



# FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

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## Fire Management Planning Process

### Risk management

The concept of risk management underpins all decisions in fire management. It involves identifying fire risks and balancing the likelihood of a fire against the consequences should one occur. For example, while an event like a fire may be unlikely to happen, its consequences can be major or even catastrophic. Consequently, plans are needed to minimise risk. When planning fire management, it is important to think about economic, environmental and social risks (risks to people). The impact of both fire prevention activities and fire itself can affect safety, the environment and the long-term sustainability of a property.

### Fire management planning

Effective fire management is a continual process that involves:

1. planning for fire safety;
2. implementing these plans;
3. checking that what was planned has been done and is effective; and
4. reviewing and changing these plans when necessary.

This type of continual process occurs both at a property scale and at a larger public scale. Both scales are important to secure fire safety across the rural landscape. Government authorities should undertake fire management planning as part of their responsibility for public safety and to support communities and industries – this includes developing and implementing plans and documents such as municipal and regional fire prevention plans - however, this is not always the case. At a property level, fire management may range from developing and undertaking simple unwritten plans to more complex documented plans, depending on the risks present. Rural landowners are encouraged to have a written plan so that it is easier for them to consider fire risk issues on their property and to communicate these issues to others.

### Step 1 PLAN:

#### Identify and assess risks

1. Identify what the plan is trying to achieve.
2. Identify key assets and key fire safety risks, including those from adjacent properties and features.
3. Consider other risks such as economic, environmental and legal risks.

4. Assess whether the risks identified are relevant and/or significant to the property by considering the likelihood and consequences of these risks happening.

### Plan to minimise risk

1. Select treatments that minimise the identified risks.
2. Include consideration of safety, environmental and economic issues and the long-term sustainability of the property and/or enterprises, with safety as a priority.
3. Consider impacts on adjacent properties and features.
4. Consider it may not always be possible to protect all assets from fire or have fire suppression services available.
5. Consult and work with adjacent public and private landowners, managers and land users to achieve fire safety benefits for all involved.
6. Locate fire management works for the property within the property boundary, unless they are part of a cooperative approach, to ensure they are there when they are needed.

### Plan for recovery

Plan for recovery issues, such as insurance, weed problems, the long-term sustainability of the property and enterprises.

## Step 2 - DO:

### Implement the plan

Implement the property fire management plan. A written plan will help to consider and communicate fire risks.

## Step 3 - CHECK:

### Check the plan

Check that the fire management works have been undertaken, are still effective and have not had unintended consequences.

## Step 4 - REVIEW:

### Review the plan

Review the plan regularly to ensure that it is still current and effective. It should also be reviewed when beginning new enterprises, undertaking a substantial change in existing enterprises, or changing the property layout or infrastructure, such as sheds or fences.

## Fire suppression

Having the capacity for a fast fire-suppression response is an important way to help protect properties from fire.

## 1. Private fire fighting equipment

All rural landowners, where the risk of spread of fire is high, are required to have fire fighting equipment. In addition to this, landowners and managers are encouraged to have access to additional private fire fighting equipment to stop the spread of fire. This may range from, rakes, fire extinguishers (homes and sheds), farm tractor firefighting units, bakkie sakkies, or bulk tankers depending on the type of fire risks present.

## 2. Response planning

Landowners and managers are encouraged to have a fire response plan for their property as part of an overall property fire plan.

## 3. Commercial and Private Timber Growers

Plantation owners are encouraged to form a Plantations Fire Crews or form a partnership with other plantation owners to form such a fire crews.

## 4. Preparedness and response plans

Plantation owners and managers are encouraged to have access to heavy equipment, such as bulldozers, graders and excavators, for fire fighting purposes. It is advised that this access be documented and that the range of equipment available can be scaled up or down as needed.

## 5. Access tracks

Generally, access tracks should:

1. be free of overhanging trees and shrubs;
2. be wide enough to allow two tankers to pass, or have passing bays;
3. be capable of a load limit of at least 15 tonnes;
4. be aligned to provide straight through access at junctions; and
5. be sign posted if visibility is poor due to terrain or vegetation.

Allow for, or manage, the growth of trees and branches when planning access tracks. Reducing adjacent fuel loads can increase the benefits and safety of access tracks. Consider the opportunity for access tracks to double as fuel breaks.

## Water supply access

Access to water will assist in securing fire safety.

### 1. Property water supply

Generally, water supplies should:

- be obvious to or known to local fire suppression services (signs or property plans may be necessary);

- be located in an open and clear flat area with a hard standing area allowing a fire tender pump to be within 3 m of the water supply;
- have a turning circle loop or turn-around point;
- where tanks are used, have couplings or adaptors that enable farm fire fighting equipment and LRFPAs & Working on Fire units to fill from the tanks;
- be available even when water levels are low during winter months; and
- be independent of mains power supply i.e borehole pumps, pressure pumps at homes etc..

Water supplies could be from a dam, tank, mains water system, helicopter, or private water tanker. Bores and standpipes may also be suitable if flow rates are sufficient. Consider having a water supply and water distribution system that operates independently of mains power.

## Community groups

While personal fire safety is an individual responsibility, fire safety is also an important community issue.

### LRFPA & Other community groups

People living and working in rural areas are encouraged to join their local fire association to help improve fire safety on their property and in their community. Opportunities to discuss local fire issues, including fire safety and fire management of public land, are provided by LRFPAs, Working on Fire and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries