on the road when conditions are the 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.*

### Preparing to leave early means:

- ☐ Completing a Bush Fire Survival Plan, available at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)
- ☐ Planning where you will go, how to get there, and what you will take
- ☐ Knowing the daily Fire Danger Rating in your area and what it means
- ☐ Having transport organised for all members of the family, including pets
- ☐ Actively seeking information on the fire situation and weather conditions from TV, local radio and the internet so you know when to leave
- ☐ Having a back-up plan in case you aren't able to leave early enough. What other safer places are there you could get to?
- ☐ Talking to family, friends, and neighbours about your plan to leave early

**DID YOU KNOW**  
Being well away from a bush fire is the **ONLY** way to ensure your safety.







## Staying and Defending

IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED, STAYING AND DEFENDING CAN BE DANGEROUS

THERE ARE SOME SITUATIONS WHEN THE NSW RFS RECOMMENDS YOU SHOULD NOT STAY AND DEFEND:

- ☐ If it is a Catastrophic fire danger rating day
- ☐ If it is an Extreme fire danger day and your home has not been specially designed, constructed or modified to withstand a fire
- ☐ If your property is not well prepared and defensible
- ☐ If you are not feeling emotionally prepared and physically fit.

**By choosing to Stay and Defend you and your family may be at risk of serious injury or death.**



Not all homes are defensible, and not all people are able to cope with the ordeal of staying to defend their home. It is important that you consider your individual and family circumstances when making decisions about what you and your family should do.

**LEAVING EARLY**  
Is your safest option

### Stay and Defend checklist:

- ☐ Do you have a Bush Fire Survival Plan?
- ☐ Do you know what your triggers are to put your plan into action?
- ☐ Is your property well prepared and maintained?
- ☐ Are you physically and emotionally prepared to defend your property?
- ☐ Do you know what to do before, during and after a bush fire?
- ☐ Do you have well maintained fire fighting equipment and does everyone planning to stay and defend know how to use it?
- ☐ Do you know what you will do if your power goes out?
- ☐ Do you have access to water for fire fighting like a dam, tank or pool? (remember town water supplies can fail during emergencies)
- ☐ Do you have appropriate personal protective clothing?
- ☐ Do you have an Emergency Survival Kit?
- ☐ Do you have a Back-Up Plan?
- ☐ What will you do if there isn't a fire truck?

**If there is any doubt in your mind, you should Leave Early**







## Defending your Property

BEFORE FIRE IMPACTS YOU NEED TO BE ACTIVELY DEFENDING YOUR PROPERTY

### 1

*Before the fire arrives at your home... you need to be actively defending your property*

- ☐ Put on your protective clothing
- ☐ Turn on the radio to keep yourself informed
- ☐ Bring pets inside and keep them in one room
- ☐ Close all windows and doors
- ☐ Block spaces beneath doors and windows with wet towels
- ☐ Fill buckets, sinks and bath tubs with water ready to put out spot fires
- ☐ Have your firefighting equipment like pumps and hoses connected to your water supply
- ☐ Block downpipes and fill gutters with water
- ☐ Remove items which can burn from around your home like outdoor furniture
- ☐ Bring ladders inside to check roof space for embers
- ☐ Patrol the outside of your home putting out any embers or spot fires
- ☐ Just before the fire arrives, wet down timber decks and gardens close to the house
- ☐ Move any firefighting equipment to a place it will not get burnt

### 2

*When the fire arrives... it's going to be hot, loud and dark*

- ☐ Go inside but stay alert
- ☐ Shelter in a room on the opposite side of the house from the approaching fire and one that has a clear exit out of the house
- ☐ Patrol inside the house, including the roof space looking for sparks and embers
- ☐ Protect yourself from the heat from the fire
- ☐ If your life is at risk, call triple zero (000)

Stay up to date by listening to local radio, checking the NSW RFS website at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) or by calling the Bush Fire Information Line.

### 3

*Once the fire has passed... you will need to patrol your property for hours*

- ☐ Check your roof spaces
- ☐ Go outside and put out any part of your house which is alight
- ☐ Check under the house and any decks
- ☐ Check on your pets and animals
- ☐ Embers or sparks can start spot fires for many hours after the fire has passed
- ☐ If you can, contact your family and friends and check on your neighbours



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE. | BUSH FIRE INFORMATION LINE | 1800 679 737







# Bush Fire Alerts

## KEEP INFORMED, STAY SAFE

Where there is a risk from bush fire, Bush Fire Alerts provide information to affected communities using **radio**, **television**, the **internet** or **telephones**. There are three Bush Fire Alert levels to help you make the right choices for your safety.

