

Fire Season Guide

Be ready to act

Call 000 for all fires and life-threatening emergencies.



Photo courtesy of DFES.

City of Swan

Fire information line – **(08) 9267 9326**
 General enquiries – **(08) 9267 9267**
 or visit **www.swan.wa.gov.au**

Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Emergency information line (alerts and warnings):
13 33 37 or **www.emergency.wa.gov.au**

Total fire ban information line:
1800 709 355 or **www.emergency.wa.gov.au**

General fire safety information:
www.dfes.wa.gov.au

Emergency WA

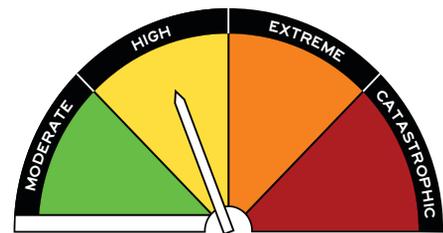
Western Australia's official emergency information site is **www.emergency.wa.gov.au**

You'll find up-to-date information about emergencies, warnings, incidents, and alerts from government entities.

Fire season quick guide

Burning restrictions					
RESTRICTED BURNING PERIOD		PROHIBITED BURNING PERIOD		RESTRICTED BURNING PERIOD	
Permits required		Burning prohibited		Permits required	
From Oct 1*	Until Nov 30*	From Dec 1*	Until Mar 31*	From Apr 1*	Until May 31*
*These dates are subject to change according to seasonal conditions. Changes will be advertised on the City's website. All burning is prohibited on days where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fire danger rating is high or above or • A total fire ban is declared. 					
Firebreak and hazard reduction period					
Install by November 1			Maintain until April 30		
Burning is prohibited on land less than 2,000sqm. Exemptions are listed on page 4.					

Fire danger rating – what does it mean?



Moderate – plan and prepare. Most fires can be controlled.

High – be ready to act. Fires can be dangerous.

Extreme – act now to protect life and property. Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous.

Catastrophic – for your survival leave bushfire risk areas. If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost.

Current and forecast fire danger ratings are provided daily by the Bureau of Meteorology at **www.bom.gov.au** and **www.emergency.wa.gov.au**.

Seasonal burning restrictions

All burning, including exemptions, is prohibited on days when the fire danger rating is high or above, or a total fire ban is declared (see fire safety bans on pages 8-10 of this booklet for details).

Prohibited period

December 1 to March 31*

All burning, including garden refuse and camping fires are prohibited. Cooking fires are exempt, subject to the conditions listed on page 4. Other exemptions are listed on page 5.

Restricted periods

October 1 to November 30 and April 1 to May 31*

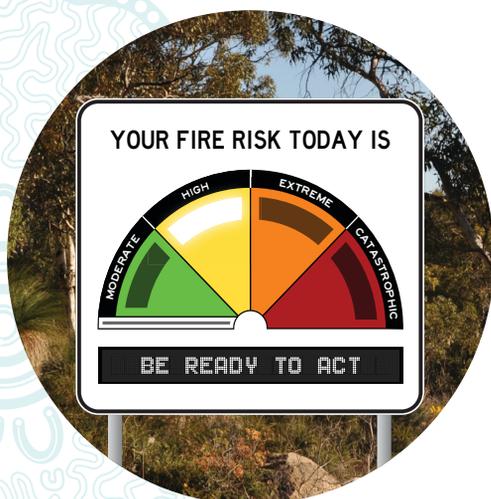
During this period you are not allowed to burn without a permit. You can request one from your local permit issuing officer (see details on the inside back cover of this booklet or visit the City's website). Garden refuse, cooking and camping fires are exempt subject to the conditions listed on page 7. Other exemptions are listed on page 8.

*Note: dates may be altered according to seasonal conditions. Changes will be advertised on the City's website.

Burning a pile of garden refuse in the restricted period

A pile of dry garden refuse may be burnt during the restricted burning period without the need to obtain a permit subject to the following conditions:

- The fire must not be lit if the fire danger rating is high or above, or if a total fire ban is declared
- The pile being burnt does not exceed one cubic metre in size and only one pile alight at any time
- No flammable material within 5m of the fire
- The fire is only lit between 6pm and 11pm and is completely extinguished by midnight
- At least one person capable of controlling the fire attends at all times with adequate means of extinguishing the fire, e.g. a garden hose that easily reaches the fire
- Neighbours are notified of your intention to burn and you ensure the smoke from your fire doesn't cause a nuisance to neighbours or obscure the vision of motorists
- You do not burn household or commercial waste, any noxious materials, or any damp, wet, or green material.



