

Media News



Yarra Area

19 November 2009

Residents are urged to continue to be fire ready as restrictions in CFA Yarra Area start on Monday 30 November 2009 in Nillumbik, Banyule, Manningham & Maroondah municipalities and Monday 14 December in Knox and Yarra Ranges municipalities.

The recent November heatwave has served as an early season reminder of what awaits all Victorians this Summer.

The CFA Yarra Area advises residents that the Fire Danger Period ('fire restrictions') for the above municipalities will commence at **1am** on the above dates and remain in force until 1 May 2010 unless revoked earlier.

CFA Yarra Area Operations Manager Graeme Armstrong said the early onset of hot weather was the clearest call yet for residents to be prepared for this fire season.

"This warm weather during November shows that it doesn't take much for vegetation, in particular grasslands, to dry out in these conditions. It is only a few weeks since people were talking about the excellent spring rains and the green countryside. Now they're talking about the heat and the rapidly drying landscape.

"This is how quickly things can change; it is therefore important that decisions are made now so that on high fire risk days, residents are well-prepared, well-informed and ready to take action. That includes leaving early, either the evening before a forecast bad day or in the morning if that is what their plans indicate to do.

"Not leaving early, particularly on a Code Red (Catastrophic) day may result in loss of life," said Mr Armstrong

"If people haven't already done so, now is the time to get busy around their homes and to clean their gutters; clear leaf litter and other fine fuels from around homes; to remove flammable items such as paper, boxes and crates; and to store fuel supplies and chemicals away from houses.

"Residents in some areas will have already received their *FireReady Kit*. This is a resource to help residents prepare their **bushfire survival plan**. Also a first this year, is the on-line *Household Bushfire Self assessment tool*. This takes residents through a number of steps to assess the defendability of their home. "

If residents have not yet received a *FireReady Kit* or need more information on how to prepare and what to do in the event of a fire, the CFA website, www.cfa.vic.gov.au is a great resource

"Residents can also call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on **1800 240 667** for bushfire planning advice or attend one of many CFA bushfire meetings scheduled in their local area."

Fire Restrictions: the details

- Under a fire restrictions regime, a CFA permit is required to burn off grass, undergrowth or weeds in the open. This permit is issued by the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer.
- Barbeques and fires for cooking and warmth, however, do not require a permit, but must be lit in properly constructed fireplaces, within limits of wind speed and clearance perimeter, and are to be supervised at all times.
- All burn-offs should be registered with the VicFire Burn-off notification line on **1800 668 511**.
- Lighting a fire in the open without a permit is an offence and can bring a penalty of up to \$5,500 or 12 months imprisonment.
- The *Can I or Can't I?* brochure, also available from the CFA website, details the fire restrictions regime, including the differences between fire restrictions and Total Fire Ban days.
- CFAs *On the Land: Agricultural Fire Management Guidelines* provides practical fire management advice for people living and working on rural properties and is particularly useful to those new to farming. To view and/or download the guidelines, go to **www.cfa.vic.gov.au**.

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