

Dear Landholder

Preparing and maintaining your property is a year-round responsibility. High importance should be placed on maintenance in the lead up to and during the Fire Danger Season.

Private property inspections will commence from mid-October in accordance with *Section 105F of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*. As per legislative requirements, properties found to be requiring hazard reduction work will be issued a notice under Section 105F of the Fire & Emergency services Act 2005 and failure to comply with these notices could incur significant penalties under section 105F (1) of the above legislation.

#### **Ways to reduce fine fuels on your property:**

- Mowing, raking and weeding to remove fine fuels from around the house
- Pruning the lower branches of shrubs/trees to separate the foliage from the ground surface underneath (at least 2m lift recommended)
- Reducing accumulated ground debris such as bark, dead twigs, leaves or needles from around the base of trees and shrubs Other general property maintenance for preparedness:
- Pruning of limbs that overhang buildings and sheds
- Clean gutters of built up debris and leaves
- Removing flammable items from beside dwellings and buildings (eg firewood, furniture, loose flammable items)
- Maintain fencing (it is recommended fencing is non-flammable eg steel)
- Clean debris from behind fixtures, such as gas bottles, air conditioning units etc.

The following is a guide of what a prepared property should look like before the declared fire season starts.

#### **Property Type Guide to preparation**

##### **Occupied property less than 1.5 hectares within a township boundary zone:**

Reduce all seasonal fine fuel and undergrowth (eg seasonal grasses and woody weeds) to a height not exceeding 100mm and maintain for the duration of the fire danger season.

##### **Occupied properties greater than 1.5 hectares within a township boundary zone:**

Reduce fine fuels and undergrowth (eg seasonal grasses, woody weeds) at a height not exceeding 100mm around property boundary (5m break) and around buildings (20m break) to provide a majority reduction in seasonal fine fuels across the property and maintain for the duration of the fire danger season.

**Vacant property (no buildings) of any size within a township boundary zone:**

Reduce all fine fuels and undergrowth (eg seasonal grasses, woody weeds) at a height not exceeding 100mm across the whole property (especially boundaries) and maintain for the duration of the fire danger season.

**Properties outside township boundary zones – occupied or other**

Establish and maintain a seasonal fine fuel fire break (either mowed or mineral earth) at a height not exceeding 100mm (or as near as practical) for the entire fire danger season in the following circumstances:

- 10 metres around sheds and out buildings.
- 20 metres around dwellings on either your property or neighbouring properties.
- 5 metres firebreak around the entire perimeter of the property.
- Mow, graze or harvest other areas of bulk fine fuel across the property prior to fire season.

Keeping your home and property well prepared throughout the year is essential to ensure you survive a bushfire. A well prepared home is more likely to survive a bushfire than one that hasn't been prepared.

**Benefits of a well prepared home:**

- can be easier for you or firefighters to defend
- is more likely to survive, even if you're not there
- is less likely to put your neighbours' homes at risk
- Will give you more protection if a fire threatens suddenly and you cannot leave and have to take shelter.

Fire prevention is a shared, legislated, responsibility and Council emphasises the importance of undertaking necessary fire prevention measures for the safety of your family, pets and property, and your local community.

**More information:**

If you require further advice or information on the best way to prepare your property, please visit the CFS or MBDC websites or contact Council on 8391 7200.



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