



## Total Fire Bans



Total Fire Bans affect everyone, whether you live near bush or in a built up area. They are a prevention measure to warn you of a day of predicted adverse fire weather. On these days you should be particularly careful not to cause a fire to start.

### WHAT DOES A TOTAL FIRE BAN MEAN?

It means a person must not:

- light, maintain or use a fire in the open air
- carry out an activity in the open air that causes or is likely to cause a fire.

The ban includes:

- hot works (welding, grinding, soldering, gas cutting)
- all open solid fuel fires for the purpose of cooking or camping
- use of incinerators and other activities (as described in the 'What Can't I do on a Total Fire Ban day?' section).

### WHEN WILL A TOTAL FIRE BAN BE DECLARED?

They are declared on days when fires will be difficult to control, are most likely to threaten lives and property, or when widespread fires are impacting the availability of resources.

The decision to put a ban in place is based on the weather forecast. DFES consults with the Bureau of Meteorology to determine when dangerous fire weather conditions are likely. DFES also consults with local governments that will be affected.

The need for the ban to remain is assessed and may be revoked in the morning if weather conditions ease. The status of a ban should be checked after 6pm each day.

### HOW LONG IS A TOTAL FIRE BAN IN PLACE FOR?

The ban will be in place from 12.01am to 11.59pm on the day declared.

### HOW IS A TOTAL FIRE BAN DECLARED?

They are declared by the Minister for Emergency Services, or his authorised delegate, using the whole local government boundary.

### HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN ONE HAS BEEN DECLARED?

You can check if your shire has a ban:

- on the DFES website at [www.dfes.wa.gov.au](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au)
- by calling **1800 709 355**
- by listening to ABC local radio and other media outlets
- on roadside Fire Danger Rating signs
- subscribe to RSS or follow DFES on twitter [www.twitter.com/dfes\\_wa](https://www.twitter.com/dfes_wa)



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### WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR IGNORING A TOTAL FIRE BAN?

You could be fined up to \$25,000 and/or jailed for 12 months, if you ignore a ban.

### CAN I GET AN EXEMPTION TO CARRY OUT WORK DURING A TOTAL FIRE BAN?

Some industries and activities may be given an exemption depending on the nature of their activity.

### HOW CAN I GET AN EXEMPTION?

An exemption may be granted if you can show you are taking proper steps to prevent any fire spreading, and that you can control and put out any fire that may start.

Exemptions can cover specific times and locations, and can be changed or cancelled at any time.

You need to apply for an exemption in writing by completing an exemption application form, available at [www.dfes.wa.gov.au](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au)

### WHAT CAN'T I DO ON A TOTAL FIRE BAN DAY?

#### BBQs

#### Can I use my BBQ?

This depends on what type of BBQ or cooker you have, and where it is located. During a Total Fire Ban you cannot light or use a fire in the open air. Undercover areas such as patios, pergolas and huts that are open or partially open to the weather are deemed to be in the open air.

#### Solid fuel

No. You cannot use any BBQ or cooker that requires solid fuel such as wood or charcoal. This includes wood fired ovens or stoves, and Weber like BBQs.

#### Gas

Yes. You can use a gas BBQ for cooking if it has an enclosed flame and:

- All flammable material is cleared five metres away from around your BBQ.
- Your BBQ is never left unattended.
- BBQs with exposed flames cannot be used.

#### Electric

Yes. You can use an electric BBQ where there is no flame.

### What happens if I don't have a five metre buffer zone for my BBQ?

In residential areas where there is not enough space to create your five metre buffer, due to a fence or building, you must:

- Ensure the area around your BBQ is free from flammable material.
- Ensure no burning or hot material escapes this area.
- Be in reach of a garden hose.
- Short green grass less than five centimetres in height, paving stones, bricks and reticulated gardens are not considered to be flammable.

### Can I have a BBQ in my local park?

Yes. But only under strict conditions. If you are in a public space or park you must only cook in an area sign posted as a BBQ area. You can only use an electric or gas appliance that has an enclosed flame. All flammable material must be cleared five metres around the appliance. Short green grass less than five centimetres in height, paving stones, bricks and reticulated gardens are not considered to be flammable. You cannot use solid fuel such as wood or charcoal in the open air.

### Can I use my wood fired pizza oven?

No. You cannot use solid fuel such as wood or charcoal in the open air this includes outdoor wood fired pizza ovens. Undercover areas such as patios, pergolas and huts that are open or partially open to the weather are deemed to be in the open air.

