

POL 0051: Bushfire Management

Purpose

1. Imposing, managing and reviewing harvesting, machinery and vehicle movement bans within the district of the Shire of Esperance.
2. Exemptions to Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans on non TFB days.
3. To ensure Bushfire Control Officers have the necessary experience and training to hold these positions.
4. Minimum standard requirements for Bush Fire Brigade Volunteers.

Scope

To ensure adequate measures are in place to reduce the risk and spread of fire in the community.

Definitions

Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban (Harvest Ban) - A ban on all harvesting, machinery and vehicle movements within a Shire, or part of the Shire, when the Fire Behaviour Index (FBI) reaches 50 or above.

Fire Behaviour Index (FBI) – Is a scale of potential fire behaviour. Fire agencies use the FBI to inform decisions about fire danger ratings for the district, along with information about other conditions.

Practice

Management of District for Harvest Bans and Burning Permits

That for the purposes of fire incident management and imposing and reviewing Harvest Bans and the district of the Shire of Esperance be divided into six zones – West Coast Zone, West Zone, North Zone, East Zone, East Coast Zone and Urban Rural Zone and include the following sub-zones -

1. West and West Coast Zones be divided into two sub-zones down the Lort River, which provides a natural boundary.
2. East and East Coast Zones to be divided into two sub-zones from Mt Ridley, along Bronzewing Road, Kau Rocks Road, Kettles Road and Daniels Road.
3. North Zone be divided into two by the Brigade boundaries of Southern Mallee and Salmon Gums.
4. Naming of the sub-zones be by numbering 1 and 2 within each existing Zone, using Esperance town as a “hub” and numbering away from town.

Each zone is to have a 'senior' control officer referred to as a Senior Bushfire Control Officer. It is accepted that the Chief Bushfire Control Officer may also be appointed a Senior in control of a zone.

The Chief Bushfire Control Officer shall have ultimate authority for fire control imposing of and reviewing Harvest Bans. When managing Harvest Bans every effort to liaise and consult with the Senior Control Officers in each zone should be made. Senior Control

Officers should make every effort to be available to assist the Chief Bushfire Control Officer with implementation and review of Harvest Bans.

Guidelines for Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans

On non-Total Fire Ban (TFB) days, a Harvesting, Machinery and Vehicle Movement Ban will be put in place when the Fire Behaviour Index (FBI) reached 50 on the Fire Behaviour Index calculator – Grassland Model.

The Senior Fire Control Officers will use WHATSAPP as the primary communication method to discuss fire weather condition. On days a High fire danger or above is forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology, a radio sched may take place, to discuss weather conditions and a plan for the day will be established by the Senior Fire Control officers across the Shire.

A Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban will be implemented when the FBI of 50 is reached, or is requested by Fire Control Officers to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. A Ban can be in place across the whole Shire or individual Zones.

Lifting the Ban, will occur when weather conditions are deemed appropriate by the CBFCCO for harvesting operations to resume.

When a Ban is implemented, it will be communicated by text message, updates on the Harvest Ban Hotline, Social Media, the Shire Website and ABC Radio.

There will be an automatic Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban in place on Christmas Day and New Year's Day annually. Other days may be considered by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer depending on seasonal conditions.

Exemptions to Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans

There are some examples of operations whereby the requirements of Harvest Bans can be exempt.

1. Loading and offloading of grain, fertiliser and feed is only permitted on sites which are approved and registered by Council on an annual basis and which are clear of all inflammable material save live standing trees to a radius of at least 25 metres. A mobile firefighting unit shall be in attendance at all times and accompany the grain carting vehicle when travelling on a laneway between the registered site and a made gazetted road.
2. Water carting for stock and domestic purposes provided it is accompanied by a mobile firefighting unit, or alternatively, the water carting vehicle acts as the mobile firefighting unit and meets minimum specifications (this also requires the retention of 400 litre of water at all times).
3. All necessary travel within piggeries, sheep or cattle feed lots, provided this is undertaken in a mobile firefighting unit.
4. All necessary carting of livestock provided that such a vehicle is accompanied by a mobile firefighting unit.
5. Essential Services such as power, water, telecommunications disruption provided that a vehicle is accompanied by a mobile fire fighting unit.

6. All other activities or operations may only be undertaken during Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans after approval has been granted by the Chief Executive Officer. Approval has to be sought on an individual basis. Approval may be subject to specified conditions. It should be noted that approval may not be granted.

Post-Harvest Stubble Slashing

As per Regulation 38A of the *Bush Fires Regulations 1954*, that post-harvest stubble slashing can only be undertaken during the Restricted and Prohibited Burning Periods under the following conditions -

1. A mobile firefighting unit of not less than 800 litres capacity be situated in the paddock whilst stubble slashing is in progress.
2. A minimum of 2 x 9 litre fire extinguishers must be carried on all slashers.
3. A 2-way radio communications unit must be installed on all vehicles.

There is to be a total ban on stubble slashing between 23 December and 2 January annually.

Qualifications of Bushfire Control Officers

That a person being nominated and elected to the position of Bushfire Control Officer is required to have practical firefighting experience and to have successfully completed the Fire and Emergency Service Authority Fire Control Officers (FCO) Course within twelve (12) months of being appointed and to undergo subsequent refresher training every 5 years.

Minimum Standard Requirements for Bush Fire Brigade Volunteers

Any person responding to an incident upon a Shire of Esperance bush fire appliance must;

1. Be registered to a shire of Esperance Bush Fire Brigade;
2. wear minimum Personal Protective Clothing/Equipment, as provided by the Shire; and
3. must have completed the Bushfire Safety Awareness and Firefighting Skills training.

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Document Information

Responsible Position	Manager Community Support
Risk Rating	High

Referencing Documents

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Bush Fires Act 1954*
- *Bush Fires Regulations 1954*

Revision History

Date	Version	CM Reference	Reason for Change	Resolution #	Next Review
Apr 2008	1	D12/16	New policy.		Apr 2010
May 2012	2			O0512-029	May 2014
May 2014	3		Include burning of blue gum provisions.	O0514-100	May 2016
Mar 2016	4		Move from COR to EXT. Policy rewritten to reflect current practices.	O0316-008	Mar 2018
Apr 2018	5	D16/29062	Update document controller title, minor formatting changes	O0418-075	Apr 2020
Mar 2020	6		No change, laid on table.	O0320-073	
Jun 2020	7	D16/29062[v2]	Amendment to exemption/variation paragraph, update department name to Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), remove Facebook and replace with social media and removal of a form from policy.	O0620-183	Jun 2022
Dec 2021	8	D16/29062[v3]	Update to Exemption/Variation and Machinery Movement Ban sections. Remove form from policy.	O1221-225	Dec 2023
Nov 2023	9	D16/29062[v4]	Remove Management Practice information, include minimum training and operational requirements for volunteers, update to reflect change in new fire danger rating system.	O1123-193	Nov 2025