

**PROTECT
YOUR FAMILY
PROTECT YOUR LIFE**

BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.



WELCOME

2 | INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

4 | ARE YOU AT RISK OF A BUSH FIRE?

PREPARE.

5 | PREPARE YOUR BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

6 | PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

ACT.

8 | FIRE DANGER RATINGS

10 | KEEPING YOURSELF INFORMED

SURVIVE.

11 |  LEAVE EARLY

12 |  STAY AND DEFEND

14 | NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES

15 | EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT

16 | LEAVE EARLY SURVIVAL PLAN

17 | STAY AND DEFEND SURVIVAL PLAN

18 | PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

19 | KIDS SECTION

23 | MYTH BUSTERS

Protect Your Family, Protect Your Life

Bush fires are a natural part of the Australian environment and occur regularly, but many people fail to prepare for them. When threatened by bush fires, people will often leave it too late to make critical decisions and often have few safe options left.

During a bush fire, firefighters will be working to stop the fire, but the size and

intensity of a fire could mean that a fire truck may not be available to defend your home.

It is your responsibility to reduce the risk to your family and your home and take actions to survive a bush fire.

The most important decision is whether you and your family will **Leave Early** or if you will **Stay and Defend** your well prepared home.



In an area where a bush fire can start, leaving early on Catastrophic fire danger days is your only safe option.

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.



The majority of deaths during bush fires result from people trying to leave their homes at the last moment. Leaving late places you at greater risk of getting caught in your car and suffering from smoke inhalation or extreme heat.

In an area where a bush fire can start, leaving early on Catastrophic fire danger days is your only safe option. On any other day you should only Stay and Defend if you have a well maintained property and if you are physically, emotionally and mentally prepared to defend your home.

This booklet will help you to make the important decisions that you need to make well before you are threatened by a bush fire. Your **Bush Fire Survival Plan** can help protect the lives of your family and will also give you information about the ways in which you can best prepare your home to survive the threat of a bush fire.

*Regardless of whether you are planning to **Leave Early** or **Stay and Defend**, you should always have a back-up plan.*

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

PREPARE. You must make important decisions before the fire season starts.

ACT. The higher the Fire Danger Rating, the more dangerous the conditions.

SURVIVE. Fires may threaten without warning so you need to know what you will do to survive.

You will notice throughout this document the **New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS)** recommends that you make the decision to Leave Early on days when:

- There is a **CATASTROPHIC** Fire Danger Rating **or**
- The Fire Danger Rating is **EXTREME**, if your home has not been specially designed, constructed or modified* to withstand a fire, or if you are not well prepared.

Choosing to ignore these recommendations means you may be risking your life and the lives of your family. Leaving early is always the safest option.

* To learn more about specially designed homes visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Understanding Your Level Of Risk

Knowing your level of risk means you will be able to make the safest decision for you and your family.

I'M NOT AT RISK OF A BUSH FIRE... AM I?

If you live or work in or near bushland, then you are at risk from bush fire.

The word 'bushland' doesn't just mean trees or forest; it also means areas such as scrub, grassland, crops, woodland and farmland.

There are some basic questions you can ask yourself to check your level of risk

1. Do you live within a couple of streets of bushland?
2. Does your local area have a history of bush fires?
3. Do you have many trees and shrubs around your home?
4. If you need to leave your home, do you need to travel through bushland?
5. Is your Bush Fire Survival Plan more than one year old?

If you answered 'Yes' to one or more of these questions, then you and your family may be at risk in the event of a fire.

ANSWERED 'YES' BUT STILL NOT CONVINCED?

The NSW RFS has created a **Bush Fire Household Assessment Tool** to help you to assess your household's level of risk from a bush fire. This quick assessment will help you make the decisions that are right for you and your family.

This tool can be found at:
www.rfs.nsw.gov.au.

YOUR HOME MAY NOT BE AT RISK...

If your home is not directly at risk from a bush fire, there are still some general actions you should take to protect you and your family:

1. Make sure your family has a general understanding about bush fires and bush fire safety. If they are in an area that is affected by a bush fire, such as at work or on holiday, they will be able to make the safest choices.
2. Make basic preparations to your home. Embers can travel many kilometres ahead of a fire, so even if you are not directly threatened by a bush fire, you may be impacted by embers. Preparing your home can reduce the risk of embers starting spot fires around your home.
3. Keep yourself informed on days of increased fire danger. You should get into the habit of paying attention to your local radio and TV stations on hot, dry, windy days. This will help you plan your day and make sure you avoid areas where there is an increased risk of a bush fire.

YOUR HOME MAY BE AT RISK...

If your home may be at risk of a bush fire you need to have a **Bush Fire Survival Plan**.

Your **Bush Fire Survival Plan** will help you make decisions that will give you and your family the best chance of surviving a bush fire.

These decisions include:

1. How will you **PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE?**
2. Will you **Leave Early** or will you **Stay and Defend?**
3. What will your triggers be to act?
4. What will your back-up plan be?

This booklet will help you answer these questions so you can make the safest decisions for you, your family and your pets well before you are threatened by a bush fire.

When fires burn on Catastrophic or Extreme fire danger days they will be so hot and travel so fast that it will be extremely hard for fire authorities to control them.

PREPARE.

PREPARE YOUR BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN PREPARE YOURSELF PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

You need to take steps to prepare yourself, your family and your home. This means being prepared well before you can be affected by a fire.



