

Media release

Thursday, 20 December 2012



Fire restrictions announced for 2012/13 season

CFA has declared that the Fire Danger Period (FDP) will commence from 1am on 7 January 2013 for the following municipalities.

- Knox
- Maroondah
- Manningham
- Yarra Ranges

The Fire Danger Period means fires cannot be lit in the open air without a written permit from CFA or from a Municipal Fire Prevention Officer.

Fire Danger Periods are based on local conditions and take into account fuel moisture, fuel loads, grassland curing, weather and rainfall.

CFA Eastern Metropolitan Regional Director Dave Baker said that CFA looks to the community to do the right thing by their family and neighbours and follow the fire restrictions that are in place throughout the Fire Danger Period.

“Fire restrictions are in place for a very good reason – to prevent fires from starting. Preventing fires is something that every member of the community should see as their responsibility,” he said.

“Victoria has experienced a lot of wet weather this year. But we are one of the most fire-prone regions in the world and it only takes two weeks of hot, dry and windy weather to create dangerous fire conditions.”

Mr Baker said that living in a grassland area with dried-out (brown or golden-coloured) grass that is over 10cm high is a significant risk to people, dwellings and infrastructure.

“Grassfires should not be underestimated; they travel faster than you can run and can kill,” he said.

“Fires burning in tall grass fuels can burn very hot with very high flame heights. History tells us that most people under estimate the speed and intensity of grassfires.

“It’s not too late to protect your home and property by slashing, mowing, grazing, and spraying grass, and creating fuel breaks by grading or ploughing fuel breaks down to the bare earth.

“But while preparing your property is a good place to start, it’s just as important to prepare yourself and your family for fire.

“Before the fire season, sit down and have talk to everyone you live with. What will you do if a fire starts? What actions will each member of the family undertake? Who will look after the children, or older members of the family? What will your trigger be to leave early? What will you do differently on a day of high fire risk?

“It’s up to you to check Fire Danger Ratings every day in summer – these help you know when the conditions are dangerous enough to enact your fire plan.



“Remember that if you can see smoke, you’re leaving it too late. A fire that is miles away could be at your door in minutes.”

To find out more about getting ready for the fire season or book the Home Bushfire Advice Service, visit cfa.vic.gov.au or call **1800 240 667**.

A map showing fire restriction across Victorian municipalities and a *Can I or Can't I?* brochure (detailing the restrictions and the differences between FDP and Total Fire Ban days) is also available on the CFA website or by phoning the VBIL.

Fire Danger Period restrictions: the details

- Fires in the open air are legally restricted when a FDP is declared in a municipality by CFA. A written permit is required to burn off grass, undergrowth, weeds or other vegetation. This permit is issued by the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer or the CFA District Office.
- Lighting a fire in the open without a permit is an offence and can bring a penalty of nearly \$17,000 and/or 12 months imprisonment. All burn-offs should be registered with the VicFire Burn-off notification line on **1800 668 511**.
- Barbeques and fires for cooking and warmth do not require a permit, but **must**: be lit in properly constructed fireplaces (i.e. metal, stone or concrete), not be used in strong winds (less than or equal to 10km per hour), be clear of all flammable material for 3m from the outer perimeter and be supervised at all times by a person who has the means and capacity to extinguish the fire. (details in *Can I or Can't I*).
- The use of: an incinerator, chainsaw/lawn mower, welding/grinding equipment, vehicles that come in contact with vegetation and machinery with an internal combustion/heat engine are permitted provided guidelines are followed (details in *Can I or Can't I*).
- CFA's *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 the CFA website.

A [Total Fire Ban declaration](#) means no fires can be lit for the declared district for that day unless there is a specific exemption or special permit issued. This applies irrespective of the Fire Restriction status for a given municipality (details in *Can I Can't I*).

-ENDS-

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