### ADVICE

A fire has started.  
There is no immediate danger.  
Stay up to date in case the situation changes.

### WATCH AND ACT

There is a heightened level of threat.  
Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.

### EMERGENCY WARNING

An Emergency Warning is the highest level of Bush Fire Alert.  
You may be in danger and need to take action immediately.  
Any delay now puts your life at risk.

#### Where can you get information during a bush fire?

- ☐ Bush Fire Information Line  
1800 NSW RFS
- ☐ NSW Rural Fire Service  
website [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)
- ☐ Local Radio, TV, Newspapers.

*Remember a fire can threaten suddenly and you may not receive an alert message. Don't rely on a single source for emergency information, and be ready to act.*

An **EMERGENCY WARNING** is the highest level of Bush Fire Alert.

You may hear a siren sound to get your attention, either on your local radio station, TV or you may get a message by telephone. The message will have information about the severity of the fire, how far away it is and what you should do. Bush fire alerts are not always given in the above order. For example your first message may be either a 'Watch and Act' or 'Emergency Warning'. Some fires start and spread so quickly that there is no time for any warning at all. You should be prepared to put your Bush Fire Survival Plan into action with little or no warning.







# Fire Safety for Your Pets

## WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR PETS IN THE EVENT OF A BUSHFIRE?

**What ever you decide to do, you should have your property prepared and a current Bush Fire Survival Plan:**

- ☐ Do not tie animals up during a major emergency, it could be fatal for them.
- ☐ In bush fires, move animals to a well grazed or ploughed area, preferably around the home and sheltered away from the winds.
- ☐ Check your property insurance for (animal) related items.
- ☐ Remove all covering from stock e.g. rugs and veils as these can burn animals if they come into contact with embers.
- ☐ If it is your decision to relocate your animals, this **MUST** be done long before the bush fire is in your area. Make sure your animals are clearly indentifiable with your contact details on all lables and tags.
- ☐ Do your animals have any special needs or require medicines or vet assistance. Make a note of these requirements and put it with your relocation kit.
- ☐ Before you leave your property check that your chosen place to relocate your animals is accessible.
- ☐ Do not leave at the last minute, this is the most dangerous option for you and your animals.

*Your Bush Fire Survival Plan must include the wellbeing of your animals*

- ☐ Long before any bush fire consult your local Council, Department of Primary Industries or the RSPCA for information on animal refuges in your area.
- ☐ Listen to the local radio for updates on bush fire conditions in your area and check [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au).
- ☐ Decide what your trigger will be to put your Bush Fire Survival Plan into action.
- ☐ Because of the potential stress on animals in a major bush fire, we recommend that you relocate your pets early to a safer location.
- ☐ If you are going to stay and actively defend your property, small domestic animals should be put in a secure place, a small room (toilet, laundry), a place that will be easy to clean after the event.
- ☐ Animals can sense danger and could easily become stressed. Keep a watch on them and reassure them. Birds should be caged with a covering (damp towel) over it, leave appropriate food and water in the room / cage.
- ☐ **PREPARE** your Bush Fire Survival Plan today. Download a plan from [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)



*The safety of your pets and animals in a bushfire is **YOUR** responsibility.*







# Grass Fires

**GRASS FIRES SPREAD QUICKLY AND CAN THREATEN LIVES, PROPERTY, CROPS AND STOCK**

## PROTECT YOURSELF

Grass fires can start quickly and spread rapidly, catching people off-guard. Grass fires are very hot and can produce huge amounts of heat that can kill anyone caught out in the open.

The safest place to be during a grass fire is well away from the fire. When in the vicinity of a grass fire, always keep the burnt ground in mind as a safe refuge. If you are threatened by a grass fire, always protect yourself by covering up all exposed skin with protective clothing such as:

- ☐ Long-sleeved shirt and pants made from a natural fibre such as cotton.
- ☐ Sturdy leather boots and woollen socks.
- ☐ Leather gloves.
- ☐ A wide-brimmed hat.
- ☐ A face mask or towel to cover your mouth and nose.
- ☐ Eye protection such as goggles.

Make sure you drink plenty of water to keep hydrated and be aware of your level of physical fitness, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and sunburn.



