

Site Bushfire Response Procedure

2011/8093

Summary

The *Site Bushfire Response Procedure* will assist site leaders, staff, pupils and persons utilising school facilities in the effective response to the potential threat of bushfires.

It is a requirement of R1 (extreme/very high) and R2 (high) risk rated sites to adhere to the *Site Bushfire Response Procedure* and to enact their respective *Bushfire Response Plans*.

It is a requirement of R3 (medium) and non-risk rated sites that are located in a CFS Fire Ban District to adhere to the *Site Bushfire Response Procedure* and to enact their respective site emergency plans.

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Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	Emergency Management Act 2004 Work Health and Safety Act 2012
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	DECD Emergency Management policy (under development) DECD Risk Management policy and framework DECD School Transport policy Site Bushfire Preparation procedure (under development) DECD Instrument of Delegation of School Closure (in the event of emergency or significant asset failure) Protective Security Management Framework AS 3745-2010 Planning for Emergencies in Facilities
Replaces	N/A
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Applies to	All schools and preschools located in a CFS Fire Ban District
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REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision Description

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1. TITLE

Site Bushfire Response Procedure

2. PURPOSE

The *Site Bushfire Response Procedure* is a component of the *DECD Emergency Management Policy* (under development) and complements the *Site Bushfire Preparation Procedure*. It is designed and intended to provide site leaders, staff, pupils and persons utilizing school facilities with the necessary information to respond effectively to the potential threat of bushfires and grass fires.

Although predominantly intended to address actions to be undertaken during Fire Danger Season (traditionally 1st November to 30th April each year), the information contained within this document may be utilised to respond to bushfire threats and Total Fire Bans issued by the Country Fire Service (CFS) at any time of the year.

3. SCOPE

The *Site Bushfire Response Procedure* applies to everyone who works at, attends or has responsibility toward a DECD school or pre-school located in a CFS Fire Ban District.

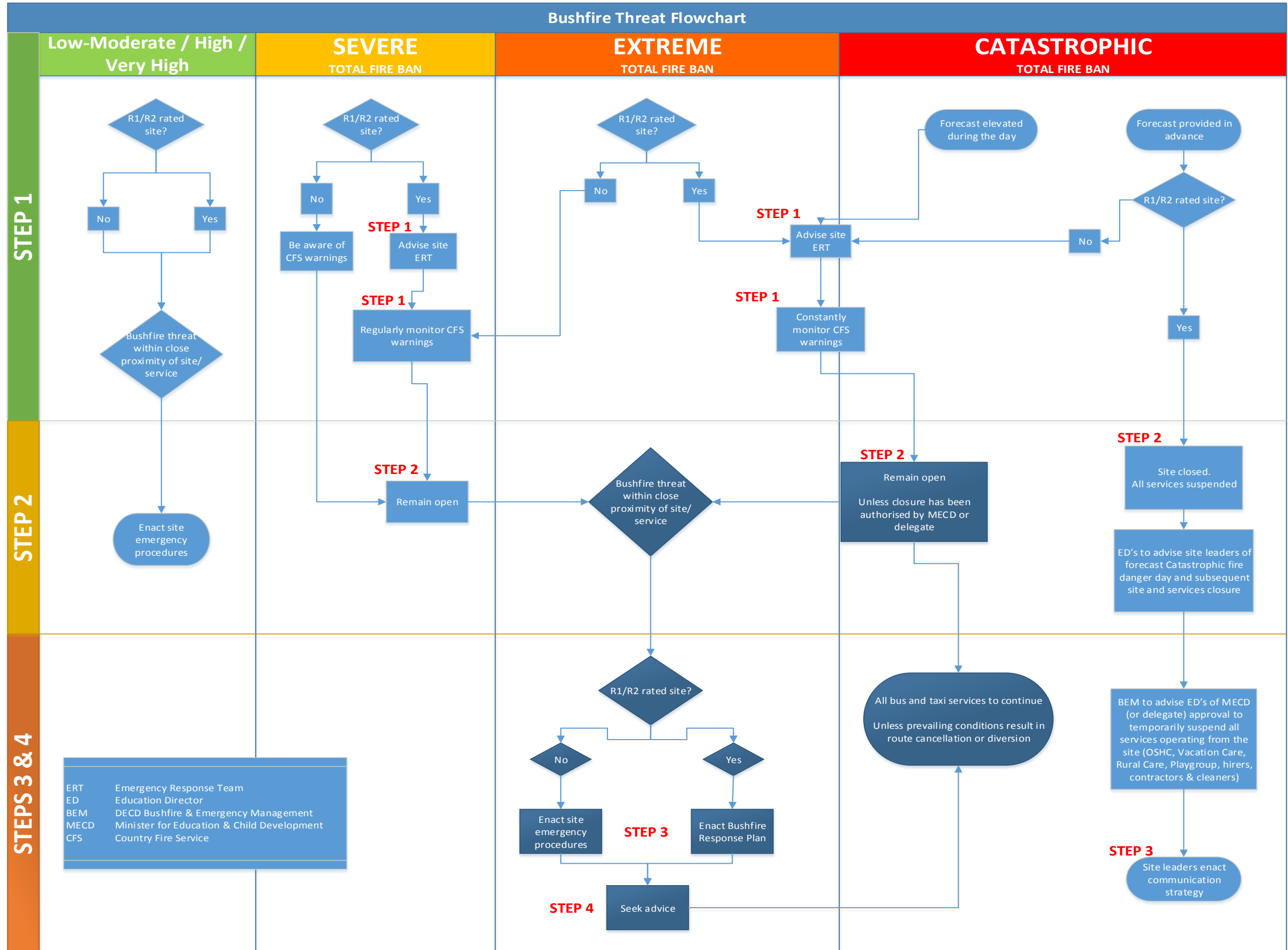
The *DECD Emergency Management Policy* details that schools and pre-schools are assigned a rating commensurate with their perceived level of bushfire risk. Actions detailed within this procedure will vary substantially, according to the risk rating of a given school or pre-school.

