



CITY OF
MITCHAM

City of Mitcham **Living in a High Fire Prone Area**



Contact the City of Mitcham on 8372 8888 or visit
www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au for more information

ABOUT BUSHFIRES

Where will the fire come from?

The direction of an approaching fire will depend on many local factors such as vegetation, wind direction and terrain. In the Mount Lofty Ranges it is usually a north-easterly that brings a major fire, but a south-westerly wind change in the afternoon often catches people unaware and increases the danger as it swings the fire in a completely different direction.

What will the Bushfire be like?

Major fires usually are accompanied by strong hot winds, thick smoke, flying debris and burning embers.

Winds

Strong winds usually accompany a bushfire which adds to the fire's intensity and the carrying of embers. The force of wind driven debris may break windows or remove parts of the roof, assisting embers to blow into and ignite the building.

Embers

The fire front may not reach your home, however burning embers carried by strong winds and travelling long distances may cause your home and property to catch on fire. This can occur before, during or after the main fire front has passed.



Direct Flame Contact

As well as direct flame contact from the fire front, direct flame contact may also occur when there is flammable material close to the house, such as wood piles, shrubs, trees and other flammable items.

Radiant Heat

Radiant heat from a bushfire scorches vegetation well ahead of the main fire front, and it roasts animals caught in the open. While extreme heat radiating from a fire usually lasts for only a few minutes, this heat can be sufficient to fracture glass and allow embers to blow inside the house.



Smoke

In bushfires smoke contributes indirectly to death by obscuring visibility, irritating eyes and lungs thus causing stress.



HOW PEOPLE DIE IN BUSHFIRES

Lives are lost due to unplanned last minute evacuations. Therefore you must make that decision **NOW**.

“STAY AND DEFEND OR GO EARLY”.

Heat Stress

The human body operates more efficiently between a narrow range of temperatures. Heat stress can be managed best by:

- ▶ Wearing sensible clothing, eg wool or of natural fibre.
- ▶ Sheltering from radiant heat.
- ▶ Avoiding unnecessary exertion.
- ▶ Keeping fluids up.



Dehydration

Very hot conditions plus excessive stress and exertion during bushfires will rapidly lead to loss of fluids and subsequent dehydration. Dehydration can be managed by drinking water regularly, about one cup every 5 to 10 minutes.

Burn Injuries

Burn injuries occur when the body is exposed to intense heat, but can be managed by wearing the appropriate clothing.

Physical Injuries

Bushfires are conducive to accidents because of factors such as poor visibility, stress and adrenalin levels. This leads to confusion, poor decision making, loss of concentration and tunnel vision.

Lung Injuries

Lung injuries can be avoided by protecting the lungs from smoke and hot air. The nose and mouth should be covered with a dust mask, wet towel or scarf. Special filtered masks should be included in your survival kit.



Why Houses Burn

In a bushfire houses can burn because of strong winds which can break glass or damage roofs allowing flying embers to enter. Many houses survive the fire front, only to be destroyed later from fires which are started from burning debris.



HOUSE SURVIVAL DURING A BUSHFIRE

The most critical factors in house survival during a bushfire are that houses do burn down during bushfires mainly because of flying embers. Sparks and embers land well before the main fire front reaches your home and well after the fire has passed.

“This is the stage when many unattended houses are lost.”

There are a number of things you can do to improve the chances of your house surviving a bushfire:

- ▶ Have people at your home to put out spot fires.
- ▶ Design and construct your home appropriately.
- ▶ Manage the vegetation around your home and property.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE FIRE

Before the fire reaches you:

- ▶ Check water supply and top up if necessary.
- ▶ Meet with neighbours to discuss your plans.
- ▶ Block up downpipes and fill gutters with water.
- ▶ Put all flammable items inside, eg door mats.
- ▶ Hose down side of the house facing the fire.
- ▶ Hose down the garden facing the fire.
- ▶ Put all hoses inside, so they don't melt.
- ▶ Put a ladder under the manhole with torch nearby.
- ▶ Close all doors, vents and windows.
- ▶ Take down curtains.
- ▶ Move furniture away from windows.
- ▶ Fill sinks, baths and buckets with water.
- ▶ Put wet towels under doors and windows.
- ▶ Ensure there is a hose attached inside that can reach the entire house including the roof area.
- ▶ Make sure you have a battery powered radio and spare batteries.



