



Lions River Fire Protection Association
By Landowners - For Landowners

BURNING OF SUGAR CANE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Guidelines to follow when wanting to burn off sugar cane in and out of fire season

GUIDELINES FOR THE BURNING OF SUGAR CANE during Fire Season 1May – 31 October annually

1. Specific Objectives for a code of good practice
 - a. Minimize smut deposits and pollution caused by sugar cane fires on sensitive areas
 - b. Attempt to prevent runaway fires.
 - a. Attempt to prevent controlled fires causing disruption to power supplies and communication links.
 - c. Attempt to prevent traffic accidents caused by smoke moving across district and national roads from controlled or accidental fires.
 - d. To trash cane immediately adjacent to sensitive areas, wherever possible.
 - e. Make every effort to protect flora and fauna when burning sugarcane fields.
 - f. For cane growers in the King Shaka International Airport area - To be compliant with the Record of Decision handed down for the King Shaka International Airport and the memorandum of understanding between Airports Company South Africa, growers and the local Conservation Authorities situated within 10km of the airport.
2. Burning can only take place from Monday – Friday and generally between the hours 04h00 – 08h00 and 16h00 – 20h00
 - a. Should there be electronic detection Firehawk must be informed and
 - b. Neighbour's MUST be notified at all times of intended burns
3. Burning can take place on Saturday only if the cane is to be delivered to the mill within 24 hrs, and generally between the hours 04h00 – 08h00
 - a. The FPA and or FPO must be informed should there be burning planned for a Saturday
 - b. Should there be electronic detection Firehawk must be informed and
 - c. Neighbour's MUST be notified at all times of intended burns
4. Burning can take place on a Sunday only if the cane is to be delivered to the mill within 24 hrs, and generally between the hours 16h00 – 20h00
 - a. The FPA and or FPO must be informed should there be burning planned for a Sunday
 - b. Should there be electronic detection Firehawk must be informed and
 - c. Neighbour's MUST be notified at all times of intended burns
5. Public Holidays: only mill cane can be burnt as per times above, and all terms and conditions apply.

6. Weather forecasts are to be taken into account at all times when making decisions on advisability and timing of cane burning. Growers should consult the SA Weather Services.
 - a. In the first instance contact the local FPA
 - b. In the second instance contact KZN FPA – 033 330 8421
 - c. For a 4 day forecast and planning –
 - i. The SAWS website can be accessed on <http://www.weathersa.co.za>.
 - ii. Fire Danger index can be obtained on <http://www.firestop.co.za>.
 - iii. Wind speed and direction forecasts for the Durban/Richards Bay areas can be obtained on <http://windguru.co.za>.
7. If the Forecast FDI is ORANGE for the day in question and the FDI is for the period prior to 14h00, conditions can be re-assessed at 15h30 and burning may be permitted on the day and only after 16h00.
8. If the Forecast FDI is ORANGE for the day in question and the FDI is for the period, early morning conditions may be assessed and by the FPA and burning may be permitted on the day and only prior to 8.00am.
9. If the Forecast FDI is RED for the day in question NO burning is permitted at all.
10. The burning of cane trash can only take place on week days and forecast FDI is below 55 yellow
 - a. Water cart must be present the whole time
11. Exceptions for Cane Burning will only be made to vary times in extreme circumstances, Heavy dew or rain and only with permission from FPA/ FPO
12. Adequate Water carts (in working condition) must be present at each a burn, anyone found burning without will automatically be deemed Negligent
13. The FPA needs to understand that in most instances the decision to burn will be left up to the landowner, unless the FPA and or Neighbour's deem it unsafe when seeking permission.
14. General Guidelines - Practices & Procedures
 - a. Prevention of smut deposits in sensitive areas

Growers are at all times required to exercise care when burning sugarcane. The wind direction at the time when fires are ignited must be considered and no burning should be carried out if the wind is likely to carry smut over sensitive areas.
 - b. Prevention of smut deposits on sensitive areas.

No cane burning will take place when wind direction is such that a sensitive area will be affected and/or strong temperature inversions are present. All controlled and arson fires must be logged by the grower with the time, date and wind direction. Trashing is strongly recommended in the vicinity of sensitive areas in order to avoid unplanned smut deposits and smoke nuisance.
 - c. Growers should inform community leaders of sensitive areas before fields on their boundaries are to be burnt.
 - d. Prevention of motor accidents on public roads.

Every action must be taken to avoid any smoke crossing public roads. If there is any danger of this happening, warnings must be established for motorists, and local traffic authorities must be contacted.

e. Burning under ESKOM and telephone lines

Growers are not permitted to burn under ESKOM or telephone lines without permission. Special permission can be obtained from ESKOM by phoning 0800 310 008, and either a reference number obtained or a record of the time of call made.

f. Firebreaks adjacent to residential areas

A break of 10 meters needs to be maintained as a firebreak between cane fields on farm boundaries, and a minimum of 18 meters between cane fields and residential boundaries. Growers are advised to consult their insurer as to the insurance requirements for their area.

g. Protection of flora and fauna.

In order to minimize maiming and/or loss of wildlife when burning, the following precautions must be taken:

15. Avoid blanket burns, leave a wildlife corridor of at least 20-30m when setting the fire.

- a. This corridor is not to be blocked by farm staff, allowing wildlife a safe exit from the field.
- b. To provide wildlife with cover, the corridor should wherever possible be adjacent to mature cane, waterways or indigenous bush.

16. In order to protect valuable vegetation, fires should wherever possible be set in such a way that they do not excessively scorch indigenous vegetation.

17. Disciplinary Procedure

i. The following procedure will be followed:

- ii. An incident is to be investigated by the FPO and or Chairman of the Fire Protection Association and leader of the Local Growers Association.

18. First offenders will be given a written warning that will be valid for the current harvesting season.

19. In the event of a second offence, a disciplinary hearing should be held and if found guilty of acting against the guidelines, a grower could face penalties in the form of loss of daily allocation.