PREPARE YOUR BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

Your **Bush Fire Survival Plan** is one of the best ways to help improve the safety of you and your family before the impact of, or during a bush fire. Your plan can help stop you from making rushed and dangerous decisions at the last moment.



LEAVE EARLY

Leaving early is always the safest option. In some situations the choice to Leave Early is much more important.

These include when:

- ☐ The Fire Danger Rating is Catastrophic. Homes aren't designed to withstand a bush fire during these conditions. Any fire that starts and takes hold will be so intense that it won't be safe to Stay and Defend any home – no matter how well prepared it is.
- ☐ 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 homes are not safe to defend because of their location or, construction.

If you plan to leave then you should leave well before a fire reaches your area and well before you are under threat. You should listen to your local radio station for messages and warnings – but do not rely just on warnings as fires can develop quickly and impact on communities before authorities can issue official warnings.

Deciding if you will Leave Early or Stay and Defend a well prepared property

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.



STAY AND DEFEND A WELL PREPARED PROPERTY

Consider the following if you plan to Stay and Defend your property:

- ☐ 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 resources and equipment and does everyone planning to Stay and Defend know how to use them?
- ☐ Do you have access to water for firefighting purposes e.g. a tank, dam or pool? Town water supplies can fail during emergencies.
- ☐ Do you have appropriate personal protective clothing?
- ☐ Do you have a back-up plan?

You cannot just Stay and Defend without careful planning and preparation.

BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

WHAT IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG? YOU NEED TO HAVE 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.

Understand your options and have back-up plans

Think about:

- What you will do if you have no time to leave and a fire threatens you – where will you shelter and how will you get there?
- What you will do if a bush fire threatens on a weekday versus a weekend or if children are at home alone?
- What you will do if you are suffering from injury, exhaustion or if the fire is more intense than you thought?

These are all scenarios that could happen to you.

Can you think of any others?

A well prepared home is more likely to survive a bush fire even if you leave early



PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

Regardless of your decision to **Leave Early** or **Stay and Defend**, you still need to prepare your property against the threat of a bush fire or ember attack.

- ☐ A well prepared home is more likely to survive a bush fire. Even if your plan is to **Leave Early**, the more you prepare your home, the more likely it will be to survive bush fire or ember attack.
- ☐ A well prepared home can be easier for you and firefighters to defend.
- ☐ A well prepared home is less likely to put your neighbours' homes at risk.
- ☐ A well prepared home will give you more protection if a fire threatens suddenly and you cannot leave and have to take shelter.

PREPARE YOURSELF

Preparation is not just about cleaning up around the house and having a plan. It is also about making sure you consider your physical, mental and emotional preparedness.

A bush fire can be a terrifying situation. Strong gusty winds, intense heat and flames will make you tired quickly. Thick, heavy smoke will sting your eyes and choke your lungs. It will be difficult to see and breathe. The roaring sound of the fire approaching will deafen you. Embers will rain down, causing spot fires all around you. Power and water may be cut off. You may be isolated. It will be dark, noisy and extremely physically and mentally demanding.

If you have any doubts about your ability to cope, you should plan to **Leave Early**.



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

ARE YOU PREPARED TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE?

Prepare your Bush Fire Survival Plan!

Cut back any overhanging trees or shrubs and dispose of cuttings appropriately.

Check the condition of your roof and replace any damaged or missing tiles.

Non-combustible fences are the most effective at withstanding the intense heat generated by a bush fire.

Clean leaves from the roof, gutters and downpipes and fit quality metal leaf guards.

Plant trees and shrubs that are less likely to ignite due to their low oil content.

If you have a water tank, dam or swimming pool, consider installing a Static Water Supply sign (SWS).

INSURANCE
Maintain adequate levels of home and contents insurance.

Enclose underfloor areas.

Store wood piles well away from the house and keep covered.

Keep garden mulch away from the house and keep grass short.

Make sure the pressure relief valves on LPG cylinders face outwards (so flame is not directed towards the house).

Ensure you have a hose which is long enough to reach every part of the home.

Remove and store any flammable items away from the house.

Check the condition of external walls, cladding and seal any gaps.

Have a non-combustible doormat.

Install metal flywire or solid screens to the outside windows and doors.



BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

ACT.

THE HIGHER THE FIRE DANGER RATING THE MORE DANGEROUS THE CONDITIONS. KEEP INFORMED AND BE READY TO ACT.

FIRE DANGER RATINGS

The Fire Danger Rating gives you an indication of the consequences of a fire, if a fire was to start. The rating is based on predicted conditions such as the temperature, humidity, wind and dryness of the landscape. It tells you how a bush fire may act, what impacts there might be on the community if a bush fire were to start and when to implement your **Bush Fire Survival Plan**.

Know the current Fire Danger Rating for your area – you and your family's survival may depend on it.

