

Living in Bushfire Risk Areas

While it is not the responsibility of your Agency to develop their client’s personal bushfire plan, Agencies need to ensure that all clients living in bushfire risk areas have developed a bushfire plan and a copy is included in the client’s OHS assessment or care plan file.



Your clients may be vulnerable and at a higher risk during a Bushfire.

All clients living in a bushfire risk area must:

- ☐ Understand their local bushfire risk
- ☐ Prepare their properties for the threat of bushfire
- ☐ Develop a personal bushfire plan with their family or personal support network prior to the summer months

The bushfire information outlined in the client's file will assist your agency to:

- Develop policies and processes to ensure staff working in bushfire risk areas understand the risk to them and what to do when a bushfire threatens
- Develop strategies that may assist clients when a bushfire threatens
- Provide information to emergency services that may assist them to respond

You can assist your agency and client manager to obtain this information by completing the following tasks when in a client’s home.

- ☐ Have an informal conversation with your client about living in a bushfire risk area
- ☐ Provide your clients with a copy of DFES’ Be Safe and Leave Early Plan, and encourage them to complete the plan with their family or personal support network
- ☐ Provide your clients with DFES’ Emergency Information fridge magnet
- ☐ Encourage your client to contact DFES for more information on bushfire preparedness.



Bushfire Information and Emergency Contact Details

There are many ways to keep informed of a bushfire. DFES recommends using a range of resources to receive alerts and warnings.

Stay informed at [emergency.wa.gov.au](https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au)

-  13 DFES (13 3337)
-  Local ABC Radio
-  @dfeswa
-  @dfes_wa



Look for signs of fire such as smoke or embers and take action for your own safety.

All fires should be reported to 000

Workplace Information

It is important that you know what your role is and how to respond as soon as you are aware of a bushfire, or in the event of an emergency.

Include your Agency’s emergency contact details below

Name	Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Position/role	Position/role
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Contact Number	Contact Number
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Pack an emergency kit for your car


- Printed maps of the areas you are travelling in as communications may go down if there is a bushfire
 - Portable AM/FM battery-operated radio with spare batteries
 - First aid kit and medication
- Woollen blankets
 - Plenty of water
 - Mobile phone and charger
 - Protective clothing (Long-sleeved cotton tops, pants, hats and sturdy shoes)



Bushfire Safety Guide for Direct Care Givers

As a Direct Care Giver, you are expected to be able to respond to an emergency if one occurs within the workplace, including when working in a client’s home.

This guide will help you to understand your risk and what you need to do if a bushfire starts. Keep this guide in your vehicle at all times.




Bushfires can start suddenly and without warning.

Working and driving in bushfire risk areas

Western Australia experiences frequent bushfires, reflected in over 90 per cent of the state being designated as bushfire prone. As a direct care worker driving and servicing clients located in bushfire prone areas, you are also at risk when a bushfire threatens.

When a fire starts in your service area, your Agency may review the need to service clients. Road closures are a likely possibility for all bushfires. Roads will be closed for the safety of both residents and for safe access to the fire by emergency services. Road closures are managed by police and they will not allow anyone to enter, other than emergency services.

Always follow your Agency’s emergency management advice. Ensure you contact your Agency to advise them of any bushfires that start, and that you know alternate routes to and from your client’s home.




Stopping or altering services is a real possibility.

What should you do if you encounter a bushfire while driving?

While travelling, you need to be aware of your surroundings. Watch for signs of a bushfire especially smoke and flames. If you see smoke you should leave the area immediately by driving away from the fire.

If there is a lot of smoke:

- Slow down as there could be people, vehicles and livestock on the road
- Close the windows and outside vents
- Turn your car headlights and hazard lights on
- If you can’t see clearly, pull over and wait until the smoke clears.



During the bushfire season always carry a supply of water and keep woollen blankets in the car.

It is with extreme caution that you should shelter in your vehicle. Sheltering in your vehicle is very high risk and it is unlikely that a person will survive in all but the mildest circumstances. Sheltering in a vehicle offers only a slightly higher chance of survival than being caught in the open.

What should you do if you become trapped in your car?

- Park in an area with low or no vegetation, off the roadway.
- Position the car facing towards the direction of escape.
- Turn headlights and hazard warning lights on to make the car as visible as possible.
- Tightly close all windows, doors and vents.
- Leave the engine running and turn your air conditioner to recirculate.
- Call 000.
- Get down as low as possible below the window level into the foot well and cover yourself under dry woollen blankets.
- Drink water to minimise the risk of dehydration.
- Stay in the car until the fire front has passed and the temperature has dropped outside.
- Once the fire front has passed and the temperate has dropped, cautiously exit the car.

Understanding bushfire

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) describes the potential danger level you could face if a bushfire starts, while the Bushfire Warning System (on the far right) provides information about what to do during a bushfire.

Always pay attention to the fire danger ratings and any bushfire warnings, and postpone journeys or find alternative safe routes if necessary.

It is critical that you:

➤

Understand the bushfire risk to you and your clients

➤

Know what to do if a bushfire starts

➤

Know how to access bushfire warnings and information

➤

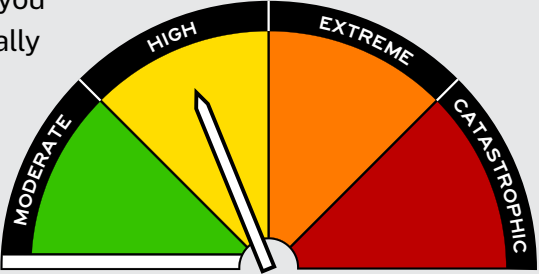
Understand your role as a Direct Care Giver

Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS)

Fire Danger Ratings provide you with important information so you can take action to protect yourself and others from the potentially dangerous impacts of bushfires.

Before a bushfire

When there is minimal risk, Fire Danger Ratings will be set to ‘**No Rating**’. At this level, fires are not expected to spread in a fast or life-threatening way.



Fire Danger Rating	Fire behaviour	Action required
Moderate Plan and prepare	Most fires can be controlled	Stay up to date and be alert for fires in your area
High Be ready to act	Fires can be dangerous	Decide what you will do if a fire starts
Extreme Take action now to protect life and property	Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous	Put your bushfire plan into action
Catastrophic For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas	If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost	Homes cannot withstand fires in these conditions. Stay safe - go to a safer location early in the morning or the night before






Stay up to date at [emergency.wa.gov.au](https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au) or listen to your local ABC radio

Australian Warning System - Bushfire

During a bushfire, emergency services will issue a warning if the fire is impacting, or likely to impact the community. There are three levels of warning. These change to reflect the increasing risk to your life or property, and the decreasing amount of time you have until the fire arrives.


During a bushfire



EMERGENCY WARNING

An out of control fire is approaching fast. There is a threat to lives and homes and you need to take immediate action to survive.


You must seek shelter or leave now if it is safe to do so.



WATCH AND ACT

If your plan is to leave, leave now. If your plan is to stay, get ready to actively defend.


Only stay and defend if you are mentally and physically prepared.



ADVICE

A fire has started but there is no immediate threat to lives or homes. Stay alert and watch for signs of fire.

Be aware and keep up to date.



Don’t wait for a text message or a knock on the door. Make your own decision on when to leave.