Cooking fires

Fires for cooking are exempt from burning period restrictions and do not require a permit subject to the following conditions:

- The fire must not be lit if the fire danger rating is high or above, or if a total fire ban is declared
- The fire is contained in a purpose-built appliance and
 - at a person's home or
 - an area is set aside for that purpose by the State authority or City of Swan
- No flammable material within 5m of the fire
- At least one person capable of controlling the fire attends at all times with adequate means of extinguishing the fire.

Burning prohibited on land less than 2,000sqm

As per the Consolidated Local Law 2005, due to the impact smoke may have on densely built-up areas, burning is not permitted at any time on land with an area less than 2,000sqm (1/2 acre). Exemptions are listed on the following page.

Exemptions

Exemptions include operations of a barbeque, heater, water heater, space heater, stove, oven, or incinerator. These must be fully enclosed and fired with dry wood, dry paper, synthetic char, or charcoal-type fuel. Suitable precautions must be taken so that no nuisance smoke arises. Causing excessive smoke is a prosecutable offence under the City's health local laws.

Alternatives to burning

Consider the environment and the impact smoke may have on the surrounding community. Whenever practical, use alternative methods of fuel reduction such as composting, mulching, slashing or the application of herbicides. Green waste can be disposed of at the City's recycling centres, in your kerbside collection service or at the Red Hill Waste Management Facility.



Fire safety bans

The responsibility remains with the individual to verify if a ban is currently in place and to ensure that the activity conducted does not breach any condition of the ban.

Total fire bans are declared by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) during times of extreme weather conditions or when the possibility of widespread bushfires may impact heavily on resources.

When a total fire ban is declared it is illegal to light a fire or carry out any activity that is likely to cause a fire. Please note that there are significant differences in what activities are prohibited for local governments and businesses versus for the public. Penalties apply for ignoring these bans, see page 9.

Harvest and vehicle movement bans are declared by the local authority and limit the operation of combustion-powered vehicles, machinery, and plant equipment near flammable material, and vegetation including grass, stubble, or bush. No exemptions are available for harvest and vehicle movement bans. Subscribe on the City's website to receive SMS alerts.

When a ban has been declared you **must not**:



- Light a fire in the open air
- Cook outside using a solid fuel fire (this includes under verandas and patios)
- Use combustion-powered vehicles or plant equipment in bushland or paddocks, except for necessary agricultural activities*
- Harvest, except for necessary agricultural activities*
- Conduct hot works such as welding, grinding, or activity that may cause a spark or ignition (see page 10 for exemption for prescribed activities).

* Necessary agricultural activities are exempt during:

- **Total fire bans** – if the activities cannot be postponed until after the ban ends without consequence to livestock or crops
- **Harvest and vehicle movement bans** – if the activities cannot be postponed without an immediate or serious risk to a person or livestock. Crop harvesting is not permitted.

When a ban has been declared you **may**:



- Use a gas cooker or barbeque with an enclosed flame on your own property or in a public recreational area designated for that purpose
- Conduct essential feeding and watering of stock
- Use electrically powered vehicles, mowers, chainsaws, line and hedge trimmers, and similar equipment – but not where use may cause sparks, e.g. mowing where rocks are present
- Conduct any work that has been approved by a current total fire ban exemption.



Total fire ban – additional information

Activations and additional information are available on the DFES websites www.dfes.wa.gov.au and www.emergency.wa.gov.au or by calling the total fire ban information line on **1800 709 355**.

Information is also broadcast on ABC local radio frequency 102.5FM and by other media outlets.

Subject to stringent conditions, business and public authorities may continue to carry out specifically prescribed activities. Prescribed activities and conditions are available on the DFES website. These amendments mean there is no longer a need to obtain a specific exemption from DFES to carry out these prescribed activities during a total fire ban.

Exemptions for other non-prescribed activities must be obtained from DFES in writing.

Harvest and vehicle movement ban – additional information

Activations and additional information is available by calling the City's fire and emergency information line on **(08) 9267 9326** and on the City's website www.swan.wa.gov.au.

Information is also broadcast on ABC local radio frequency 102.5FM and by other media outlets.

During a harvest and vehicle movement ban, combustion-powered vehicles may be used over vegetation, including paddocks, if it is to prevent an immediate or serious risk to a person or livestock, and if reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent that activity from causing a bushfire.

Notification service

The City provides a SMS and email notification service for total fire bans and harvest and vehicle movement bans. You can subscribe online by visiting www.swan.wa.gov.au/fire.

Penalties apply

You could be fined up to \$25,000 or imprisoned for 12 months, or both, if you commit an offence concerning a total fire ban. You could be fined up to \$5,000 if you commit an offence concerning a harvest and vehicle movement ban.

