

Landscape burning

Council recognises that bushfire risk reduction can be effective through landscape burning on private land using low intensity burning techniques. These methods may also contribute to improved biodiversity by reducing weed growth and reducing competition for some plants.

This document outlines the principles and requirements under Local Law 20 for landscape burns, outside the fire danger period. For information on burning off during the fire danger period, please contact the Country Fire Authority or see <https://firepermits.vic.gov.au/>.

A local laws permit will be required.

For all proposed landscape burns, a permit is required to be issued before the burn off takes place. Permits can be applied for at <https://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/burningoff>. An inspection of the burn site by a Council Authorised Officer will be required before the permit is considered and consultation with the CFA may be required depending on the planned works. You should allow up to 10 working days for this process.



Landscape management plans.

- Before a local laws permit will be issued, residents will need to produce a land management plan for their property. This will outline the areas in which fire will be used to manage bushfire risk.
- Creating a property plan and property fire map will help you understand the various planning scheme requirements that may apply to your property. It will also help you determine what the fire management approach will be for each part of your property.
- Note that exemptions under the planning scheme to allow removal of native flora through fuel management burns do not apply to environmental or heritage requirements under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (Vic) or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (Cth). Planning and environmental covenants may restrict fuel management activities.

Burn plan

Before issuing a permit, Council officers will review the property plan and the burn plan for the fire.

- The burn plan should be overlaid on the fire map and include:
 - Details of blocks to be burnt, including vegetation type, area and aspect/topography
 - Control lines
 - Objective of the burn
 - Weather prescriptions
 - Personnel and resource requirements
 - Lighting technique and sequence
 - Notifications and permit requirements
 - Risk assessment
 - Contingency arrangements
 - Post-burn actions – mop-up, patrols and extinguishment

Low intensity burning

The objective of a low intensity bush fire hazard reduction burn is to reduce the fuel load (vegetation) and therefore minimise the potential impacts of a bush fire on life, property and the environment.

The characteristics of a low intensity burn include:

- Low flame heights – Flame heights should average about one metre, but may be higher in patches of heavy or elevated fuels.
- Low scorch height – Scorch height should average less than five metres. Scorch height is the height to which tree leaves are killed from the heat of the fire.
- Slow rate of spread – The fire should spread only at a slow walking pace.



Safe weather parameters (burn prescription)

It is important to consider the weather prescription that is needed to achieve your burn (e.g. wind speed and direction, humidity, time since last rain event, temperature), and study the weather forecasts with the prescription in mind.

In general, you should consider the following parameters as a guide.

- Temperature: Less than 25 degrees
- Relative humidity: Above 40%
- Wind speed: Less than 10 km/h
- No rating on the Fire Danger Rating System

You should also check and record the weather forecast for the following three days.

Contingency planning

As part of your planning, it is important to consider any possible contingencies. What will you do if:

- Weather conditions are outside prescription, winds are gusty?
- Fuel moisture content is not suitable?
- Lighting plan is not effective?
- An incident occurs or someone receives an injury?
- The fire escapes or spots over control lines?
- The fire becomes unmanageable with current resources?

Safety must always guide your decision making. You should continually monitor the conditions in the burn area and the fire behaviour.

Burn resourcing

Residents should have suitable firefighting equipment available to ensure the burn off can be controlled. This may include:

- Reticulated water supply with hose that can reach all parts of the fire,
- Water tank mounted on vehicle or trailer of a suitable capacity for the fire (recommended minimum of 1000 litres)
- Water pump – electrical or petrol/diesel.
- Suitable fire fighting tools such as rake hoes
- Suitable numbers of personnel to ensure that the fire is patrolled and maintained as safe.

Residents should not rely on the CFA being available to assist with private burns.

All burns must be registered with ESTA on 1800 668 511 or online at

<https://firepermits.vic.gov.au/>



Cardinia Shire Council has developed the Bushfire Prepare program. This has been designed to provide residents wishing to undertake landscape burns on their property with the knowledge and skills to safely burn off. The program consists of an online self-paced course of seven modules with a practical workshop opportunity where hands-on skills can be developed.

If you are not an experienced fire management practitioner, prior to being issued a permit to burn we would expect that you have undertaken this program. See <https://bushfireprepare.online> for more information