*Protect your property, livestock and crops*

### The Importance of Fire Breaks:

- The spring time preparation of fire breaks by mowing, grazing, brush cutting or ploughing around buildings, crops, pasture, storage areas, along key fence lines and other exposures will greatly assist in fighting fires during the summer.
- Construct effective fire breaks as a means of preventing fire escapes from your property and reducing the likelihood of fires entering.
- Fire breaks should, where practical, be designed to avoid trees or to provide an additional break around the trees themselves.
- Work together with neighbours to construct effective fire breaks.

REPORT ALL FIRES TO:

**000**







## IDEALLY YOU SHOULD MAINTAIN SHORT GREEN GRASS AROUND YOUR HOUSE AND BUILDINGS.

0% CURED (green)



40% CURED



90% CURED



## WHAT IS CURING?

- When grasses are dying and drying out they are curing. The browner the grass the more cured it is.
- The more 'cured' grasses are, the more intensely they burn and the quicker the fire will spread.
- Grass on dry ridges cures more rapidly than in moist low-lying areas or creek lines.
- Grasses respond quickly to changes in air moisture - they absorb moisture from damp air overnight and lose moisture very quickly on high fire danger days. This means that grasses can be ready to burn early in the day.

## WIND

Wind is an important factor in grass fires. Wind determines how quickly a fire moves through grass and which direction it travels in. Grass fires are quick to respond to changes in wind speed and direction.

## GRASS HEIGHT

Fire in tall grass will have tall flames that may burn across trails, roads or fire breaks.

## GRASSLAND CURING GUIDE

Cured %	Colour	Physiological changes
0	Green	From germination to start of seed head development
20-30	Greenish-yellow	Seed head maturing and opening from top
40	Yellow-green	
60	Straw. Odd patch of green or yellow-green	Seed dropped, half to one third of most stems green. Some paddocks fully cured, others green
80	Straw. Very little green showing anywhere	Some greenness in lower third of stalks. Many stalks fully cured
90	Straw. Odd green gully	Odd stalks may show some greenness
100	Bleached	All stalks fully cured, seed heads and stalks starting to break easily

## MACHINERY AND GRASS FIRES

Machinery such as tractors, slashers, harvesters, welders, chainsaws and grinders can start grass fires. During the bush fire danger period, it is important that any machinery such as listed above are:

- Free from any faults and mechanical defects that could start a fire.
- Fitted with an approved spark arrestor.
- Carrying a working water fire extinguisher or knapsack.
- Not used during extreme fire conditions.

- Slashers should not be used unless conditions are mild and/or they are accompanied by an independent means of fire suppression.
- Grinders should not be used unless conditions are mild and/or the immediate area is dampened down to prevent ignition.

Prior to any machinery maintenance works, clear the immediate area of flammable materials.

**Note:** During Total Fire Ban days, no hot work (welding, grinding) in the open is permitted without special permission from the Rural Fire Service.





# PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

WAIT UNTIL THE FIRE IS ON TOP OF YOU AND YOU MAY DIE

## PREPARE.

**You must make important decisions before the fire season starts**

You are at risk from bush fires if you live or work near bushland, grassland, scrub, or farmland.

A fire can be terrifying, with strong winds, intense heat and flames, and thick smoke. Don't make rushed and dangerous decisions. Prepare your **Bush Fire Survival Plan**. Relocate aged, young and sick family members early from areas likely to be impacted by fires. Leaving early is the safest option.

Your **well-prepared home** will increase the safety of fire fighters and is more likely to survive a bush fire even if you leave early.

## SURVIVE.

**Know what you will do to survive**

Know your **bush fire alerts**.

**Advice** means a fire is nearby and you should stay up to date.

At **Watch and Act**, a bush fire is approaching and you need to put your Bush Fire Survival Plan into action.

An **Emergency Warning** means you may be in danger. Don't wait for direction from emergency services, as failure to act can result in death or injury.

If you plan to leave early, you should leave long before the bush fire is in your area. **Do not stay and defend without careful planning and preparation.**

Know an alternative route to a **safer location**. Find out if there is a Neighbourhood Safer Place in your area, but remember they should only be used as a place of last resort. Have a **back-up plan** in case you can't get to a safer location.

## ACT.

**The higher the fire danger rating, the more dangerous the conditions**

Know the fire danger in your area and what it means. **The fire danger rating** should be your first trigger for action and could save your life. When the rating is **Catastrophic**, leaving early is the only option for your survival.

Know your triggers. Be prepared to **activate your Bush Fire Survival Plan** with little or no warning.

PROTECT  
YOUR FAMILY.  
PROTECT  
YOUR LIFE.



## PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

Your Bush Fire Survival Plan, Fire Danger Ratings, Bush Fire Alerts and Neighbourhood Safer Places can be found at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