Houses as safe refuges

As the fire front approaches it is vital that you seek refuge from the radiant heat. Your home or your neighbours house may be used as a safe refuge provided:

- ▶ You have done all the preparatory work.
- ▶ All persons present have a good understanding of what to expect when the fire front arrives.
- ▶ You are vigilant in patrolling for spot fires.
- ▶ You have identified a room for the elderly, young or other less able bodied people to shelter in while able bodied people patrol the house for sparks and embers. This room should be away from the likely direction of the fire and have at least two exits.
- ▶ A refuge is not meant to serve as a hiding place, but a place of protection from the radiant heat until it is safe to go outside.

When the fire is close and during the fire:

- ▶ Dress in personal protective clothing.
- ▶ Ensure children and pets are inside.
- ▶ Drink water to prevent dehydration.
- ▶ Shelter in a room which has a clear view of the approaching fire and also has a clear exit.
- ▶ Keep regular checks inside the house and roof space.
- ▶ Turn off any gas cylinders and gas supply, (don't turn gas supply back on after the fire has passed without first consulting with a professional).
- ▶ Remain outside as long as possible, checking for spot fires.

WHAT TO DO ONCE THE FIRE HAS PASSED

After the fire front has passed and it is safe to go outside, and you are appropriately dressed, put out any spot fires and patrol the entire property including:

- ▶ The house including the roof space.
- ▶ Under the house and floor boards.
- ▶ On verandas and under wooden decks.
- ▶ On timber windows and door sills.
- ▶ Roof lines and gutters.
- ▶ Garden beds and mulch.
- ▶ Check that everybody is alright.
- ▶ Listen to your battery operated radio for fire updates.
- ▶ If there is any further fire danger or your house begins to burn move to burnt ground outside the house and wait for help, (ensure you are appropriately dressed).
- ▶ Do not touch any metal, exposed electrical wires or powerlines and be aware that open sewage pipes can be a health hazard.
- ▶ Check trees, logs and any other places where burning embers may fall and smoulder for many hours.
- ▶ Smouldering embers are likely to be blown into and under houses, sheds, wood piles and start burning.

You will need to patrol your property for up to six hours or longer after the fire front has passed.



PLACES NOT TO TAKE REFUGE IN

Swimming Pools

The use of swimming pools as a safe refuge is discouraged. Although it may provide adequate protection to parts of the body below, the face, head and lungs will be exposed to radiant heat and smoke.

Water Tanks

Once immersed in water the body will quickly absorb heat and as the water and body temperature rise it will become un-survivable.

Cellars

Seeking refuge in a cellar or underground garage should not be considered as you can not patrol your house for ember attack or keep an eye on the fire. Smoke may enter the confined space and there may only be one exit, which could get blocked.



STAYING OR GOING

Following major bushfires in South Australia 1983, Sydney 1994, Canberra 2003 and Victoria in 2006 and 2009 all investigations have come to the same conclusions:

Lives, assets and most houses are unlikely to be lost if someone defends them, and the safest place to be is in a well prepared house and property.

Comments from some reports published stated that:

- ▶ "Houses were generally ignited by wind driven embers lodging in the eaves or beneath the house".
- ▶ "Majority of urban houses were unattended at the time they caught alight".
- ▶ "Over 50% of the people who died escaping from their house, but the house did not catch on fire".
- ▶ "The survival rate for houses actively defended by able-bodied occupants was 90%".
- ▶ "There are risks in staying, but in our view these seem less than the risks inherent in large scale evacuations".



PREPARING FOR THE FIRE DANGER SEASON

There are many things you can do prior to a fire season to increase the safety of your home by:

- ▶ Preparing a 20 metre fuel break around your home.
- ▶ Reducing fuel loads around your property.
- ▶ Reducing fine fuels around the property and house especially long dry grass, leaves and twigs.
- ▶ Cutting back trees and branches overhanging the house.
- ▶ Pruning lower branches off to a height of two metres from the ground to provide a vertical fuel break.
- ▶ Moving wood piles away from the house and putting them undercover eg in sealed and spark proof sheds.
- ▶ Cleaning leaves out of gutters.
- ▶ Planting trees and shrubs away from the house.
- ▶ Placing weather strips on doors and windows.
- ▶ Enclosing areas under floor spaces.
- ▶ Filling gaps in roofs, house, sheds and eaves.
- ▶ Fitting metal fly screens to windows and doors.
- ▶ Ensuring you have extra water supply eg tank, dam, swimming pool and 44 gallon drums strategically placed around the house and property.
- ▶ Ensuring you have an alternate power supply eg petrol generator.
- ▶ Keeping fire equipment handy, such as ladders, hoses, buckets, mops, portable water pump, rake, torch, battery radio/spare batteries, knapsack and mobile phone.
- ▶ Removing or enclosing all flammable items under the house.
- ▶ Understanding the impact a power failure would have on your plans eg cordless phones and garage doors.
- ▶ Checking that you have adequate insurance.
- ▶ Having a long hose that reaches all parts of the house including roof areas and gardens.
- ▶ Having a ladder to reach the roof area.