4. PROCEDURE DETAIL

The bushfire threat *flowchart* (4.1) is a guide to the actions that site leaders are to undertake in response to a potential bushfire threat to their school or pre-school. The bushfire threat *steps* (4.2) detail and outline the minimum actions required for the given circumstances and must be adhered to.

4.1 Bushfire threat flowchart

The *flowchart* (overleaf) is designed to enable staff to determine the correct course of action to be taken in response to Country Fire Service (CFS) forecasts of Fire Danger Ratings. It documents requirements in relation to events and circumstances predominantly occurring during Fire Danger Season but should also be used to respond to bushfire threats impacting upon a school or pre-school at any time of the year.



4.2 Bushfire threat steps

The tables below outline the steps to be followed when responding to a potential bushfire threat. The actions a site should take are dependent on the Fire Danger Rating of any given day and the bushfire risk rating that DECD has applied to a site.

During Fire Danger Season, all schools and pre-schools are required to identify the CFS Fire Danger Rating for their Fire Ban District on a daily basis.

Fire Danger Rating : SEVERE (Total Fire Ban)	
<p>Step 1 Precautionary measures</p>	<p>The CFS considers that a bush or grass fire ignited in these conditions will be difficult to control. Consequently, all sites in the affected Fire Ban District(s) must be prepared to enact the appropriate elements of their site emergency plan.</p> <p>DECD schools and pre-schools with a risk rating of R1 or R2 and situated in the affected Fire Ban District(s) are to ensure the site Emergency Response Team is alerted to the Fire Danger Rating. Regular monitoring of the CFS website or ABC Radio 891 is essential for these sites.</p>
<p>Step 2 Site operation</p>	<p>All DECD schools, preschools and transport services will operate 'as normal' on days of 'Severe' fire danger.</p>
<p>Step 3 Fire event impacting upon site</p>	<p>DECD Schools and pre-schools with a risk rating of R1 or R2 <i>must</i> enact the respective elements of their <i>Bushfire Response Plan</i> in the event of a fire impacting upon their site or student transport facilities.</p> <p>R3 and non-rated schools should enact their site emergency plan.</p> <p>DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management will provide direction and assistance on being made aware of a fire in close proximity to a DECD site or transport route. Sites must not wait for direction prior to enacting emergency procedures.</p>