FIRE DANGER RATING	WHAT YOU SHOULD DO
CATASTROPHIC	<p>For your survival, leaving early is the only option.</p> <p>Leave bush fire prone areas the night before or early in the day – do not just wait and see what happens.</p> <p>Make a decision about when you will leave, where you will go, how you will get there and when you will return.</p> <p>Homes are not designed to withstand fires in catastrophic conditions so you should leave early.</p>
EXTREME	<p>Leaving early is the safest option for your survival.</p> <p>If you are not prepared to the highest level, leave early in the day.</p> <p>Only consider staying if you are prepared to the highest level – such as your home is specially designed, constructed or modified, and situated to withstand a fire, you are well prepared and can actively defend it if a fire starts.</p>
SEVERE	<p>Leaving early is the safest option for your survival.</p> <p>Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety – but only stay if you are physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.</p> <p>If you're not prepared, leave early in the day.</p>
VERY HIGH	<p>Review your Bush Fire Survival Plan with your family.</p> <p>Keep yourself informed and monitor conditions.</p> <p>Be ready to act if necessary.</p>
HIGH	
LOW MODERATE	

PREPARE. **ACT.** SURVIVE.

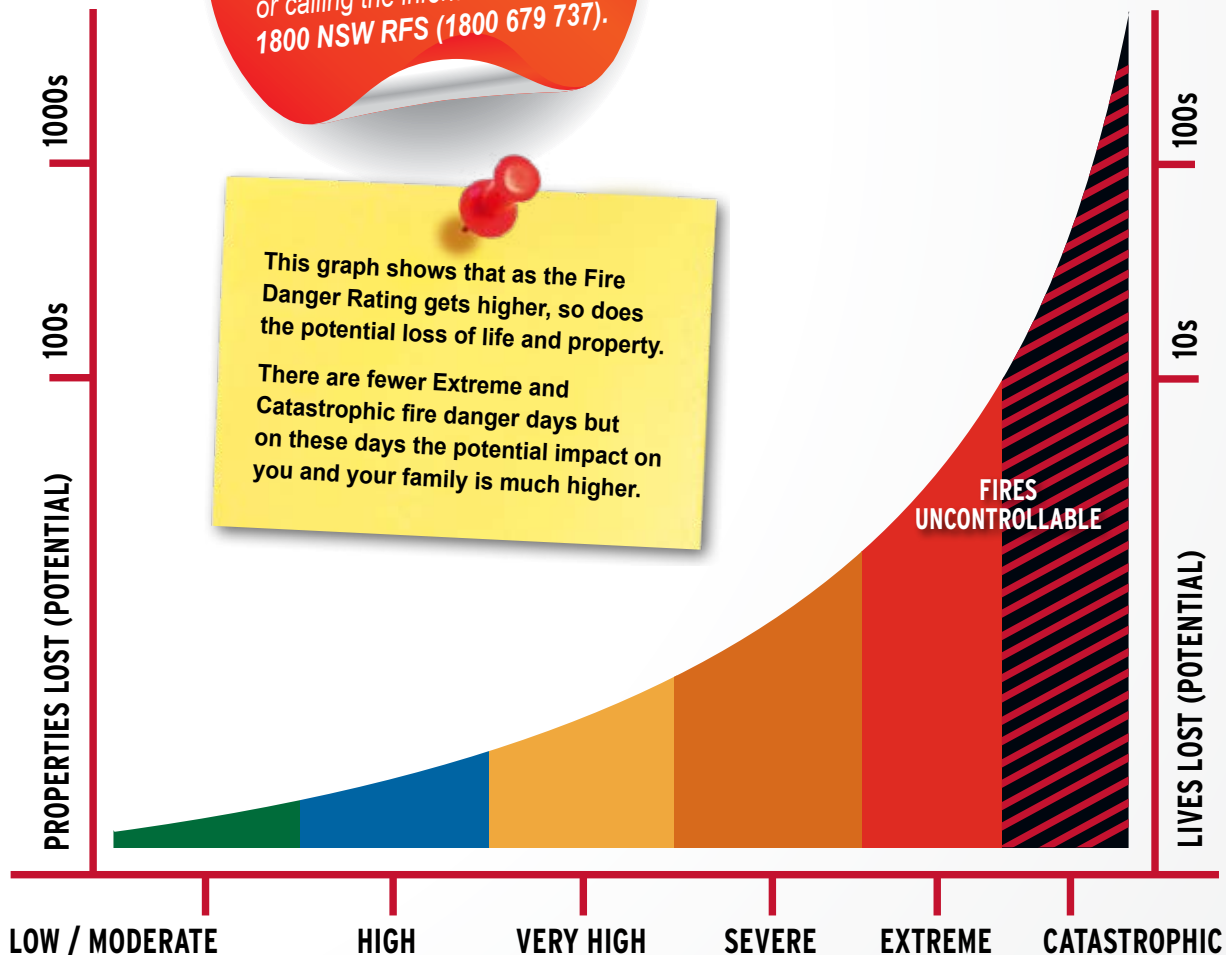


You can find out the Fire Danger Rating for your area by listening to your local news, by visiting the NSW RFS website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or calling the information line on 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737).

SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND

- ☐ The higher the Fire Danger Rating the more severe the consequences could be for you and your family. As the fire danger increases so does the likelihood that people will die or be injured if a fire was to start.
- ☐ On Catastrophic days, no properties in areas where a bush fire can start will be defensible. Some fires burn so intensely that not even specially designed and constructed homes will be safe.
- ☐ Severe, Extreme and Catastrophic Fire Danger Ratings mean a fire will be unpredictable, uncontrollable and very fast moving. This means that you may have little or no warning about the threat of a bush fire. You need to make sure you keep yourself informed and be ready to put your plan into action.

The Fire Danger Rating should be your first trigger for activating your Bush Fire Survival Plan. The safety of you, your family and your home may depend on it.



BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

KEEPING YOURSELF INFORMED

Some fires start and spread so quickly that there's no time for any warning at all. That's why you need to have a **Bush Fire Survival Plan** and be prepared to put it into action quickly.

WHAT ARE BUSH FIRE ALERTS?

During a bush fire, Alert Levels are used to give you an indication of the level of threat from a fire. You'll find these on the **NSW RFS** website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and on radio and television. **There are three levels of Bush Fire Alerts.**

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.

For some fires, you may hear a warning message over your radio or television, such as a siren, or you may receive a text message or phone call. Other fires may start so quickly that there will be no time for any warning at all.

Bush Fire Alerts are not always given in the above order. As an example, the first alert you receive may be at Watch and Act. If you receive a Bush Fire Alert, you must take it seriously. Failure to take action can result in death or injury to you or your family members.

You can keep up to date by:

- ☐ Knowing what the Fire Danger Rating is for your area, especially on hot, dry and windy days.
- ☐ Look and listen for information on TV, radio, the INTERNET, mobile phones and speaking with neighbours, friends and family.
- ☐ If you receive a Bush Fire Alert, take it seriously and act promptly.
- ☐ Watch for signs of fire, especially smoke or the smell of smoke.
- ☐ Do not rely on a single source for emergency information!

Know what your trigger is and be prepared to put your Bush Fire Survival Plan into place with little or no warning.

ON DAYS OF INCREASED FIRE DANGER

On hot, dry, windy days you should pay extra attention to the fire risk in your area. There are actions you can do to save time in case a fire does start:

- ☐ Contain pets so they can be easily found.
- ☐ Move stock to fully grazed areas.
- ☐ Check water pumps and generators to make sure they are working.
- ☐ Review your Bush Fire Survival Plan with your family and have your Emergency Survival Kit and protective clothing ready.
- ☐ Listen to the media for updates and information.
- ☐ Talk to your neighbours, family and friends.

Make sure your whole family knows what your trigger is and be ready to put your Bush Fire Survival Plan into action.

SURVIVE.

KNOW WHAT YOU WILL DO TO SURVIVE

As soon as you become aware that there is a fire in your area you must put your Bush Fire Survival Plan into action. Hesitating or adopting a 'wait and see' approach could have deadly consequences for you and your family.

If you are planning to Leave Early you should plan to leave early in the morning or even the night before. Leaving early means leaving LONG before the bush fire is in your area and long before you see flames!



If you are leaving then you must Leave Early.

If you are planning to Stay and Defend you should ask yourself:

- ☐ Is there a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating? If you answer "Yes" then you should Leave Early.
- ☐ Is there an Extreme fire danger rating and my home has not been specially designed, constructed or modified to withstand a fire? If you answer "Yes" then you should Leave Early.
- ☐ Am I physically and mentally prepared for this? If you answer "No" then you should Leave Early.
- ☐ Is my property well prepared and defensible? If you answer "No" then you should Leave Early.



LEAVE EARLY

The safest option in a bush fire is always to Leave Early. **When you are preparing your Leave Early plan you need to decide on several important things, including:**

What will your trigger be to Leave Early?

Your trigger is something that happens to signal to you that it is time to leave. You need to decide on your own triggers, depending on your own situation. Triggers could be a range of things such as a Fire Danger Rating of Catastrophic or Extreme, or a fire in the vicinity of your home.

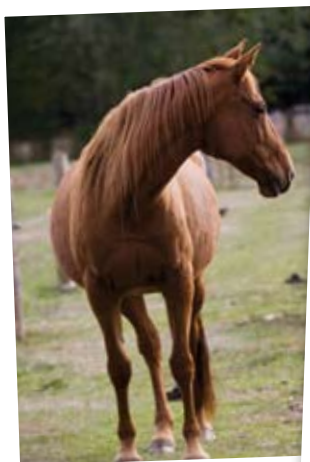
Regardless of what your trigger is, it must be something that happens long before your safety is threatened by the bush fire.

Where will you go and will it be safer?

If you are planning to Leave Early then you need to make sure you are going somewhere that is safer. Places you could go might be a friend or relative's house, or a shopping centre away from bushland - which isn't going to be affected by a fire.

It is important to make sure that where you are planning to go to is safe and away from the threat of the fire. You can find this information by talking to relatives or friends, visiting the NSW RFS website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or by calling the information line on **1800 NSW RFS**.

As a family you should identify a number of safer places you could go. This means that if the situation does change and you cannot go to your first choice of a safer place, you will have a number of other safe places you could go to.



PREPARE YOUR PETS AND LIVESTOCK

A bush fire will be a traumatic and stressful experience for your pets and livestock. During a bush fire your animals will need water, shade and a safe place. You should always contain your animals in a well cleared fenced-in area. Never turn animals out on the road to run free. This is dangerous not only for them but also for firefighters and other people on the road.

BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN



STAY AND DEFEND

**BEFORE THE FIRE IMPACTS...
YOU NEED TO BE ACTIVELY
DEFENDING YOUR PROPERTY**

Outside the house

- ☐ Ensure you drink plenty of water so you do not dehydrate.
- ☐ Block your downpipes, (a sock full of sand/soil will help) and fill your gutters with water.
- ☐ Move flammable items such as outdoor furniture, doormats, hanging baskets away from the house.
- ☐ Gas cylinders should have the valve facing away from the house.
- ☐ Do not stand on your roof with your hose. In bush fires, often more people are injured by falling from roofs than suffering burns.
- ☐ Patrol the outside of your home, putting out any embers and spot fires that may start. An ember or spark can reach your home hours before the fire front arrives.
- ☐ Just before the fire arrives, wet down timber decks and gardens close to the house.
- ☐ Move any firefighting equipment to a place that it will not get burnt.