PROTECTING YOUR ASSETS

The path that a fire will take depends on how the fuel is arranged.

Fire does not spread easily over low fuel areas therefore:

- ▶ Breaking up areas of fuel can slow the spread of a fire and reduce the heat.
- ▶ Consider your home's location in relation to prevailing winds as this indicates the most likely direction from which a bushfire may come.
- ▶ Position your driveway on the side most likely to be impacted by fire. (Where the fire is likely to come from).
- ▶ Build a stone wall or covered fence close to your house as a radiant heat shield.
- ▶ If you are on a steep slope, terrace your garden and plant with low flammable species eg plants with broad fleshy leaves and high salt content which burn less readily than fine hard leaves.
- ▶ Ensure you have a good water supply and access to water for firefighting.
- ▶ Consider ways of creating low fuel areas, such as grazing, slashing or planned prescribed burning.
- ▶ Plants that retain or accumulate dead leaves, bark and twigs can burn more easily, but more importantly they can assist the spread of fire from the ground into the trees.
- ▶ Design plantings with fire protection in mind, and consider the location and arrangement of the plantings.
- ▶ Avoid having plants near your home which:
 - ▶ Accumulate lots of dry and dead debris.
 - ▶ Have loose flaky bark.
 - ▶ Have masses of very fine leaves.
 - ▶ Have low moisture content.

HOW WILL YOU PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY?

There are a number of things you can do well before the Fire Danger Season, such as:

- ▶ Remove the fine fuels from around the property.
- ▶ Ensure you have a tap inside to attach a hose.
- ▶ Ensure your hose reaches all areas of the house including the roof space.
- ▶ Have an independent water supply.
- ▶ Have appropriate firefighting equipment.
- ▶ Establish a landscaped garden or vegetable garden, mow lawns, wide paths, paving or driveways that can provide fuel breaks.
- ▶ Chemically treat areas around outbuildings and sheds to prevent regrowth of vegetation.
- ▶ Store flammable fuels and chemicals away from the house (not under the house unless completely enclosed) and secure in an enclosed shed.
- ▶ The use of metal shutters which can be pulled down over exposed windows or placed over skylights.



PLANTS WITH LOW FLAMMABILITY CHARACTERISTICS

Having a garden containing low flammable plants will not necessarily stop a fire from damaging your house, but may help slow the fire and reduce radiant heat.

Plant choices:

- ▶ Smooth barked trees will not burn as readily as stringy or rough barked trees. Plants with high moisture or salt content, or with a low oil content, will take a much greater time to ignite and will burn more slowly.
- ▶ A well watered hedge on the fire prone side of the house can reduce radiant heat and spread of fire to the house.
- ▶ Inorganic mulches, such as granite or gravel on the fire prone side of the house will help slow the spread of fire.

Look for the following features when choosing plants:

- ▶ Broad or fleshy leaves.
- ▶ Smooth bark.
- ▶ High moisture content in leaves.
- ▶ Low oil content.



FIRE PREVENTION LANDSCAPING

- ▶ Positioning driveways to north or west of the house.
- ▶ Planting a well-designed and maintained wind break to reduce wind and radiant heat, as well filtering flying embers.
- ▶ Building a stone wall, earth mound or covered fence close to the house as a radiant heat shield.
- ▶ Placing your tennis court, vegetable garden or swimming pool between your house and the expected fire direction.
- ▶ Thinning out tree foliage so there are breaks in tree canopies.
- ▶ Removing trees, shrubs or mulch which are close to or overhanging the house.
- ▶ Locating garden sheds away from the house.



MANAGING VEGETATION AROUND YOUR HOME

The type and amount of vegetation determines fuel loads and fuel loads in turn determine fire intensity. Fuel reduction is about the removal or reduction of combustible vegetative material to reduce the bushfire risk. Fuels naturally build up over time and without active management have the potential to accumulate to such an extent that fire control is difficult or under some conditions impossible. With the correct preparations and planning you can survive a bushfire. A good plan will consider the preparation of your home and property and what you will do in the event of a fire.



The greater the fuel load = The greater the fire intensity.



IF YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE

Even if you decide to leave you must still prepare your house and property as if you were staying. You must ensure that a fire doesn't start or travel through your property thus causing your neighbours a concern.

You may have no choice but to stay and if you aren't ready or prepared you will not only put your life in danger but also the lives of your family and neighbours.

When will you leave?

- ▶ Leave early, before the day gets too hot and winds get stronger.
- ▶ On total fire ban days.
- ▶ On days over 35 degrees.
- ▶ On days with low humidity and north winds.