<p>Step 4 Seek advice</p>	<p>Following a decision to enact site emergency or Bushfire Response Plans owing to a fire, schools or pre-schools must inform DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management via 1800 000 279 or contact their Education Director at the earliest opportunity. Advice relating to CFS activity and the viability of transport arrangements will be provided.</p>
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Fire Danger Rating : EXTREME (Total Fire Ban)	
<p>Step 1 Precautionary measures</p>	<p>The CFS considers that a bush or grass fire ignited in these conditions will move quickly, be unpredictable and be very difficult to control. Consequently, all sites in the affected Fire Ban District(s) must be prepared to enact the appropriate elements of their site emergency plan.</p> <p>DECD schools and pre-schools with a risk rating of R1 or R2 and situated in the affected Fire Ban District(s) are to ensure the site Emergency Response Team is alerted to the Fire Danger Rating. <i>Constant</i> monitoring of the CFS website or ABC Radio 891 is essential for these sites.</p>
<p>Step 2 Site operation</p>	<p>All R3 and non-rated DECD schools and preschools will operate 'as normal' on days of 'Extreme' fire danger.</p> <p>DECD schools and pre-schools with a risk rating of R1 or R2 and situated in the affected Fire Ban District(s) will operate 'as normal' unless otherwise advised by DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management.</p> <p>All transport services will operate 'as normal' unless otherwise advised by DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management.</p>
<p>Step 3 Fire event impacting upon site</p>	<p>DECD Schools and pre-schools with a risk rating of R1 or R2 <i>must</i> enact the respective elements of their <i>Bushfire Response Plan</i> in the event of a fire impacting upon their site or student transport facilities.</p> <p>R3 and non-rated schools should enact their site emergency plan.</p> <p>DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management</p>

	will provide direction and assistance on being made aware of a fire in close proximity to a DECD site or transport route. Sites must not wait for direction prior to enacting emergency procedures.
Step 4 Seek advice	Following a decision to enact site emergency or Bushfire Response Plans owing to a fire, schools or pre-schools must inform DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management via 1800 000 279 or contact their Education Director at the earliest opportunity. Advice relating to CFS activity and the viability of transport arrangements will be provided.

Fire Danger Rating : CATASTROPHIC (Total Fire Ban)	
Step 1 Precautionary measures	<p>The CFS considers that a bush or grass fire ignited in these conditions will be extremely difficult to control and require significant resources. These are the worst possible conditions for the spread of a bushfire.</p> <p>Consequently, all sites in the affected Fire Ban District(s) are to ensure the site Emergency Response Team is alerted to the Fire Danger Rating. <i>Constant</i> monitoring of the CFS website or ABC Radio 891 is essential for all operating sites.</p>
Step 2 Site operation (advance notification) ** The Country Fire Service (CFS) generally advises the public by 5.00pm of a 'catastrophic' fire danger rating for the following day **	<p>Following the approval of the Minister for Education and Child Development (or their delegate), DECD schools and pre-schools with a risk rating of R1 and R2 and situated in the affected Fire Ban District will be CLOSED on days of where a forecast 'catastrophic' fire danger rating has been supplied in advance.</p> <p>All school bus and taxi services scheduled to travel through the affected Fire Ban District will be CANCELLED when the fire danger rating has been supplied in advance.</p> <p>All R3 and non-rated schools in the affected Fire Ban District will operate 'as normal' unless otherwise advised by DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management.</p> <p>All school closure directions will be coordinated by DECD Bushfire and</p>