Staying and defending equipment

Extra equipment that might help you if you are going to Stay and Defend your property includes:

- ☐ Ladders
- ☐ Spades/shovels
- ☐ Mops and buckets
- ☐ Hoses (long enough to reach every part of your house)
- ☐ Consider having a minimum 5000-litre water tank
- ☐ Petrol/diesel pumps



Before you decide to Stay and Defend you should ask yourself 'am I prepared and am I capable?' If no, then you should Leave Early.

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

Before making the final decision to Stay and Defend you should make sure

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

By choosing to Stay and Defend your property you may be at risk of serious injury or death. If there is any doubt in your mind, you should Leave Early.



Inside the House

- ☐ Continue to drink water so you do not dehydrate.
- ☐ Confine pets to one room.
- ☐ Close doors, windows, vents, blinds and curtains to prevent flames, smoke and embers from entering.
- ☐ Put tape across the inside of the windows so they stay in place if they break.
- ☐ Shut off gas at the meter or bottle.
- ☐ Move furniture away from the windows to prevent any embers that enter the house from igniting.
- ☐ Fill bath, sinks and buckets with water for putting out any fires that may start inside.
- ☐ Place wet towels around window and door edges to stop smoke and embers from entering.
- ☐ Put a ladder next to the access hole to the roof space so you can check for spot fires.

WHEN THE FIRE ARRIVES... IT'S GOING TO BE HOT, LOUD AND DARK

Go inside but stay alert as the fire front approaches. Ensure you have torches ready as it is likely to become completely dark and you will not be able to see. Shelter in a room that is 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 for sparks and embers.

If your house catches fire and you cannot put it out, close all interior doors and shelter inside on the opposite side of the house from the approaching fire close to an exit. Leave the house when it is necessary and safe to do so.



The safest place is always away from the fire – your life and the life of your family is the highest priority.

ONCE THE FIRE HAS PASSED... YOU WILL NEED TO PATROL YOUR PROPERTY FOR HOURS

Go outside and put out any part of your house which is alight. Check under the house and any decks as well as in the roof space. You will need to keep patrolling your property for many hours even when the fire has gone. An ember or spark can impact on a house up to eight hours after the fire has passed and small spot fires can quickly get out of control.

Neighbourhood Safer Places

PLACES OF LAST RESORT

The safest option for you and your family is always to **Leave Early**. If the situation does change and you find yourself unable to **Leave Early** or safely **Stay and Defend** your property then you may want to consider going to a **Neighbourhood Safer Place**.

Places of last resort

- ❑ If it is unsafe to leave the area or **Stay and Defend** your property, and the path is clear, you should move to your pre-identified **Neighbourhood Safer Place**, or other safer location, prior to the impact of a bush fire.
- ❑ Be aware that when you are travelling to your **Neighbourhood Safer Place** there may be heavy smoke and poor visibility.
- ❑ Gather at the location and remain there until the bush fire threat has passed.
- ❑ Conditions may be uncomfortable and you may be affected by smoke and embers
- ❑ Water, toilets and food may not be available at the **Neighbourhood Safer Place** and emergency service personnel may not be present.
- ❑ **Neighbourhood Safer Places** are not intended for pets and livestock.

Remember, **Neighbourhood Safer Places** and other safer locations are places of last resort, meaning they should only be used when all other options identified in your **Bush Fire Survival Plan** cannot be safely implemented. Leaving well before you and your family are threatened by a bush fire will always be your safest option.



What are Neighbourhood Safer Places?

Neighbourhood Safer Places are buildings or open spaces that are away from bushland and can provide some protection from the immediate threat of a bush fire.

They are a place where people can take short-term shelter during a bush fire and should only be used until the threat of the fire has passed.

They are not long-term options and shouldn't be confused with places like **Fire Refuges**, **Evacuation Centres**, **Welfare Centres**, **Recovery Centres**, **Assembly Points** or private bush fire shelters (bunkers).

Neighbourhood Safer Places do not guarantee your safety and should only be used as a Place of Last Resort during a bush fire.

**Bush Fire
Neighbourhood
Safer Place**
A Place of Last Resort



Including Neighbourhood Safer Places in your Bush Fire Survival Plan

Ideally you should have more than one **Neighbourhood Safer Place**, and other safer locations included in your **Bush Fire Survival Plan**. Other safer locations may include a nearby well prepared home, the beach, a shopping centre or a sports oval that is away from the bush. **You should always use the safest option during a bush fire emergency.** It is important that you know the safest route, as well as any alternate routes, to your **Neighbourhood Safer Place**. Remember that local roads can become blocked by fire, smoke or fallen trees.

TO FIND YOUR LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES

... visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or
call the NSW RFS Bush Fire
Information Line on
1800 679 737 (1800 NSW RFS).

Emergency Survival Kit

Prepare an Emergency Survival Kit before the bush fire season starts. Having a prepared kit means having easy access to things that can help you survive a bush fire or other natural disaster and, will be in one handy location. This kit will help you regardless of whether you are going to leave or stay and actively defend your house.

