



**BUSHFIRE
SAFETY**

Getting Your Mob Bushfire Ready



For more information on how to prepare
you and your mob for bushfire season,
visit www.ahmrc.org.au/bushfire-safety

**PLAN
PREPARE
PROTECT
YOUR MOB**



The AH&MRC would like to acknowledge the Bidjigal and Gadigal Clans who traditionally occupied the Sydney Coast, and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

About: This resource has been created to help you and your mob prepare a bushfire safety plan. Bushfires can have a devastating impact, not only on our environment, but also on our health and wellbeing. Preparing for a bushfire now will help you and your family to stay safe and well during a bushfire emergency. AH&MRC recommends leaving early as the safest option to protect you and your family. If you would like more information on planning to stay and defend your home, please visit the [NSW Rural Fire Service website](https://www.nsw.gov.au/rural-fire-service).

Getting bushfire ready: Family members can react differently in an emergency, and some people are more affected by bushfire smoke including children, Elders and people with chronic health issues. Making a plan together will help you identify any possible risks, reduce stress and ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a bush fire. If you live in a bushfire affected area, don't wait until a bushfire starts. Plan now using five steps:



Step 1:
Yarn with your family



Step 2:
Prepare your home



Step 3:
Prepare your mob



Step 4:
Take care of yourself

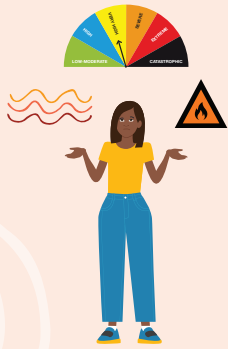


Step 5:
Stay informed

Step 1: Yarn with your family



If you live in an area affected by bushfires, have a yarn with your mob about getting bush fire ready. It's important to have a plan so everyone in your family knows what to do in the event of a bushfire. Write down answers to the below questions together as a family.



1. When will we leave?

What will be the sign? E.g. smoke in area, 'very high' fire danger rating, as soon as you find out there is a fire near you.

2. Where will we meet?

Where is a safe meeting place that is away from the fire area? It might be a friend or relative's house who lives outside of your Community.



3. How will we get there?

What road will you take? What's your back up plan if a road is blocked?



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4. What will we take?

E.g. identification, photos, documents, medications etc. See the checklist on **page 5** for ideas of what to take.



5. Who will we call to tell them we're leaving and have arrived safely?

Use the bushfire emergency contact list on **page 9** to make a list of important numbers to call in the event of a bushfire.



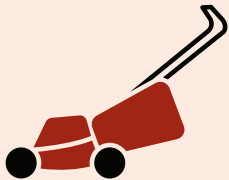
6. What is our plan b?

If a bushfire is close to your home, check whether your Community has a Neighbourhood Safer Space or identify a safe location close by e.g. sporting ground or a well-prepared neighbour's home.

TIP: Once you have written your answers out, keep your bushfire safety plan somewhere you and your mob can see e.g. on the fridge or the kitchen counter.

Step 2: Prepare your home

Here are some things you can do to prepare for bushfires and help firefighters to defend your home.



Action 1: Trim, mow and clear

It is important to trim, mow and clear to prevent fire from spreading to your home.

Trim

- Trees
- Hedges
- Bushes

Mow

- Your lawn

Clear

- Grass cuttings
- Branches
- Sticks
- Leaves

- Dry grass and plants can easily catch on fire. Don't forget to check gutters and awnings for plant material to clear.



Action 2: Remove flammable materials

Remove outdoor items that could catch on fire. These include:

- Door mats
- Wood piles
- Mulch
- Paint
- Petrol
- Outdoor furniture
- BBQ gas bottles



Action 3: Have access to a hose

Make sure you have a good quality garden hose that is big enough to reach around your home or have a hose at both the front and back of your house. During bushfire season make sure this is ready to go and attached to a reliable water source.



Action 4: Prepare your home in the long term

If you want to protect your home from fire danger in the long term, it might be worth investing in more permanent protection for your home. Consider:

- Installing metal fly screens on all windows and vents
- Installing metal gutter guards
- Replacing wooden fences with metal fences
- Using stones instead of mulch in your garden

Step 3: Prepare your mob

3.1 Prepare a mob safe bag

Make sure you prepare a bag with essentials before the bushfire and flood season starts. Keep your bag in a dry and safe place in your home, so it is easy to find in case you need to leave home quickly in an emergency.

Mark the white circles with a tick once you have packed the items.



