

CFS FACT SHEET

PLANNING TO STAY AND DEFEND



If you are planning to stay and defend your property then you will need to prepare your property and yourself throughout the year. It is important that you consider the Fire Danger Rating when considering whether to stay and defend your property. Checking the daily Fire Danger Rating should be included in your Bushfire Survival Plan.

What to do during the year

- Prepare a 'bushfire survival kit' (refer to CFS Fact Sheet- "Bushfire Survival Kits")
- Prepare a checklist of what you need to do before, during and after a bushfire
- Clean up and manage fine ground fuels within 20 metres of your house
- Address any long standing problems
eg: close underfloor space
seal gaps around house
purchase and install water tank
landscape garden etc.



Manage fuel loads around your property



Clean gutters of leaves and other debris

What to do before and during the fire danger season

- Check water supply and top up if necessary.
- Service pump and check at regular intervals.
- Reduce fine ground fuels within 20 metres of your house
- Clean gutters of any flammable debris.
- Move firewood away from house.
- Practice your 'Bushfire Survival Plan'.
- Check your 'bushfire survival kit'.
- Check your pump and run it for approximately 5 minutes and then refuel

What to do on Fire Danger days

- Discuss the day's action with your family and/or neighbours.
- Keep pets in close proximity.
- Relocate livestock to a safer paddock.
- Listen to the radio, scanner or keep a regular look out for telltale smoke
- Check pump. Run for approximately five minutes and refuel.
- Water your garden early in the morning.
- Wet down any problem areas.



Regularly test pumps

Get Physically and Emotionally Prepared

If you intend to stay and defend your property, you need to be physically and emotionally able to do this. You will need to be alert, have a plan, and be prepared to act independently. The impact of a bushfire can be stressful, defending your home can be a long and exhausting process, and smoke and radiant heat can be hazardous to health.

It is important to understand that stress is normal and natural, but it needs to be recognised so it does not cause further problems.

- Focus on staying as calm as you can, even as the emergency builds.
- Stick to your plan, unless there is a very good reason to change it.
- Monitor how other people in the household are feeling, and help them to stay calm.
- Tell them how you are feeling, and support each other.
- Use breathing techniques: breathe slowly and calmly.

Radiant Heat Protection

As the fire front approaches your property it is vital that you seek refuge from the radiant heat.

Your home may provide some protection provided:

- You have done all the essential preparatory work throughout the year.
- All people present have a good understanding of what to expect when the fire front arrives.
- You are vigilant in patrolling for sparks and embers and can observe the behaviour of the fire whilst inside.
- You have identified a room for the elderly or young to shelter in while others 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**.

Water tanks

Avoid elevated water tanks as a safe refuge. Once immersed in water, the body will quickly absorb heat. If the ambient air temperature is in the high thirties and a bushfire raises the temperature of the water a further ten degrees, the water or body temperature will be un-survivable.

Swimming Pools

The use of swimming pools as a safe refuge is also discouraged. Although pools may provide adequate protection to parts of the body below the water line, the most sensitive parts of your body (face, head, lungs) will be exposed to radiant heat, smoke and superheated air.

Further information including the in-depth fact sheet titled 'On the Day of a Bushfire' and a 'Bushfire Survival Plan' template can be obtained from: www.cfs.sa.gov.au or SA CFS, GPO Box 2468, Adelaide, SA 5001. 08 8463 4200.

