

Get ready for the fire danger period

Prepare for bushfire

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) introduces fire restrictions or the Fire Danger Period for all private land in Victoria over the summer period each year. The dates for the Fire Danger Period change yearly, but it usually runs from November to April.

Information about the Fire Danger Period and declaration dates can be found on the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au.

Rural areas are the most likely to be threatened by bushfire. However, residential and industrial landowners also have a responsibility to protect their property from the threat of fire.

The following timetable can be used as a guide for fire prevention preparations:

October

Inspect your property. Winter rains and spring growth bring ideal growing conditions for grass. Remove all grass, stubble, and weeds to a height of not more than 10cm.

November

Re-inspect your property. Conduct further fuel reduction works if necessary.

December – March

Monitor your property during these critical months and continue to maintain your property. Clearing and maintaining your property is easier and less time consuming if it is done on a regular basis.

For information on property preparation visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare.



Prepare your property

- Grass and undergrowth near buildings to be kept under 10cm high.
- Grass/weeds, leaf litter, green waste piles and flammable items near buildings must be removed.
- Trees and shrubs should be minimised near buildings and not overhang roofs.
- Prune shrubs away from tree branches.

For rural and rural residential allotments

- 25m slashed or grazed area near buildings including those of your neighbour.
- 6m fuel reduced zone along property boundaries with no nearby infrastructure.

For more information visit www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/FirePrevention or www.cfa.vic.gov.au.

What else can you do to be fire ready?

- **Educate yourself** and family about fire risks. Find information at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare.
- **Decide now and practice** as a family how you will respond to high fire danger ratings and warnings. Create a bushfire safety plan and practice it. Find a template at www.cfa.org.au/plan-prepare. Don't forget that leaving early is the safest approach.
- **Prepare your personal emergency kit.** Include water, protective clothing, first aid, prescription medications, toiletries and sanitary needs, additional face masks, hand sanitiser, antibacterial wipes, important documents and identification. You should have water and at least one woollen blanket for protection in each of your vehicles all summer.
- **Download the free VicEmergency app on your phone.** Set watch zones to receive instant warnings and advice for your area.
- **Have a plan for pets and stock.** Will you take them and what do you need for them? For ideas visit the Animal Welfare section of www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals.
- **Know your neighbours** and their contacts. Work with them and your local community to plan, share your intentions, support each other before, during and after events.
- **Display your street address number** at your entry gate. The address numbers should be clearly visible as you approach along the roadside.
- **Prepare for power outages** as they often occur. Keep your mobile phone fully charged.
- **Check your driveway.** Fire trucks are long, wide and high. Ensure there is enough clearance along your driveway if they need to attend.

Tips to manage vegetation

Properly managed burning of vegetation without a permit is generally allowed outside of Residential, Business or Industrial Zones except during the Fire Danger Period – check with Council on 5471 1700.

Planning a burn off? Be sure to register it on 1800 668 511 or the CFA website to prevent unnecessary CFA Brigade call-outs.

Green waste may be taken to the Castlemaine and Maldon transfer stations. The rate is \$22.50 / m³. For opening times visit www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/WasteFacilities.

The 10/30 rule allows for vegetation removal without a permit only if your dwelling was constructed prior to September 2009.

It allows you to:

- Remove all vegetation (including trees) from within 10 metres of your home.
- Remove all vegetation (except trees) within 30 metres of your home. If your property is subject to a bushfire overlay then the 10/50 rule applies.

Fire Prevention Notice

When the environment begins to dry out (usually late spring), Council's Fire Prevention Officers inspect properties across Mount Alexander Shire for fire hazards.

Council will issue a Fire Prevention Notice if a fire hazard is identified on your property. The works are designed to reduce the likelihood of ignition and spread of fire and minimise direct flame impact on yours or your neighbours' assets.

Non-compliance with a Fire Prevention Notice means Council will arrange for the works to be done at your expense and will issue an infringement notice of 10 Penalty Units (currently \$1652).

Contact Council on 5471 1700 if you see a fire hazard on a property.

Native vegetation

Native vegetation is protected in Victoria and usually requires a permit for removal.

If you need assistance to identify native vegetation or whether your property has habitat for rare or endangered species, contact Council's Environment Officer on 5471 1700.