

Fire News and Advice - Oct 2017

Important Dates

1st Oct	Start of Restricted Burning Season in both Swan and Toodyay - Permits Required
7th Oct	City of Swan Bush Fire Ready info session - Gidgegannup
28th Oct	Gidgegannup Show - be there!
1st Nov - 9th March	Prohibited Burning Season in Shire of Toodyay
1st Dec - 31st March	Prohibited Burning Season in City of Swan

Note that fire breaks and building protection zones must be maintained for the months November to April inclusive

Be reminded that there will be lots of hazard reduction burning between now and the start of the prohibited season. Most of this is safe and legal. If you are concerned that what you are seeing seems unusual for this time of year, take the time to check it out rather than knee jerk react. However if you see a fire which you believe is unsafe, out of control, or illegal, call 000 giving the street address if at all possible.

New and renovated fire stations

The East Gidgegannup Station is nearing the end of renovations, and should be handed back to the brigade shortly. WA Govt funding from the ESL has been approved and land allocated near the corner of Toodyay and O'Brien rds for the new West Gidgegannup station, hopefully construction will occur during 2018.

Your Preparedness for the upcoming Bush Fire Season

Planning to plan is NOT a plan. Not having a plan is setting yourself up for failure. You and your family should have a robust Bush Fire Survival Plan in place well in advance, and it should take into account those worst days when you may get no warning of impact of bush fire, and you may not be able to evacuate or get help before the fire arrives. The plan should allow for losing mains power etc. Warning systems, social media, various Apps etc are of no use if you cannot actively defend yourself and your family if caught out! Seek advice from your brigades and Bush Fire Ready facilitators, or on DFES and Local Govt websites.

Community Bush Fire Ready information session Gidgegannup 7th Oct 10:00 to 12:00

Scheduled to be held in the Gidgegannup Fire Station, however renovations might not be complete so check beforehand, it may have to be relocated to the Rec club.

Your Responsibilities under the Bush Fires Act

You are required to comply with the Annual Firebreak Notice from your Local Govt. This imposes an obligation on you to maintain firebreaks and Building Protection Zones on your property. You must also manage fuel loads in both pastures and bush - if you own the land you own the risk.

You are required to comply with seasonal restrictions, including the requirements for permits, see below for further details

You also have an obligation to report and to "take all possible measures" to extinguish any bush fire occurring on your land irrespective of the cause. However you are not expected to expose yourself to undue danger in carrying out this obligation, and in many cases the higher priority is ensuring the safety of yourself, your family, and vulnerable persons.

Having a robust Bush Fire Survival Plan, appropriate infrastructure and equipment, and ensuring your whole family are thoroughly familiar with the plan and equipment will go a long way to ensuring your family's safety, and enabling you to meet your obligation to control bush fire on your land.

Importance of Extinguishing your burns

Please ensure all fires are left extinguished or safe before you leave them. Each year there are numerous callouts by emergency services for escaped burns and re-ignitions. Extinguishment means with water, NOT covering with earth as this can trap heat/embers which burn out and restart fires days or even weeks later. Smaller burns should be completely extinguished, larger ones at least within 20m of the edge or as per issued permit.

Restricted Burning Season

1st Oct to 30th Nov in City of Swan

1st Oct to 31st Oct in Shire of Toodyay

Check your Local Govt Fire Season Guide/Firebreak notice for details but in a nutshell

All forms of burning before 18:00 (6:00pm) on any day require a permit

All but the smallest fires after 6:00 pm require a permit. The exception is a single small heap of garden refuse (not exceeding 1 sq m) and only between 6:00 and midnight (must be fully extinguished). You must have an effective means of extinguishment, have an adequate firebreak, and not leave it unattended until fully extinguished.

Applying for a permit

Gidgegannup residents - 08:30 to 10:00 Saturdays from 30th Sept. Initially the City of Swan Place Office near the Gidge bakery will be used. Once the refurbished Gidgegannup fire station is opened (late Oct) permits will be issued from there. Check social media for updates.

Toodyay Shire residents - online via permits@toodyay.wa.gov.au

When are Permits cancelled or suspended

Permits can be suspended or cancelled at any time by a Bush Fire Control Officer.

Automatic permit suspension occurs on any day when the forecast Fire Danger is "Very High" or above, or if a Total Fire Ban or Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban is in place for the area. The onus is on YOU to check, not to expect to be advised.

In Shire of Toodyay permits are automatically suspended on Sundays

Typical permit conditions

All permits have notification requirements specified, including to adjoining landholders (this includes across the road, or stream or railway reserve). Notice periods vary, but standard under the Bush Fires Act is 4 days in writing delivered to the address for adjoining residents (but 8 days for absentee landowners), unless they agree to a shorter notice period. Verbal notice is also OK but notice by email, SMS etc are likely not to be considered valid unless a response acknowledging the notice is received. All permits will have requirements for firebreaks, for attendance until safe/extinguished, and for firefighting equipment of some sort. The permit will also specify times of lighting and extinguishment and what can be burnt eg heaps only or running fire in grass or bush. Size/area of the burn and how many people need to be in attendance will also be specified.