Where will you go?

- ▶ You may choose to visit family or friends out of the high fire risk area.
- ▶ Going to another shopping centre out of the high fire risk area.

How will you get there?

- ▶ If you don't drive or own a car you may need to book a taxi or look up bus and train timetables.
- ▶ You may get a friend or family member to pick you up.
- ▶ What if the roads are blocked?

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU?

There are certain items you should take with you such as:

- ▶ Photographs, legal documents and insurance policies.
- ▶ Certificates, prescriptions and medicines.
- ▶ Family mementos.

These items should be packed at the beginning of the Fire Danger Season so that they are easy to grab on the way out.

What do you do with your pets?

Domestic animals can generally be taken with you, but if you have animals that you can't take with you, then you will need to consider what arrangements you can make to ensure their safety eg agisting animals out of the area during the fire danger season.

What if you are unable to leave?

A situation may arise that makes it difficult or dangerous for you to leave, placing you in a situation where you have no choice but to stay. It is imperative therefore that you have a contingency plan to cater for such situations, so you can seek refuge accordingly, eg a neighbour.

Who will you inform when you leave?

Let family, friends and neighbours know you have left and how and where you can be contacted.

Vehicle preparation

During the fire danger season it is essential that your vehicle is maintained and prepared, all vehicles should have:

- ▶ A woollen blanket, container of water and first aid kit.
- ▶ Filtered mask for every members of the family.
- ▶ Have adequate fuel at all times.

IF YOU DECIDE TO STAY

You can't assume that the entire family will be home when the fire starts, therefore your plan needs to include, what you and other members of the family plan to do on the high fire risk days.

Put together an emergency/survival kit:

- ▶ torches with spare batteries
- ▶ candles to provide light
- ▶ matches or lighter
- ▶ battery radio with spare batteries
- ▶ first aid kit and medications
- ▶ fire extinguishers
- ▶ fire blankets
- ▶ bottled drinking water

How will you protect yourself?

In a bushfire you need to protect yourself from radiant heat.

- ▶ Wear long trousers and long sleeves shirts of natural fibres, wool or cotton socks.
- ▶ Sturdy leather shoes or boots.
- ▶ Gloves, not rubber or synthetic and goggles.
- ▶ Broad brimmed hat and scarf.
- ▶ Face mask to cover mouth and nose.
- ▶ Drink plenty of water.

Where will you and other family members be?

- ▶ Will you stay at home?
- ▶ If you are at work you can't assume that you will be allowed into the area to defend your home, as roads may be blocked.
- ▶ If one partner is at work is the other partner capable of defending the property?

What will you do if your children are at school?

Check with your school to find out what plans they have in place for fire and emergencies. Schools in bushfire areas have action plans where the children are kept in a safe area of the school until the danger has passed.

Who will look after the pets?

Make sure pets are securely contained and have adequate water.

What will you do if you have elderly relatives or young children living with you?

- ▶ Make sure every one is drinking enough water.
- ▶ Monitor the radio for up to date news.
- ▶ Make sure every body in the house is wearing protective clothing.
- ▶ Make sure you keep track of their movements.

Storage of flammables

Store petrol, diesel and other hazardous chemicals in a safe, well cleared area or shed which is well signed so as to warn and aid fire fighters.



HOW MUCH WATER WILL YOU NEED?

The CFS recommends at least 5,000 litres for firefighting (using a fire pump, hoses etc) and 22,000 litres if you installed a sprinkler system.

But if you live in a high fire prone area a large water tank (at least 22,000 litres) is essential as mains water could be cut at any time.



Water storage options

- ▶ Fill your kitchen sink, bath and laundry trough when you first become aware of a fire.
- ▶ Place 200 litre (44 gallon) drums and metal buckets in strategic locations and fill them at the beginning of the fire danger season.
- ▶ Rubbish bins and stockfeed bins can be filled on high fire danger days.

Pumps and equipment

A 5hp (3.7kw) portable diesel or petrol motor coupled to a 38 mm centrifugal fire pump will provide the independent water pressure needed for your emergency firefighting system when mains power is cut.

Keep the pump in a readily accessible shed in a protected area on the side of the house which should have:

- ▶ A protective housing to stop fuel vaporisation.
- ▶ Adequate ventilation for air cooling of the unit.
- ▶ An inline filter to reduce the chance of blockage.
- ▶ Make sure the pump can be operated by any member of the family.
- ▶ Check the pump weekly during the fire danger season.
- ▶ A key start ignition is ideal.