Important documents

- Copies of identification documents in a zip lock bag (e.g. birth certificates, passports, driver's license, Medicare cards). ☐
- Copies of important documents, such as insurance papers or property titles. ☐
- List of emergency contact number for your family and local AMS or GP. ☐



Personal items and clothing

- Spare clothes for everyone. ☐
- Woollen blankets. ☐
- Other special items you need for babies or pets, such as nappies, kids toys. ☐



Food and water

- Food that does not need to be refrigerated. ☐
- Bottles of water. ☐
- Pocket knife (to help open canned food, packets etc). ☐



Medications and masks

- Regular medication supplies for you and your family e.g. Ventolin inhaler for asthmatics. ☐
- P2 masks to stop fine particles of smoke. N95 and KN95 masks are good too. Ask your local chemist for the best mask to minimise the impacts of bushfire smoke on your health. ☐



First aid supplies

- First aid kit if you have one or some medical supplies e.g. bandages, antibacterial wipes, antiseptic cream etc. ☐
- Hand sanitiser. ☐



Technology

- Waterproof torch and batteries. ☐
- Phone charger. ☐
- Portable radio with batteries (remember in an emergency there might be no internet connection or mobile reception). ☐

Make a list of last minute items to pack in your mob-safe bag.

Fires can move very quickly. If you and your family need to evacuate right away, then do not wait. Get your bags packed and go.

Activity: Write down the last-minute items for your mob-safe bag if there is a bushfire emergency near you.



Last minute items

• Cash and credit cards.

• Toiletries and sanitary items.

• Photos and items of sentimental value that can fit in a bag.

• Medications and scripts.

• Mobile phone and charger.

• Items for the health of Elders, people with a chronic health condition, or family members with a disability, children, or pets.

• Sturdy footwear.

• Most important items the kids want to take with them such as a familiar toy or blanket.



Cut out and keep this checklist in your mob-safe bag.

Checklist of last-minute things I need for My mob-safe bag.

1.

5.

2.

6.

3.

7.

4.

8.

Need extra things for your mob-safe bag?

If you live in a fire-affected area and need some extra items for your Mob-Safe Bag call your local AMS or local community organisations and ask if they can help you.

3.2 Keep your mob safe from bushfire smoke

While smoke holds an important place in our ceremonies and culture, bushfire smoke can have serious effects on our health and wellbeing.

Who is at greater risk from bushfire smoke?



Elders – Elders are at risk because of age and potential pre-existing health conditions.



Pregnant women – Pregnant women are more sensitive to bushfire smoke and its effects.



Children – Children are at risk because their airways are still developing.



People with health issues – People with underlying health issues, especially ones that affect breathing like asthma and emphysema.

Stay safe from bushfire smoke



1. Have a yarn with your doctor

No one is better placed to give you health advice than your doctor. Make sure you:

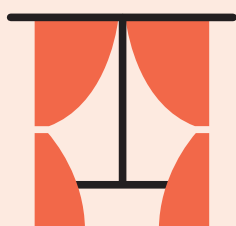


- Check your scripts are up to date and ask your doctor whether you should get any extra medication in case of a bushfire emergency.
- If you or anyone in your family is asthmatic, work with your doctor to create an asthma action plan. Visit your local AMS or GP or book an appointment through telehealth to organise this before a bushfire emergency.



2. Monitor air quality

If you or one of your mob have a condition that may affect your breathing, regularly check the air quality in your local area by using the [NSW Air Quality Index \(AQI\) web page](#). If air quality is poor, and there are no fires nearby, stay indoors as much as you can and close the windows and doors.



3. Spend more time indoors

Stay indoors as much as possible to avoid the dangerous effects of inhaling smoke. Keep your doors and windows shut to keep the smoke out. Spend more time in air-conditioned venues like shopping malls, libraries, and cinemas, but remember to stay physically distanced as much as possible while COVID-19 is still around. While indoors, avoid pollutants like cigarette smoke, candles, and incense.



4. Use HEPA air purifiers

Air purifiers with High Efficiency Particle Air (HEPA) filters minimise the risks of smoke by reducing the number of very small smoke particles indoors. You can purchase HEPA air purifiers from electronics stores online or in-store.



5. Use P2 face masks

Surgical and cloth masks do not protect against smoke, but P2 masks do. P2 masks are also known as N95 or KN95 masks. P2 masks reduce the risk of smoke inhalation by filtering out small particles in smoke. P2 masks are distributed by NSW Health and are available from pharmacies in bushfire affected areas. P2 masks can make it harder for some people with a serious heart or lung condition to breathe. If you're not sure, have a yarn with your doctor and ask whether these masks are safe for you to use.

3.3 Get your bushfire emergency contacts ready

It's important to write down a list of important contact phone numbers, bushfire apps and websites before a bushfire emergency. This will help you prepare if you do not have access to a phone or the internet at the time of the bushfire.

