

ARE YOU BUSHFIRE READY?

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All fires need fuel, air and heat

Bushfires happen every summer and can start suddenly without warning. If you live in or near bushland you need to understand how bushfires behave to help protect your family and home.

Fuel

Fuel plays a part in how hot a fire can be and how fast it can spread. Drier fuels ignite and burn easily. Vegetation around your home like dry grass, leaves, twigs and bark provide fuel for fires. If fuel is removed the fire will starve.

You can reduce fuel levels around the house and reduce your bushfire risk by, clearing long grass, raking leaves and twigs, pruning shrubs and moving flammable material such as wood piles away from your house.

Air

A bushfire needs oxygen to keep going – the more there is, the faster the fire. Fire spreads as a result of burning embers, radiant heat and direct flame contact. Increasing winds push flames closer to fuel making the fire travel faster. Changes in wind direction or speed can rapidly increase the rate of spread and the direction of the fire.

The afternoon breeze in summer presents the most common threat as it fans bushfires when the fuel is at its driest.



Did you know?
If you live on or near very steep slopes, it is a high risk area. Bushfires travel faster up a hill. For every 10 degree increase in an up slope, a bushfire can potentially double in size.



Radiant Heat

Bushfires generate unbearable heat. The hotter, drier and windier the day, the more intense a bushfire will be and will generate more radiant heat.

Radiant heat is the main cause of people dying in a bushfire. It can cause injury and death from burns and cause the body's cooling system to fail, leading to heat exhaustion and possible heart failure. It is important that you include water and appropriate clothing in your emergency kit and consider where you will shelter during a bushfire to protect yourself.

Radiant heat may not set fire to your home but it can crack and break windows that will allow embers in.

The best protection from radiant heat is distance.

Ember attack occurs before, during and after a fire front passes. Embers are pieces of burning bark, leaves or twigs that are carried by the wind, creating spot fires and can be carried over half a kilometre. Embers can land in areas around your home such as your garden, under or in the gutters and on wooden decks. If not extinguished, your house could catch fire.

For more information visit www.dfes.wa.gov.au or contact **DFES Community Engagement 9395 9816**