Sprinklers

Sprinkler systems can be extremely valuable in defending your home against bushfires provided you have sufficient water supplies. When planning a sprinkler system remember that fires are accompanied by high winds and high temperatures that can reduce the effectiveness of fine sprays.

Sprinkler systems may be designed for:

- ▶ Reducing the impact of radiant heat.
- ▶ Direct flame contact.
- ▶ Ember attack, by supplying a curtain of water that wets down the roof and walls.
- ▶ Fire intensity, by wetting down vegetation surrounding the home.



In designing a sprinkler system, be sure to:

- ▶ Use metal pipes and sprinkler heads.
- ▶ Sprinklers should be positioned so that the spray is not blown away from the approaching fire by high winds.
- ▶ Keep the sprinklers operating until well after the fire has passed.

Pets and Livestock

The care and transportation of pets and livestock prior to, during and after the passage of fire is rarely mentioned.

- ▶ Ensure your dogs and cats are identified and registered.
- ▶ Get your animals used to travelling when young.
- ▶ Be sure that you can adequately restrain or confine your pet, as they will become frightened and panic.

Dogs: Check that you have collars, leads, harness and muzzle if aggressive.

Cats, Rabbits, Guinea Pigs: Use a secure cage or box with air holes.

Birds, Ferrets, Mice: Use a secure cage or box with air holes.

Fish: Transport in a wide necked jar with a secure lid and fill with 2/3 water, use a plastic straw to blow air into water now and again.

Snakes and Lizards: Use a secure box with small air holes or a firmly tied pillow case or carry bag.

YOUR QUICK CHECK LIST

Are you, your family and your property ready for the coming Bushfire Season?

If you answer no to any of the questions below then you may not be ready for the up-coming fire season.

If you are unsure of some of the answers or do not understand some things contact Council's Bushfire Prevention Officer for an inspection or advice.

Decision time

Here is your check list.

- WE ARE STAYING
- WE ARE GOING
- Do you understand the local bushfire risk?
- Do you know how to prepare yourself and your property?
- Do you have a plan in place with all members of the household aware of what they need to do?
- Are pets seen to?
- Is your insurance up to date?
- Is the emergency kit ready?
- Is your fire fighting equipment ready and accessible eg metal buckets, rakes, ladders, knapsacks and protective clothing?
- Is your protective clothing for each member of the household stored in one place?
- Are all valuables in a container in one place and ready to be grabbed on the way out if you intend to leave?
- Are battery operated radios and torches ready and working, plus spare batteries?
- Are all ground fuels cleared from around the house and property?
- Is all flammable material within 20 metres of the house cleared and removed?
- Are all gutters cleaned?

- Is the roofing firmly fixed and all gaps covered?
- Are all roof areas cleared of leafs, branches and debris?
- Are all fire breaks prepared?
- Are screens or shutters installed over windows?
- Is the area under the house enclosed or cleaned?
- Are all vents covered with metal mesh?
- Are wood piles removed from near the house or sheds and under cover to prevent ember attack?
- Are all flammable materials such as paper, boxes, crates and bales removed?
- Are hanging baskets removed or well wetted?
- Is all wooden furniture stored under cover when not in use?
- Are LPG tanks vented away from the house?
- Are all water supplies, tanks, dams and swimming pools full?
- Are your hoses long enough to reach all sides of the house?
- Are the correct gate valves fitted to tanks so that CFS can use water supply if needed?
- Are all external piping work of galvanized or copper or underground?
- Are any sprinkler systems installed in gardens or on roofs ready and working correctly?
- Have you got large drums such as 44 gallon drums placed around house and property and filled prior to fire danger season?
- Is there a tap inside fitted with a hose connection?
- Is the hose long enough to reach every corner of house including the roof space?
- Is there a ladder handy to get into the roof space?
- Are the blocks around you prepared?

WHERE DO YOU START?

The first thing you must do is to sit down with your family and develop your Bushfire Action Plan.

Every resident living in a high fire risk area must have a Bushfire Action Plan. This plan must include every person and pet living on that property. It is very important that everybody in the household knows exactly what to do and expect on these days.

This plan along with all hazard and fuel reduction around your house and property must be completed in Autumn / Spring prior to the start of the Fire Danger Season.

Consider the following questions:

- ▶ Are you ready for the Bushfire Season?
- ▶ Is your family and home at risk?
- ▶ Will you or your family stay and defend your home or leave early before the fire starts?
- ▶ Does your family include, children, elderly or people with disabilities?
- ▶ Can you or your family physically or mentally defend your house and property during a bushfire?