Some of the things you might like to include in your kit are:



Remember to prepare for your pets as well. Make sure your pet is wearing an identification tag and add the following to your Emergency Survival Kit:

- ☐ Basket/cage/leash.
- ☐ Any medications, dietary supplements, food and drinking water.
- ☐ Familiar item (toy, bed, treats) to help reduce stress.

You should keep your Emergency Survival Kit in a waterproof storage container in a location that is easy to get to and that the whole family knows about. This will make it quick and easy to find when you need it.

General items

- ☐ Portable battery-operated radio
- ☐ Waterproof torch
- ☐ Spare batteries
- ☐ First aid kit with manual
- ☐ Candles with waterproof matches
- ☐ Woollen blankets
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers
- ☐ Waterproof bag for valuables

Before you leave, add:

- ☐ Cash, ATM cards, credit cards
- ☐ Medications, toiletries and sanitary supplies
- ☐ Special requirements for infants, elderly, injured, disabled
- ☐ Mobile phone and charger
- ☐ Combination pocket knife
- ☐ Important documents, valuables and photos (in waterproof bag)
- ☐ Change of clothes for everyone
- ☐ Drinking water (at least three litres per person per day)

Tip: Your Emergency Survival Kit can also be used for other emergencies such as storms and flooding. Just make sure you check and refill your Emergency Survival Kit each time you use it.



BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

Our **LEAVE EARLY** Plan

WE WROTE OUR BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN ON: __ / __ / __



IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU LEAVE EARLY IF:

- ☐ There is a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating.
- ☐ There is a Extreme Fire Danger Rating and your home has not been specially designed and constructed.
- ☐ Your property has not been well maintained.
- ☐ The people who will be actively at home are not emotionally prepared or physically fit.

ON ANY OTHER DAY OUR TRIGGERS TO LEAVE EARLY WILL BE:

(Consider triggers such as a fire in the vicinity of your home, the smell of smoke, family members being home alone, loss of water or power and the ability to leave your home safely.)

WE WILL GO TO:

(Consider low fire risk areas.)

WE WILL GET THERE BY:

(Depending on where the fire is located, you may need to consider alternate routes.)

WE WILL TAKE:

(Prepare your Emergency Survival Kit as well as anything else you might need such as kids' favourite toys, medications, pet needs.)

WE WILL TELL:

(Make sure people know where you are going to and when you get there safely.)

OUR BACK-UP PLAN

Sometimes things don't go according to plan.
To make sure our family is always safe our other **Leave Early** options are:

Our Places of Last Resort are:

(Neighbourhood Safer Places and other safe locations.)

Our back-up travel routes are:

If we cannot leave the house, we will:

Scenarios you should consider include:

What will you do if you have no time to leave and a fire threatens you, what if local roads become unusable, what happens if the children are home alone or if it is a weekday versus a weekend or if you are unwell?

Don't forget to close the doors and windows before you leave.

Our **STAY AND DEFEND** Plan

WE WROTE OUR BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN ON: __ / __ / __



IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU DO NOT STAY AND DEFEND IF:

- ☐ There is a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating.
- ☐ There is a Extreme Fire Danger Rating and your home has not been specially designed and constructed.
- ☐ Your property has not been well maintained.
- ☐ The people who will be actively defending are not emotionally prepared or physically fit.

THE OTHER TRIGGERS THAT MEAN WE WILL NOT STAY AND DEFEND ARE:

(Consider triggers such as a fire in the vicinity of your home, family members being home alone, loss of water or power or failure of equipment.)

AS THE FIRE APPROACHES WE WILL:

(Prepare for an ember attack on or near your home. List the actions you will take.)

ONCE THE FIRE HAS ARRIVED WE WILL:

(Stay safe by monitoring the fire from inside your house. List the actions you are going to do such as check inside the roof space.)

AFTER THE FIRE HAS PASSED WE WILL:

(Patrol your property, checking under the house, decks and in the roof space for any burning embers. You may need to do this for several hours. Outline the actions you will take.)

OUR BACK-UP PLAN

Sometimes things don't go according to plan. To make sure our family is always safe our other **Stay and Defend** options are:

Our Places of Last Resort are:

(Neighbourhood Safer Places and other safe locations.)

Our back-up travel routes are:

If we cannot leave the house, we will:

Scenarios you should consider include:

What will you do if you have no time to leave and a fire threatens you, what if local roads become unusable, what happens if the children are home alone or if it is a weekday versus a weekend or if you are unwell?

Personal Protective Clothing

WHY WEAR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING?

Being in or near a bush fire can cause a number of different injuries and everyone should wear protective clothing to avoid injury from smoke, sparks, embers and extreme heat. Loose fitting clothing made from natural fibres such as pure wool, heavy cotton drill or denim is important to protect you from injury. Synthetic fabrics can melt or burn.



A pair of heavy cotton pants. For example denim jeans, oil-free drill pants or cotton overalls.



Sturdy leather work boots or shoes along with a pair of woollen or cotton socks.



A wide-brimmed hat or hard hat can stop embers from dropping onto your head or down the back of your shirt.



Glasses or goggles will protect your eyes against any smoke, embers and debris that may be in the air.



Gloves.



A mask or cloth (non-synthetic) to cover your nose and mouth will protect you from inhaling smoke, ash and embers.



A long-sleeved shirt made from thick cotton or wool is ideal (e.g. flannelette or cotton drill work shirt).

Fire Danger Rating

Knowing the Fire Danger Rating helps your family make a safe decision.