Your Emergency Contact List

Add your emergency contact details to the list, cut it out and put on the fridge or where everyone can see it.



NSW Rural Fire Service



Call

NSW RFS bushfire information
line: **1800 679 737**.



Visit the [NSW RFS website](#) to
stay informed.



Download the [Fire near me app](#)
for updates.

NSW Health

Visit the [NSW Health website](#) for health advice

Local Contacts

Write down contacts that can offer you support during a bushfire emergency.

Aboriginal Medical Service
phone number:

Aboriginal Land Council
phone number :

Electricity Company

Write down the number of your electricity company in case you have difficulties in getting power online.

Electricity company number:

Family contacts

Write down a list of emergency contacts in case your phone runs out of battery.

Name:

Name:

Name:

Step 4: Take care of yourself



For our mob, connection to country is an important part of our social and emotional wellbeing. The threat of being moved on from our own land can be stressful. Here are some deadly tips to focus on your mental health and wellbeing during the bushfire season.



Find new ways of connecting to culture

Walking and being outside in an area affected by bushfires can be dangerous because of smoke and fire danger. Think about ways you could stay connected to land and culture in difficult times such as online community groups, sharing stories with family and friends or reconnecting with a hobby like painting, writing, or music.

Activity: Write down 3 ways you could connect to culture if your community becomes impacted by bushfires or bushfire smoke.

Spend time together

It's important to spend time with people who are supportive when you are feeling worried or anxious. If it is unsafe to travel or spend time together in person, organise to do activities through zoom or video-calling.

Activity: Write down activities you could do with your friends and family if your community was impacted by bushfires.



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Keep a routine

Keep to your daily routine as much as possible. If your routine has been impacted by bushfire conditions, find new things to add to your routine to keep you grounded during stressful times. Some examples include online exercise classes, journaling, or regular phone calls with your mob.

Activity: Plan your day in half hour blocks from when you wake up to when you go to sleep. Try to stick to your routine as much as possible.

Time	Activity	Time	Activity
8.30 AM		3.30 PM	
9.00 AM		4.00 PM	
9.30AM		4.30 PM	
10.00 AM		5.00 PM	
10.30 AM		5.30 PM	
11.00 AM		6.00 PM	
11.30 AM		6.30 PM	
12.00 PM		7.00 PM	
12.30 PM		7.30 PM	
1.00 PM		8.00 PM	
1.30 PM		8.30 PM	
2.00 PM		9.00 PM	
2.30 PM		9.30 PM	



Seek support

Don't be shame to reach out to your friends and family for help if you need it. If you need immediate mental health support and counselling contact Lifeline on **13 11 14** or Beyond Blue on **1300 22 4636**. For more information on the resources and services available to you, contact your local AMS.

Activity: Write a list of three people/services you would call for support during a bushfire emergency.

1

2

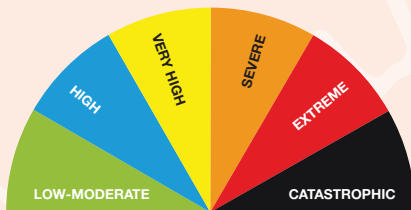
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Step 5: Stay informed



Bushfire danger ratings and alerts will help you to plan when to leave and the actions to take to keep you and your mob safe from bushfires.

What do bushfire danger ratings mean?



Bushfire danger ratings tell you the possible consequences if a fire was to start. Regularly checking the bushfire danger ratings will help you decide what you need to do to keep you and your family safe.

If the fire danger is:

- **Catastrophic: Extreme: Severe:** Leave early in the day to avoid dangerous fire conditions. Leaving early is the safest option for you and your family.
- **Very High: High: Low-moderate:** Stay informed and be prepared to leave. Review your mobs bushfire safety plan on **page 2** so you know what to do.

The higher the fire danger rating, the more dangerous the conditions. You can check the fire danger rating for your area by visiting [NSW RFS website](#).

What do bushfire alerts mean?



During a bushfire, alerts are used to indicate the level of threat from a fire. The three level of bushfire alerts are:

- **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:** You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

When there is a bushfire safety risk, the NSW RFS will send out alerts online, on TV and through local radio and newspapers.

Plan to leave early



Bushfire situations change quickly and sometimes there isn't enough time to watch for bushfire danger ratings and alerts.

The AH&MRC recommends leaving early as the safest option to protect you and your family from bushfires. Use your mob's bushfire safety plan on **page 2** to plan what your family will do in a bushfire emergency.

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BUSHFIRE SAFETY

Bushfire Ready

Once you and your family have written out all the information in the book, make sure you keep the book in a cool, dry place that everyone in your family can access.

For more information on how to prepare you and your mob for bushfire season, visit www.ahmrc.org.au/bushfire-safety



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