	<p>Emergency Management in conjunction with the relevant Education Director.</p> <p><u>No school or pre-school is to close or suspend operation without the prior approval of the Minister for Education and Child Development or their authorised delegate.</u></p>
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Site operation (delayed notification)</p> <p>** The Country Fire Service (CFS) may amend the forecast fire danger rating for a Fire Ban District at any time. However, changes to a fire danger rating will generally occur on the morning of the day in question **</p>	<p>DECD schools and pre-schools with a risk rating of R1 and R2 and situated in the affected Fire Ban District will <u>operate 'as normal'</u> on days where a fire danger rating has been elevated to 'catastrophic' <u>that day</u>.</p> <p>All school bus and taxi services scheduled to travel through the affected Fire Ban District will <u>operate 'as normal'</u> when the fire danger rating is elevated to 'catastrophic' <u>that day</u>.</p> <p>The DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management team will advise schools and pre-schools if a school closure is subsequently deemed appropriate.</p> <p>All school closure directions will be coordinated by DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management in conjunction with the relevant Education Director.</p> <p><u>No school or pre-school is to close or suspend operation without the prior approval of the Minister for Education and Child Development or their authorised delegate.</u></p>
<p>Step 3</p> <p>Fire event impacting upon site</p>	<p>DECD Schools and pre-schools <i>must</i> enact the respective elements of their site emergency plan in the event of a fire impacting upon their site or student transport facilities.</p> <p>DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management will provide direction and assistance on being made aware of a fire in close proximity to a DECD site or transport route. Sites must not wait for direction prior to enacting emergency procedures.</p>
<p>Step 4</p> <p>Seek advice</p>	<p>Following a decision to enact site emergency or Bushfire Response Plans owing to a fire, schools or pre-schools must inform DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management via</p>

	<p>1800 000 279 or contact their Education Director at the earliest opportunity. Advice relating to CFS activity and the viability of transport arrangements will be provided.</p>
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4.3 Communications

The *Site Bushfire Preparation Procedure* and associated guidelines detail the requirements and recommendations for R1 and R2 schools and pre-schools relating to the communication of emergency events to the wider school community.

During the course of Fire Danger Season, sites must apply their communication strategy to alert parents and caregivers of site closures arising from forecast 'catastrophic' or 'extreme' Fire Danger Days.

DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management are responsible for communications relating to :

- Confirmation to affected sites, Education Directors and relevant corporate business units of Ministerial or delegated authority for school and pre-school closures
- Notification to affected sites, Education Directors and relevant corporate business units of emergency events impacting upon service delivery or school transport arrangements
- Notification to Catholic Education and Association of Independent Schools of South Australia of school and pre-school closures or emergency events impacting upon service delivery or pertinent school transport arrangements in a given Fire Ban District.
- Relevant procedural updates to Minister for Education and Child Development and DECD Senior Executives.
- Consultation and dissemination of information to CFS, SES and other emergency services.

***** Although DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management retain responsibility for handling communication between the Department and the relevant emergency services, sites *must* report all fire sightings and other emergencies to appropriate the CFS / Police through 000 *****

4.4 Vacation Arrangements

Many school and pre-school sites continue to be populated during school holidays as a result of services such as Vacation Care, Rural Care and holiday sports programmes.

The *DECD Emergency Management Policy* and *Site Bushfire Response Procedure* continue to apply to DECD schools and pre-schools during school holiday periods.

All services, maintenance and construction works scheduled to take place on a DECD school or pre-school will be cancelled on a day of forecast 'catastrophic' fire conditions. No persons are permitted to be on site. Dissemination of this information to relevant persons must be included in the communication strategy (refer 4.3 above).

4.5 School transport Bushfire Risk Management

In accordance with the *DECD Emergency Management Policy* all school bus routes and taxi services travelling through the affected Fire Ban District(s) will be cancelled on a day of forecast 'catastrophic' fire danger.

Where the fire danger rating for a Fire Ban District is elevated to ‘catastrophic’ during the relevant day, the *DECD Emergency Management Policy* dictates that bus routes and taxi services will operate ‘as normal’ unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Dissemination of this information to relevant persons must be included in the school communication strategy (refer 4.3 above).

In the event of an active or ongoing bushfire in close proximity to a recognised school bus or taxi route, site leaders are to contact their Education Director or DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management for direction.

In the event that conditions dictate the cancellation or delay of a scheduled bus or taxi service, parents and care givers must be notified. Students are required to be supervised at school, until services can resume or children have been collected.

The *Site Bushfire Preparation Procedure* and associated guidelines contain requirements and advice relating to management of events impacting upon a scheduled bus or taxi service that has already departed.

4.6 Excursions/camps to Fire Ban Districts

Planning and contingencies relating to school excursions or camps in Fire Ban Districts is detailed in the *Site Bushfire Preparation Procedure*. Appropriate planning is the most effective way to mitigate risks posed by excursions during Fire Danger Season.