City of Swan bushfire hazard regulations

This guide provides select information about firebreak and asset protection zone requirements. Property owners are advised to familiarise themselves with the full annual Fire Hazard Reduction Notice published on the City's website and ensure that all requirements contained within the notice are carried out and maintained during the regulated firebreak periods. Property owners who are unsure of their responsibilities can contact the City on **(08) 9267 9267** for more information.

Environment and heritage considerations

Property owners are responsible for conducting due diligence before starting works to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation.

For more information, contact the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation about the natural environment or the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage about Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Fire safety on your property

Property owners are required annually to reduce fire hazards and install firebreaks before November 1 and maintain their property in that condition until April 30. The bushfire hazard reduction strategies outlined below are legal requirements to reduce the likelihood of bushfire and the impacts it may have on life, property, and the environment.



Example of a maintained firebreak (i.e. free of flammable material) which prevented a fire from spreading into another paddock.

Land less than 5,000sqm (0.5 ha or 1.2 acres)

- Install and maintain an asset protection zone
- Maintain all grass to or under 10cm high
- If your land predominantly consists of dense native vegetation then firebreaks or additional understory maintenance may be required
- Native vegetation should be maintained at or below eight tonnes per hectare.

All land greater than 5,000sqm (0.5 ha or 1.2 acres)

- Install and maintain an asset protection zone
- Install firebreaks as close as practicable inside of, but no more than 10m from, the property's external boundaries. Firebreaks need to be 3m wide with a 4m vertical clearance, free from flammable materials and overhanging branches.
 - A boundary firebreak is not required where

the land is 90 per cent or more covered by buildings, other non-vegetated areas, and/or irrigated orchards/vineyards. All grass must be maintained to 10cm or less

- Properties over 100 hectares require additional firebreaks to divide the land into areas not exceeding 100 hectares.
- Maintain all grass:
 - On land between 5,000sqm and 25,000sqm (0.5 – 2.5ha) or (1.2 – 6.2 acres) to a height no greater than 10cm
 - On land greater than 25,000sqm (2.5 ha or 6.2 acres) all grass immediately adjacent to any firebreak must be reduced to a height of no greater than 10cm for a minimum width of 3m
 - If the land is stocked, grass compliance must be met by December 1.
- Natural vegetation within 100m of relevant buildings, including attached and adjacent structures and essential infrastructure, shall be maintained at or below eight tonnes per hectare.

Fuel loads

Fuel is any natural combustible material such as leaf litter, grass, shrubs, trees, wood piles, and more.

To help residents calculate the fuel tonnage per hectare across their property the City has produced a Residents' Vegetative Fuel Load Guide available for download on our website.

Alternative firebreaks

If it is impractical for you to install firebreaks along all or parts of your internal boundaries, you may apply for approval to install a firebreak in an alternative location or of a different nature via the City's website. Your request must be received by October 1 for the application to be assessed by the City and a decision made on whether an alternative firebreak is a valid option.

Fire hazard advisory service

The City offers a free service for properties in fire-prone areas where a Fire Hazard Inspection Officer can come to your property and help you develop a plan to manage the risk on your land. The Officer can provide advice on developing a bushfire plan, reducing fuels around your home, developing a fuel management plan for your property, and firebreak requirements.

For more information, please contact **(08) 9267 9022** or make a booking request on the City's website.

Additional fire preparedness

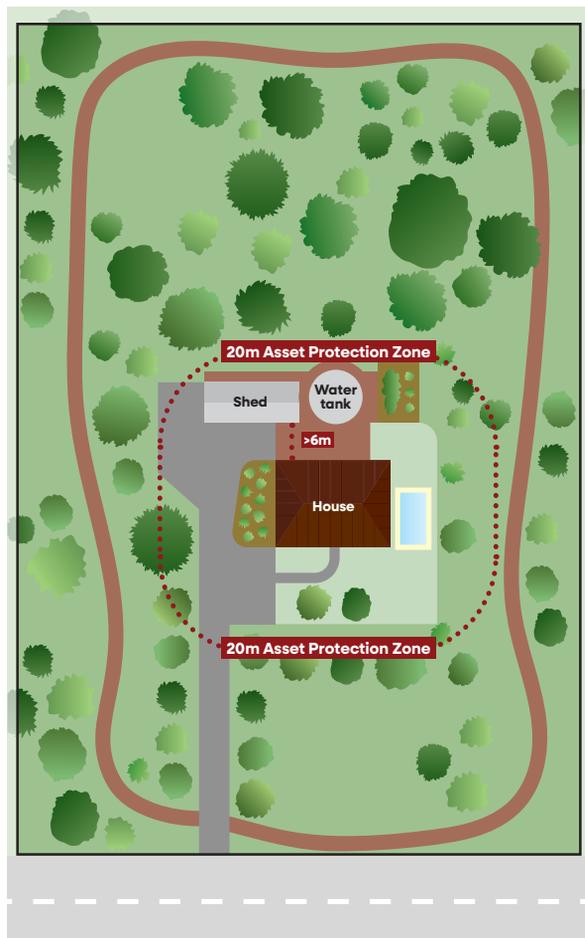
The City encourages all residents to conduct additional fire hazard reduction and preparedness measures for the safety of you, your property, and the community, such as:

- Ensuring gutters are cleared
- There is clear access around your house and property
- A family response plan is prepared and well known
- There is an accessible water supply on the property
- Leaves and twigs are raked up and removed.



Asset protection zone

An asset protection zone (APZ) is a fuel-reduced area that surrounds relevant buildings. A well-maintained APZ can minimise the likelihood and impact of direct flame contact, radiant heat, and ember attack on buildings in the event of a bushfire.



The APZ extends 20m from the external walls of relevant buildings.

APZ requirements include:

- Maintain fuel loads at two tonnes per hectare or lower
- Maintain grass at 10cm or under
- Keep tree crowns or branches clear from overhanging buildings
- Maintain clear separation between tree crowns
- Under-prune trees to 2m from the ground
- Ensure shrubs and trees taller than 2m are not located within 3m of the building
- APZ requirements only apply within the boundaries of the lot on which the asset is located and cannot be enforced across boundaries.

Refer to the Fire Hazard Reduction Notice on the City's website for the complete list of APZ requirements. Permanent clearing of vegetation beyond the requirements of the Fire Hazard Reduction Notice is not permitted without approval from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the City of Swan.

Fire management plans

Where a property is affected by an approved bushfire management plan, property owners must still comply with all requirements of the annual Fire Hazard Reduction Notice and any additional requirements outlined in that plan.

Firebreaks, fire service access routes (strategic firebreaks) and emergency access ways

Firebreaks, fire service access routes (strategic firebreaks) and emergency access ways must be constructed and maintained to the standard specified in the City of Swan Fire Hazard Reduction Notice (see our website for details).

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Type	Dimensions	Trafficable surface
Firebreak	3m wide 4m high	Suitable for 4 x 4 vehicles
Fire service access route (strategic firebreak)	6m wide 4m high	Suitable for 4 x 4 vehicles
Emergency access way	6m wide 4m high	Suitable for all types of vehicles in all weather



Firebreaks must be constructed to this width and height, and corners must accommodate vehicles 9m in length.

Engaging contractors

Landowners, including absentee landowners, must make efforts to verify contractor work is being completed to the standard required and not rely on their contractor's word. Ultimately, it is the landowner's responsibility to ensure their property complies with the annual Fire Hazard Reduction Notice.

Precautions when slashing

Slashing and mowing can cause fires. These activities should not be conducted in hot or windy weather. It is recommended that a suitable fire extinguisher is fitted to any machinery conducting these activities.

Permit issuing (restricted burning period)

During the restricted burning period, you may apply for a permit to burn. Please visit www.swan.wa.gov.au/fire to apply online or visit your local fire brigade to apply in person.

Brigade officers are volunteers and their availability may vary in some instances.

Assessment of a permit application may be subject to a site inspection.

Online applications – entire City of Swan

www.swan.wa.gov.au/fire

Metropolitan fire district

Permits are issued by the City's Community Safety team. **(08) 9267 9267**

www.swan.wa.gov.au/fire

East Gidgegannup Volunteer Bushfire Brigade

Fire Station, Toodyay Road, Gidgegannup **(08) 9574 6000**
Saturday 8.30–10am
captain@egvfbf.com

West Gidgegannup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

Fire Station, Toodyay Road and O'Brien Road, Gidgegannup **(08) 9574 6536**
Saturday 8.30–10am
captain@westgidgebfbf.org

East Swan Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

Fire Station, Cathedral Avenue, Brigadoon **(08) 9296 1288**
Sunday 9–11am
captain.eastswan@gmail.com

Bullsbrook Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service

Fire Station, Chittering Road, Bullsbrook **(08) 9571 2099**
Sunday 9–11am
bullsbrookvfcaptain@gmail.com

West Swan Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

Permits within the metropolitan fire district are issued by the City of Swan (see above for details). **(08) 9296 4431**
Membership and controlled burn enquiries email westswan.captain@gmail.com





City of **Swan**

2 Midland Square, Midland
PO Box 196 Midland WA 6936

(08) 9267 9267

www.swan.wa.gov.au



Safer in Swan

This document can be made available in
alternative formats and languages on request.