Making a Bushfire Plan

Protection of your home, family, pets and assets are your responsibility. There are a number of things to consider when developing your plan, like deciding whether you should stay or go. Every home and every person's situation are different, that's why every household needs to develop their own Bushfire Action Plan. The advantage of having a plan and writing it down is that you have thought through what is required to defend your home, and there will be no need to panic on the day. The heartache of loss of pets can be avoided if, when developing a bushfire action plan, pets and livestock are included. It is important that when making a plan you take into consideration things such as, topography, vegetation, access, escape route, etc.



Vegetation

Vegetation is fuel for fires, eg long dry grass, leaf litter, scrub, shrubs and loose tree bark. The type and amount of vegetation determines fuel loads, and fuel loads, in turn determine fire intensity.

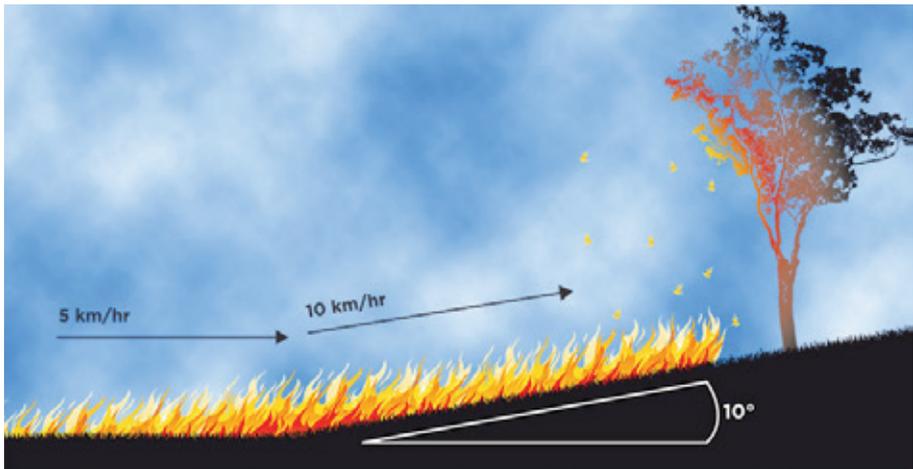
Wind direction

In South Australia the prevailing fire winds are normally from the north to northeast, however history has shown that a south / westerly wind change can increase the danger by swinging the fire in a different direction therefore catching people unaware.

Topography

Fires burn more quickly and with greater intensity up slopes than on flat ground or down slopes.

North / westerly facing properties on slopes are at greater risk than south facing properties as they are normally drier.



A fire travels faster uphill than it does down hill

For every 10 degrees increase in slope the rate of spread and intensity of the fire will double.

Make a sketch of your property including:

- ▶ location of your house
- ▶ driveways, roads, major highways and tracks
- ▶ other out buildings
- ▶ slopes
- ▶ surrounding bush area
- ▶ your vegetation and surrounding vegetation
- ▶ major hazards or concerns

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

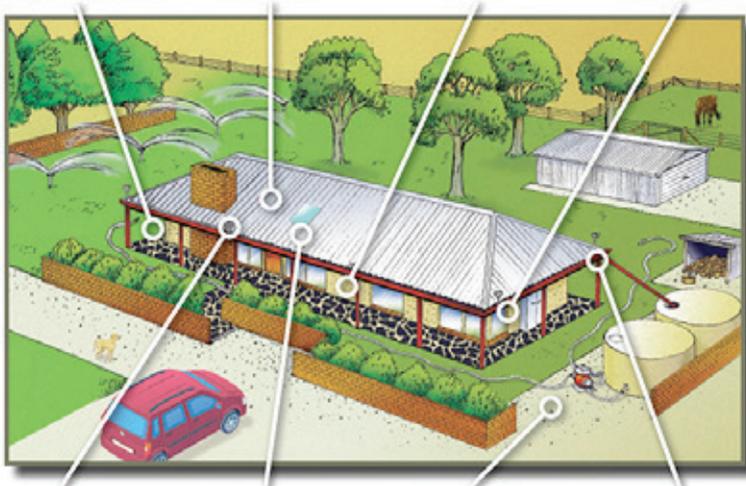
Well-secured metal roofing is preferable. A tiled roof needs to be well fitted with fire-resistant sarking (fibreglass-based aluminium foil).

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.

Gutters

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



GENERAL INFORMATION

Free Dumping of Green Waste Material

For residents living in the Council area and especially those living in the high fire risk areas.

Council will open the Green Organics Drop Off Facility on Beagle Terrace at Lynton on:

- ▶ the last two Saturdays of November, followed by a Monday.
- ▶ the first Saturday of December followed by the Monday.

Please check these dates with Council each year.

