

LANDOWNER / LANDUSER OBLIGATIONS IN TERMS OF PROPERTY / FARM FIRE MANAGEMENT



1. Veld and Forest fires are managed under the National Veld & Forest Fire Act 101, 1998
2. All landowners / landusers residing on property where there is a likely chance for spread of fire on and or over the property are required to burn fire breaks.
3. The minimum requirement in this regard is to ensure all boundaries are secured by fire breaks (boundary / external fire breaks)
4. Generally, fire break preparation is a joint effort with neighbours and along the joint boundaries
5. Should grass management burning need to be undertaken in spring – the area to be burnt must be completely surrounded by fire breaks (internal fire breaks).
6. Fire break width depends on the adjacent risks (well grazed grass, tall grass, timber, scrub etc) and the fuel load – a guideline;
 - 6.1. Fire breaks must be reasonably clear of combustible material – and hence should be burnt and or bare earth
 - 6.2. Mowing / brush cutting of grass – DOES NOT equate to a firebreak as the grass even at 2cm in length during the dry winter months is combustible and will allow a fire to cross.
 - 6.3. Approximately 10m either side of the boundary
 - 6.4. A fire break can be positioned away from the joint boundary, for so long as the joint neighbours are in agreement
 - 6.5. If timber is grown up to the boundary – the under canopy / inter-row can be rake hoed and cleared of fuel load – this creates a bare earth fire break – ladder loads must also be reduced on the tree stem
7. It is always available to enter into a written firebreak agreement – a template is obtainable from the Lions River Fire Protection Association (admin@lionsriverfpa.co.za)
8. Fire break preparation generally starts as follows:
 - 8.1. If tracer lines are to be chemically sprayed and then burnt – begin the spraying activity prior to end of April, allows sufficient time for the grass to cure, and the tracer lines can be burnt in April
 - 8.2. If tracer lines are to be mown – do this prep work during the month of May
 - 8.3. Fire break burning generally gets underway soon after the first good frosts
 - 8.4. Fire breaks must be completed by no later than 31 July each year
 - 8.5. Any burning activity can only be undertaken with a permit issued by the Lions River FPA and or its appointed agent – regardless of membership to the Lions River FPA
 - 8.6. Contact No's (Permits): 073 704 5862 / 078 392 1435 / 033 – 330 6369
9. All landowners / landusers MUST have reasonable firefighting equipment and veld and forest fire trained staff to undertake fire break preparation and fire suppression activities.
10. All uncontrolled fires MUST be reported to the Lions River FPA.
11. Membership to the FPA is voluntary, and with a number of substantial benefits, compliance is mandatory, and the Lions River FPA is the registered Fire Protection Association to manage, monitor and enforce the legislation
12. During the period 1 May – 31 October, tracer lines, fire breaks (note 8.4 above) and controlled grass management burns (in terms of Conservation of Agricultural Resource Act (CARA) are permitted – NO OTHER FORM OF BURNING IN THE OPEN AIR IS PERMITTED.

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF THE LIONS RIVER FPA – PLEASE DO CONSIDER SUBSCRIBING –
A NOMINAL ANNUAL FEE IS PAYABLE

Contact Bobby Hoole: 082 901 8795 fpo@lionsriverfpa.co.za

THE ONUS RESTS WITH THE LANDOWNER / LANDUSER IN TERMS OF OVERALL COMPLIANCE (UNDERSTAND THE NATIONAL VELD & FOREST FIRE ACT 101, 1998), THE LRFPA IS YOUR MENTOR, FACILITATOR, COORDINATOR & GUIDE TO COMPLIANCE.

Membership:

Does not equate to an insurance policy; however, insurers may require clients to be members of a Fire Protection Association

Legislated legal benefit – Presumption of Negligence clause i.r.o. civil proceedings

Guide & assist with overall fire management principles

Guide i.r.o legal matters pertaining to veld & forest fires

Assist & facilitate i.r.o. firefighter training

Assist & guide in terms of fire break preparation

Manage & coordinate fire suppression activities where required

24/7 alerts in terms of any potential uncontrolled fires

Disseminate weather warnings and the Fire Danger Index (FDI)

Issue permits for all controlled burning activities

Keep abreast with fire related technologies

Small pool of fire equipment available (fee)

Supplier discounts available

Basic fire reports

Weekly newsletter with important information

Keeping abreast of climate change issues & impacts on veld & forest fires