

GET READY WINGECARRIBEE

Get Bush Fire Ready: Week 6 – What's Your **Plan B?**

HELLO AND CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations on making it to the final week of our bush fire preparedness series! Over the past five weeks, you've learned how to:

- 1. Discussed** what to do if a bush fire threatens your home.
- 2. Prepared** your home for the bush fire season.
- 3. Know** the bush fire alert levels and assess your risk.
- 4. Keeping Up to Date** with local news and alerts
- 5. Created our emergency kits**

This week, we'll help you know some of the risks of fire, including Ember Attacks and prepare your back up plans. Do not underestimate the importance of contingency plans – fires can be unpredictable.



Know Your Risk

Living with the bush is part of living in Southern Highlands – but so is living with the risk of fire.

A bush or grass fire can happen at any time of the year, but the risk is higher during the warmer months, when bush, grass or scrub is drier.

You don't have to live right near the bush to be at risk. Even if your home is a few streets back, you may be at risk.

You can check for bush fire prone areas in your area on your [local council website](#)



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Plan B: Be Prepared for Alternatives

Having a Plan B is essential in case your primary plan cannot be executed. Here are some steps to help you prepare.

Map Your Safety Zones:

Get a copy of a local map and mark key locations, including:

- The closest large, flat, open clearing near your home that's free of trees and other combustible materials.
- The nearest Neighbourhood Safer Place.
- A short-stay location where you can go for a few hours.
- At least two routes to reach your short-stay location safely.

Reassess Your Risks:

Think about the risks in your area and how they might affect your alternative plans:

- Are you close to bushland or areas prone to fires?
- Is there a history of fires in your vicinity?
- Are there many trees or shrubs around your home?
- Does your evacuation route go through bushland?

TIP

Ensure everyone has access to transportation. If the main car and driver are unavailable, consider alternatives like public transport, arranging a lift, or walking if necessary

Know When to Leave:

Leaving too late can be dangerous. Driving through smoke can reduce visibility, putting you, other motorists, and emergency services at risk of collisions or getting caught in the path of a fire.

What If It's Too Late to Leave?

If you've left it too late to evacuate, take these steps to shelter in place:

- **Find Shelter:** Look for a safe spot in your home away from the fire front. Protect yourself from radiant heat and flames, and be ready to extinguish spot fires quickly.
- **Identify Escape Routes:** Ensure there are exits in each room, like ground-level windows and doors.
- **Stay Oriented:** Remember where your nearest clearing is and how to get there, as smoke can be disorientating.
- **Protect Yourself:** Use wool blankets to shield against radiant heat and falling embers.
- **Stay Calm:** Keep a clear head to make safe decisions, as panicking can impair your judgment.

TIP

Before you leave, check for the latest updates on traffic, road closures, and public transport disruptions:

Preparing to Stay and Defend:

Even if you decide to leave early, take basic steps to improve your home's chances, such as clearing your yard of flammable items and keeping your emergency kit and grab bags easily accessible.

Remember, many people caught out by disasters say, "I didn't think it could happen to me." By having a solid Plan B, you can give yourself and your family the best chance to stay safe.



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Understanding Ember Attack

Did you know that 90% of homes lost in bush fires are due to ember attack?

During a bush fire, burning parts of trees such as twigs, branches, or leaves become airborne and can be carried downwind of the bush fire.

An 'ember attack' occurs when many embers are carried in a cluster by winds. You can minimise the effect that ember attack will have on your home by undertaking a few simple tasks. These include:

- Regular cleaning of gutters to prevent a build up of leaves and sticks
- Removal of flammable materials such as woodpiles and dead/dry plants and grass from around your home
- Fitting wire mesh screens to windows and doors
- Enclosing spaces where embers could enter the structure of your home such as underfloor areas and under eaves



Watch: NSW RFS – Don't Give fire A Chance

Avoiding Car Accidents

Experience has shown that the greatest risk to life in a bush fire is to those involved in car accidents due to poor visibility and poor choices.

Thick smoke and heat exposure while a fire front passes through can turn a moment of panic into a deadly situation.

You can avoid this situation by planning ahead so you can make the right choices and give yourself and your household the best chance of survival.

TIP

Always have a clear plan and avoid driving through heavy smoke or areas impacted by a fire if possible.

Bush Fire Safety for Travellers

Bush fires can occur quickly and without warning, so it's crucial to reduce your risk while traveling.

Ensure you and your family are prepared:

- Inform someone of your plans.
- Avoid remote areas on Total Fire Ban days.
- Check Fire Danger Ratings.
- Identify Neighbourhood Safer Places.

Use the Fires Near Me NSW app to monitor fire activity and pack an Emergency Survival Kit. While traveling, keep an eye on weather conditions, stay updated on nearby fires, and avoid areas with high Fire Danger Ratings. Always check for fire restrictions, especially in national parks or state forests.

RFS information for Traveller factsheet



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Be Prepared for Changing Conditions

Now, you should have a robust bush fire survival plan, a well-prepared home, and the knowledge to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

We hope you never have to use these plans, but if you do, you'll be ready.

Thank you for taking this journey with us. Don't forget you can always go back a review previous week's information.

Remember, **preparedness is a continuous process**. Keep your plans updated and stay vigilant. Your safety is our top priority.

Stay Safe and Prepared!

P.S. We encourage you to share your feedback with us. Your insights can help us improve our future programs and support our community better. Feel free to reach out with any comments or suggestions.



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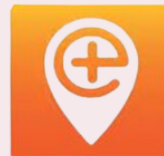
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Disclaimer

This information is not intended to supersede any formal advice given to you by an appropriate authority such as NSW RFS Current as of August 2024.



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