This facility is free, upon proof of residency in the Council area and only green waste will be accepted. Green waste material can consist of grass cuttings, leaf matter and branches no larger than 200 mm (8 ins) in diameter.

Clearing Land

Any land clearing must take into account proper land management in accordance with the Native Vegetation Act and the Significant Tree Legislation.



COUNCIL'S BURNING POLICY

Backyard burning was banned in the Council area over 20 years ago. Mitcham Council was granted an exemption under the Environment Protection Authority (Burning) Policy 1994 to allow burning for the purpose of fire prevention in Council's high fire prone areas. Therefore residents living in Council's high fire risk areas (hills) are able to burn green waste material for the purpose of fuel and hazard reduction and only with a permit from Council.

General Guidelines:

- ▶ You must live in Council's high fire risk area.
- ▶ You must be conducting fuel and hazard reduction work.
- ▶ Material to be burnt must only be green waste (no rubbish).
- ▶ Material must be dry and ready to burn.
- ▶ Material must be hard to remove eg down in a gully or inaccessible by car.
- ▶ You must have a permit to burn from Council's Fire Prevention Officer (permits are free upon inspection).
- ▶ You must adhere to all of the conditions on the permit.
- ▶ Permits will only be issued after the Fire Danger Season (1 May, subject to CFS advice and weather conditions) until it becomes too dangerous to burn in November (subject to weather conditions).

Note

It is illegal to burn rubbish or green waste material in the open anywhere within the City of Mitcham without obtaining a permit from Council's Fire Prevention Officer.

For more information contact the Fire Prevention Officer on 8372 8133.

Parking in the Hills

Most roads in the hills are narrow and it is very difficult for emergency vehicles to have a clear passage when there are cars parked directly opposite each other.

Therefore when parking in the hills have consideration for emergency vehicle drivers and park in a way which will give them a clear passage to the emergency they are rushing to.

It may well be a family member or close friend that they are trying to help and any delay may be critical.

CFS Protecting Your Home and Property

CFS can not guarantee a fire fighting vehicle or crew to protect every home in a major bushfire.

The CFS **will not** put their volunteers into dangerous, inaccessible situations. Therefore it is important that a property owner does the necessary hazard reduction work around their property and ensures there is a well cleared driveway and sufficient turn around space for a fire truck on larger properties. It is therefore extremely important to plan for your family's safety and be self-reliant.

If your driveway or access to your property looks like this, then CFS may not enter your property, as it's far too dangerous for fire fighters.



YOUR BUSHFIRE ACTION PLAN

START YOUR PLAN PRIOR TO THE START OF THE FIRE DANGER SEASON.

What will you do?

- ▶ **STAY**
- ▶ **Go**

If you plan to stay and defend your property, you will need to consider the following:

1. Are you physically fit to fight spot fires in and around your home for up to 10 hours or more?
2. Are you mentally and emotionally able to cope with the intense smoke, heat and noise of a bushfire, while implementing your plan?
3. Are you able to implement your plan while caring for distressed young children, elderly or disabled people in your home?
4. Do you have the resources and equipment to effectively fight a fire, eg a water supply of at least 20,000 litres a water tank, pond, dam, a creek, swimming pool, a petrol powered fire-fighting pump and adequate lengths of hoses?
5. Does your home have a defensible space of at least 20 metres cleared of flammable materials and vegetation?
6. Is your home 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 bush land?

If these questions make you doubt your ability, or you are for any reason unsure about staying and defending your property, then you should prepare a "Go Early" Plan.



TO PREPARE YOUR PLAN

Your Bushfire Action Plan must be prepared with all members of the household.

On the following pages are two checklists which will help you prepare either a "Go Early" or "Stay and Defend" Bushfire Action Plan, so that you are Bushfire Ready.

Everyone's Bushfire Action Plan will be different depending on their individual situation.

Once you have completed your plan, practice it regularly and keep it in a safe and easily accessible place for quick reference (eg on the fridge).

Preparing your home for a bushfire

A properly prepared home will be more likely to survive a bushfire without you, and fire fighters will be better able to defend it.

Create a defensible space around your property.

Consider the following:

- ▶ Remove dead branches, leaves and undergrowth from around your home.
- ▶ Prune any tree limbs less than two metres from the ground or overhanging your home.
- ▶ Cut long grass within 20 metres of your home.
- ▶ Remove bark, heavy mulch, wood piles and other flammable materials close to your home and shed.
- ▶ On high fire risk days or actual fire days:
 - ▶ Block drain pipes and fill gutters with water.
 - ▶ Remove flammable items from the exterior of the house (eg blinds, outdoor furniture, door mats).

When to leave

- ▶ Plan your relocation early enough to avoid being caught in smoke, the fire or on a congested road.

