

## TRAVELLING DURING BUSHFIRE SEASON



In Western Australia, bushfires can start suddenly and without warning throughout the year. People have been killed and seriously injured during bushfires. Bushfires in WA are becoming more common and the risks are increasing.

People should reconsider travel into area where the fire danger is high to extreme. Pay attention to fire danger warnings, and postpone travel or find an alternative route if necessary.

### THE WA BUSHFIRE SEASON

- **South West** – November to April
- **Goldfields Midlands** – November to March
- **Midwest Gascoyne** – October to April
- **North West (Kimberley and Pilbara)** July to October – depending on seasonal rainfalls.

If you intend to travel through bushfire risk areas you must plan ahead



### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

In a major emergency when lives and property are at risk, ABC radio broadcasts will be issued at a quarter to and a quarter past the hour. Find out the local ABC radio frequency in the area that you are travelling to.

### PLAN AHEAD:

- Check the weather forecast and Fire Danger Ratings (FDR) for the areas you plan to visit
- Listen to ABC local radio for news about where bushfires are burning
- Check for current fire restrictions and if a Total Fire Ban (TFB) is in place for the areas you plan to visit
- Always carry maps of the area you are entering and know the exit routes
- Be prepared to reassess your plans and visit low risk areas on days where weather conditions are unpredictable.

The Fire Danger Rating is based on the weather forecast and gives you advice about what level of bushfire threat on a particular day



### PACK A BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL KIT

A survival kit should include essential items such as

- AM/FM portable radio
- spare batteries
- a first aid kit
- woollen blankets (one for each person)
- drinking water and food
- protective clothing like long-sleeved cotton tops, pants, hats and sturdy shoes.



If you see a bushfire in the distance, carefully pull over to the side of the road to assess the situation. If it is safe to do so turn around and drive to safety. If you have been trapped by the fire, find a suitable place to park the car and shelter from the bushfire

Always follow the directions of police and firefighters if they are present.

### KEEP UP TO DATE

DFES Information line 1300 657 209

### POSITIONING YOUR CAR

- Find a clearing away from dense bush and high ground fuel loads.
- Where possible, minimise exposure to radiant heat by parking behind a natural barrier such as a rocky outcrop.
- Position the car facing towards the oncoming fire front.
- Park the car off the roadway to avoid collisions in poor visibility.
- Don't park too close to other vehicles.



## INSIDE YOUR CAR

- Stay inside your car – it offers the best level of protection from the radiant heat as the fire front passes.
- Turn headlights and hazard warning lights on to make the car as visible as possible.
- Tightly close all windows and doors.
- Shut all the air vents and turn the air conditioning off.
- Turn the engine off.
- Get down below the window level into the foot wells and shelter under woollen blankets.
- Drink water to minimise the risks of dehydration.



## CAUTION!

Do not attempt to drive through a fire front unless you can see through to the other side and the flames no higher than you.



## AS THE FIRE FRONT PASSES

- Stay in the car until the fire front has passed and the temperature has dropped outside.
- Fuel tanks are very unlikely to explode.
- As the fire front approaches, the intensity of the heat will increase along with the amount of smoke and embers.
- Smoke gradually gets inside the car and fumes will be released from the interior of the car. Stay as close to the floor as possible to minimise inhalation and cover mouth with a moist cloth.
- Tyres and external plastic body parts may catch alight. In more extreme cases the car interior may catch on fire.
- Once the fire front has passed and the temperature has dropped cautiously exit the car. (Be careful - internal parts will be extremely hot.)
- Move to a safe area such as a strip of land that has already burnt.
- Stay covered in woollen blankets, continue to drink water and await assistance.

## Resources:

- **DFES Travellers Checklist**  
[http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/BushfireChecklists/FESA\\_Bushfire\\_Travellers\\_Checklist.pdf](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/BushfireChecklists/FESA_Bushfire_Travellers_Checklist.pdf)
- **DFES Prepare. Act. Survive**  
<http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/Pages/default.aspx>
- **DFES Homeowners Bushfire Survival Manual**  
[http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/BushfireManualsandGuides/FESA\\_Bushfire-Homeowners\\_Survival\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/BushfireManualsandGuides/FESA_Bushfire-Homeowners_Survival_Manual.pdf)
- **Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) Guidelines for people in cars during bushfires – January 2008**



For more information please contact  
**DFES Community Engagement on  
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[communitysafetyresources@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:communitysafetyresources@dfes.wa.gov.au)**