On days when the Fire Danger Rating is **CATASTROPHIC**
the only safe option is to Leave Early.

Do you know the right colours and ratings?

Draw a line to match the rating to the right colour, then colour in the Fire Danger Rating Chart below.

Low/Moderate

Red/Black stripe

High

Green

Very High

Orange

Severe

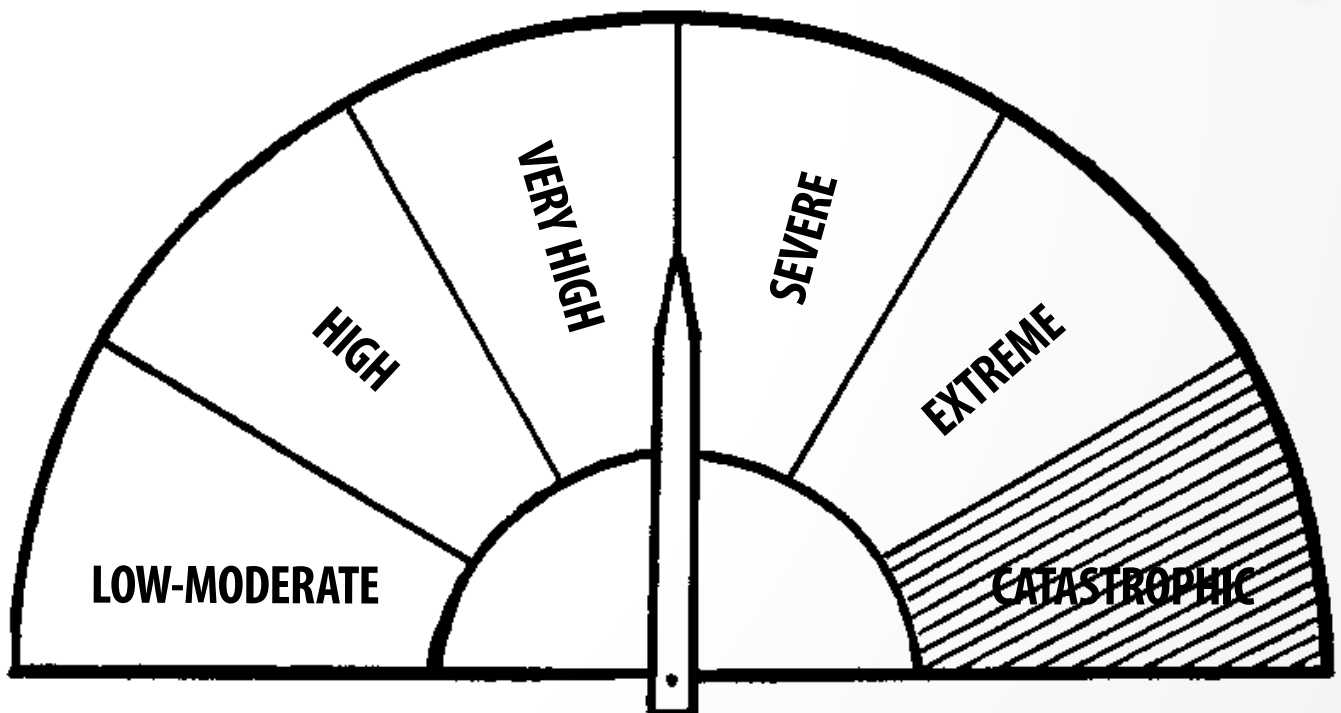
Red

Extreme

Blue

Catastrophic

Yellow



Fire Danger Rating Chart

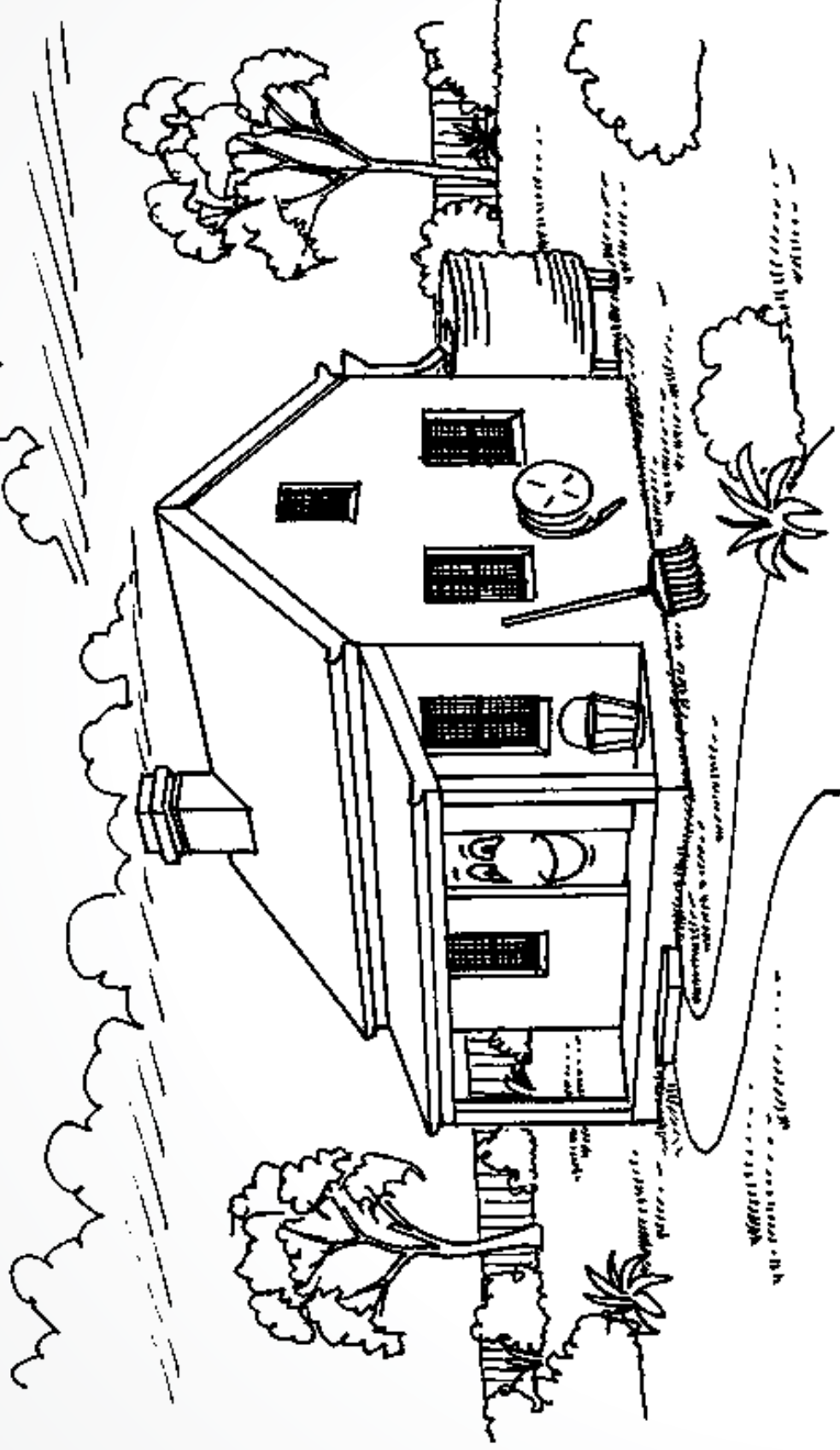
ANSWERS: Low/Moderate – Green, High – Blue, Very High – Yellow, Severe – Orange, Extreme – Red, Catastrophic – Red/Black stripes

Good House

A good house is easier to protect from fire.

I'm ready for a bush fire! Can you find the things that make me a good house?

HINTS:
Clean roof,
clear gutters,
water tank,
hose pipe,
bucket,
mowed lawns,
trimmed
shrubs and
bushes,
screens on
windows





Bad House



A bad house is hard to protect from a bush fire.

I'm not ready for a bush fire. Can you find the things that make me a bad house?

HINTS:

Leaves,
wood piles,
furniture
outside
the house,
overgrown
trees, shrubs
and bushes,
gas cylinders,
trees branches
overhanging
house, no
screens on
windows,
long lawns



BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

What would you take?

Having a **Bush Fire Survival Plan** helps keep your family safe.
Part of having a plan is knowing what you would take with you
if there was a bush fire and you had to leave your house.

Circle the items you may want to take with you



Myth Busters

Here are some of the common myths about bush fires and bush fire safety. Not knowing the facts can be life threatening for you and your family.



MYTH There will always be a fire truck available to fight a bush fire threatening my home

FACT There will never be as many fire trucks as there are houses. Do not depend on a fire truck being available at your home.



MYTH I'll be fine; the bush is a few streets away

FACT Most houses are burnt in bush fires because of ember attack. Embers can cause fires many kilometres in front of the main fire and can start falling hours before the fire arrives at your home. You need to make sure that your home is properly prepared to withstand an ember attack.



MYTH Filling the bath tub when a fire is approaching is to sit in

FACT The NSW RFS recommends that you fill your bath and sinks with water so that you will have water in case water supply to your home is cut off. This water can then be used to put out small spot fires that may start in and around the home.



MYTH It won't happen to me

FACT No one can guarantee that it won't happen to you. When you think of recent large bush fire events in Australia, do you think that the people that were impacted by those fires thought that a bush fire would happen to them? If you prepare and nothing ever happens then you have lost nothing. If you do not prepare your family and home in order to best protect them from a bush fire you may regret it when a bush fire does occur!



MYTH Standing on my roof and hosing it down with water will help

FACT During a bush fire more injuries normally occur from people falling off roofs than from burns! Filling your gutters with water and hosing down your roof will help with spot fires due to ember attack, but any hosing should be done from the ground or off a ladder.



MYTH If I know the back streets in my suburb or town really well, it will be okay for me to leave at the very last minute

FACT Smoke from a fire can make it very hard to see and make it dark during the day. Objects like power lines and fallen trees on roads may be hard to see, making driving dangerous. It is always better to leave long before the fire arrives.



MYTH Fire travels slower up hill

FACT Fires will move faster up a hill and slower down a hill. The speed of a fire will double with every 10 degree increase in slope. For example on a 20 degree slope, bush fire speed is four times faster than on flat ground!



MYTH A house can explode if it catches on fire

FACT That depends on what is stored in the house. You should consider what flammable and explosive objects you have in your home and where you can move them to reduce the risk to your home.

BUSH FIRE INFORMATION LINE

1800 NSW RFS

1 8 0 0 6 7 9 7 3 7

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au



The information and material contained within this publication is general in nature and is intended to be used as a guide only.

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