Where to go

- ▶ Consider low fire risk areas (eg the local shopping centre, a well prepared neighbour's house, etc).

How to get there

- ▶ Consider a number of travel routes.

What will you take?

- ▶ Prepare a relocation kit (blankets, water, first aid kit, medications, change of clothes, children's toys and important documents).
- ▶ Organise household members and make arrangements for pets.

Stay and Defend

Most bushfire fatalities occur because people leave too late and are overtaken by the fire.

If you are ever unsure, you should prepare a "Go Early" Plan as well.

When completing your Bushfire Action Plan, these points are some examples of what you need to consider.



Prepare for your safety

- ▶ Prepare a bushfire survival kit, eg long-sleeved wool or cotton clothing for all persons, a torch, a battery powered radio, spare batteries, spare set of hose fittings and drinking water.
- ▶ Dress in appropriate clothing (eg made from natural fibres).
- ▶ Patrol property for spot fires to extinguish.
- ▶ Wet vegetation near the house with a hose or sprinkler.
- ▶ Block drain pipes and fill gutters with water.
- ▶ Remove flammable items from the exterior of the house (eg blinds, outdoor furniture, door mats etc).
- ▶ Stay close to the house, drink water and check the welfare of others.

A well prepared home withstand a bushfire and you will be better able to defend it

- ▶ Remove dead branches, leaves and undergrowth from around your home.
- ▶ Prune any tree limbs less than two metres from the ground or overhanging your home.
- ▶ Cut long grass within 20 metres of your home.
- ▶ Remove bark, heavy mulch, wood piles and other flammable materials close to the home and shed.
- ▶ Ensure you have an independent adequate water supply (ie no less than 20,000 litres from a bore, rain water tank, dam etc).
- ▶ Ensure you have equipment to fight fires (a petrol powered pump, long hoses, buckets, bins and sprinklers).
- ▶ Keep gutters clean.

As the fire front arrives

- ▶ Move inside the house.
- ▶ Prepare inside of the house (eg remove curtains, move furniture, close doors and windows).
- ▶ Soak towels and place under external doors.
- ▶ Stay inside the house and be alert to extinguish any fires.
- ▶ Ensure you can exit the home should it catch alight.
- ▶ Monitor the fire, but keep away from windows.
- ▶ Keep hydrated.

After the fire has passed

- ▶ Patrol property (including roof space) to extinguish fires.
- ▶ Continue to drink water.

On high fire risk days important bushfire information and warning messages will be broadcast on ABC radio and 5AA.

You must listen out for these messages.

Actual fire days

As the fire approaches

After the fire has passed

As the fire front arrives



BUSHFIRE INFORMATION AND WARNING MESSAGES

The CFS has developed an information and warning system to keep the community informed about significant bushfires.

On high risk fire days you should listen to your local ABC radio station or 5AA for these bushfire messages and monitor the CFS Website.

The messages are designed to provide important information about bushfires.

The information provided is likely to include:

- ▶ the location of the fire.
- ▶ where it is expected to move next.
- ▶ the risks faced by people in the area.
- ▶ what the public is advised to do about those risks.
- ▶ what the CFS is doing about the situation.

Although the CFS will provide as much information as possible, it is the responsibility of every South Australian to ensure they are adequately prepared for a bushfire and know what to do should one occur.

Please note the information and warning messages are not a substitute for good planning on your part.

HELP AND INFORMATION

If you are unsure of what to do, where to start or need an inspection, contact Council's Fire Prevention Officer.

You can also contact the CFS for information and to find out about Community Fire Safe Groups in your area.

Contact Numbers

Mitcham Council	8372 8888	Emergency	000
		Police	
		Ambulance	
Fire Prevention Officer	8372 8133	Fire	
CFS Sturt Group Duty Officer	8370 3600	Flinders Medical Centre	8204 5511
		Doctor	_____
		Vet	_____
CFS		School	_____
Headquarters	8463 4200	Chemist	_____
Information Hot Line	1300 362 361	Family	_____
Web Site	www.cfs.sa.gov.au	SA Water	1300 883 121
		SA Power Networks	13 13 66
		Gas	131 245



City of MITCHAM

Civic Centre

131 Belair Road
Torrens Park SA 5062

Postal address:

PO Box 21
Mitcham Shopping Centre
Torrens Park SA 5062

Telephone: 08 8372 8888

Facsimile: 08 8372 8101

Internet: www.mitчамcouncil.sa.gov.au

Email: mitчам@mitчамcouncil.sa.gov.au

Emergency after hours: 7111 3588

Opening hours

Monday to Friday
(excluding public holidays)
from 9 am to 5 pm