If a bushfire is burning on the day of the intended camp or excursion and is likely to threaten the destination or any subsequent return to school, the excursion or camp *must* be cancelled.

In the event of a bush or grassfire impacting upon a camp or excursion that is already underway, establish and maintain contact with the CFS and DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management.

Emergency services

For incidents requiring search or rescue, the police will coordinate the response and should be immediately contacted by the group, the school contact person or both.

Emergency services can respond most effectively when they have accurate knowledge of the location and the nature of the group they are dealing with.

The activation of all emergency services is carried out by calling **000**.

Accurate and current knowledge is essential. If a party deviates from an itinerary lodged with relevant authorities, the swiftness of an emergency services response can be seriously compromised.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Authority/Responsibility for
Site Leaders	Responsible for development and maintenance of a <i>Bushfire Response Plan</i> (R1/R2 sites) or site emergency plan (R3 and non-rated sites). Are responsible for taking appropriate action if a temporary closure of the site is required and in the

	<p>event of a bushfire where the site emergency or Bushfire Response Plan is to be enacted.</p> <p>During the school holidays, many sites continue to run services such as vacation care, OSHC, rural care etc. Over this period the <i>DECD Emergency Management Policy</i> and <i>Site Bushfire Response Procedure</i> continue to apply. Consequently, the Department may institute appropriate safety procedures where the threat of bushfires in a specific locality gives significant cause for concern. This may include the suspension or cancellation of non-essential services or activities operating on high risk DECD sites.</p> <p>Director/Managers of affected services are responsible for the enactment of the site emergency or Bushfire Response Plan in the absence of the Site Leader.</p>
Education Director	<p>has the following key responsibilities during the fire danger season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to schools in the event of and following a bushfire, as required • In the event of a bushfire, liaise with emergency services personnel (e.g. CFS Regional Commander and SAPOL) regarding the current situation and recommended course of action for affected sites. Notify affected site leaders of advice received and action to be taken. • Keep DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management (BEM) informed of developments. This information will be provided to the State Emergency Centre and/or CFS State Coordination Centre in the event of a state level emergency.
DECD Central Office (Bushfire and Emergency Management)	<p>has responsibility for ensuring a coordinated and consistent approach to the delivery of emergency responses during fire danger season.</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify Education Directors and relevant business units within DECD, of CFS forecast catastrophic fire danger rating within fire ban districts and the action to be taken • Provides assistance to Education Directors or Site Leaders as required, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaison with CFS likely impact on sites

	<p>and school bus/taxi runs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring stakeholders are aware of potential risks (e.g. smoke hazard) • Activate the DECD Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) in the event of an emergency that cannot be managed by either the site Emergency Response Team (ERT) or the Education Director, or in the event that a State level emergency occurs and the Department is requested to provide support • Activate (as required) and provide executive support to the Corporate Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT membership is comprised of senior level officers from within State Office who have the authority to make decisions about the support that can be provided to DECD disaster affected sites during and after an emergency event • Maintain the DECD Parent Bushfire Hotline and DECD intranet / internet pages to provide information regarding school and bus route closures or cancellations on forecast 'catastrophic' fire danger days and in the event of a bushfire threat.
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6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

DECD Bushfire and Emergency Management (BEM) staff is responsible for the development, monitoring, evaluation and review of the *DECD Emergency Management Policy* that governs the *DECD Site Bushfire Response Procedure*.

The evaluation of procedures is achieved by BEM undertaking direct discussions with the relevant Education Director(s) on the effectiveness of emergency operations. Each evaluation will take place following a significant event to ensure accurate and relevant information is captured, along with any lessons learnt and gap identification. Significant events during the Fire Danger Season will vary greatly dependant on the environmental and atmospheric conditions.

BEM undertakes an annual review of procedures and events at the conclusion of each Fire Danger Season to determine gaps, opportunities and lessons learnt, thus presenting actions to improve processes and service delivery.

7. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
BEM	Bushfire and Emergency Management
CFS	Country Fire Service

OSHC	Out of Hours School Care
ECC	DECD Emergency Coordination Centre
CERT	DECD Corporate Emergency Response Team