### Tools and Equipment

#### Can I use a chainsaw, plant or grass trimmer, or lawn mower?

Yes. These activities can be undertaken in suburban or built up areas, but not in bush or other areas where their use is likely to cause a fire. If possible postpone this work as the risk of starting a fire is extremely high.

#### Can I use a generator?

Yes. This can be undertaken in suburban or built up areas, but not in bush or other areas where their use is likely to cause a fire. If possible postpone this work as the risk of starting a fire is extremely high.



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### **Can I use equipment and machinery (e.g. bobcats, excavators, bulldozers etc)?**

Yes. But only if a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban has not been implemented by your local government and not in the bush or other areas where their use is likely to cause a fire. If possible postpone this work as the risk of starting a fire is extremely high. Their use is permitted in suburban or built up areas where the area is sufficiently cleared of flammable material to prevent a fire escaping.

### **Can I do grinding, welding or other forms of 'hot works'?**

These types of activities are not allowed in the open air at all unless you have an exemption.

### **Can I use an angle grinder, power tools or welder inside my shed?**

This depends on the type of shed you are working from. You cannot use any of these if your shed has one or more open sides that are exposed to the weather. This is because of the risk of wind blowing through and causing sparks to land on flammable material starting a bushfire. You can use these tools inside your shed if it is fully enclosed on all sides, and has a door and roof to prevent sparks blowing outside. Please be aware of general safety risks when working inside enclosed spaces, including the risk of fumes.

### **Can I burn leaves, garden waste and grass cuttings, or use an incinerator?**

No. During a Total Fire Ban it is illegal to:

- light, maintain or use a fire in the open air
- carry out any activity that causes or is likely to cause a fire in the open air

### **Camping and Recreation**

#### **Can I light a camp fire?**

No. During a Total Fire Ban it is illegal to:

- light, maintain or use a fire in the open air
- carry out any activity that causes or is likely to cause a fire in the open air

### **Can I cook while camping outdoors?**

No. You cannot:

- light a camp fire or maintain a fire in the open air
- use any solid fuel such as wood or charcoal for cooking
- carry out any activity that causes or is likely to cause a fire in the open air

If you are in a public space or park you must only cook in an area sign posted for the purpose. You can only use an electric or gas appliance that has an enclosed flame. All flammable material must be cleared five metres around the appliance.

### **Can I drive on to my bushland block and go camping?**

Yes. But only if a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban has not been implemented by your local government and the road, track and camping area used is sufficiently cleared of flammable material to prevent a fire escaping. You cannot light a camp fire see 'Can I cook while camping outdoors?' for details.

### **Can I ride my motorbike/motocross bike or quad bike in bush or on a paddock or track?**

Yes. But only if a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban has not been implemented by your local government and the road, track and camping area used is sufficiently cleared of flammable material to prevent a fire escaping.

### **Can I use a dune buggy?**

Yes. But only if a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban has not been implemented by your local government and the road, track and camping area used is sufficiently cleared of flammable material to prevent a fire escaping.

### **Farming and Industry**

#### **Can I harvest my crop?**

Yes. But only if a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban has not been implemented by your local government. Additionally, check with your local government regarding any fire suppression equipment that may be required to be onsite while harvesting.



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### **Can I feed or water my stock in a paddock?**

Yes. But only if a Vehicle Movement Ban has not been implemented by your local government. If one has been implemented, the immediate welfare of animals, such as urgent watering and feeding of stock has an automatic exemption.

However:

- you must ensure your vehicle is mechanically sound and the exhaust system is in good condition, free of gas leaks and/or has a spark arrester that is well maintained
- you must ensure all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent a bushfire starting.

### **Can I operate or move an aeroplane or helicopter in a paddock?**

Yes. But only if a Vehicle Movement Ban has not been implemented by your local government. Note however that the following conditions need to be met:

- you must ensure your aeroplane or helicopter is mechanically sound
- you must take all reasonable precautions to prevent a bushfire starting

### **What if both a Total Fire Ban and a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban are in place?**

If both bans are in place for your local Shire then you cannot work or use a vehicle, equipment or machinery powered by an internal combustion engine on land covered by bush, crop, pasture or stubble as there is a chance it will start a fire. However the immediate welfare of animals, such as urgent watering and feeding of stock has an automatic exemption.

### **Can I work on a professional construction site near bushland, crops or pastures during a Total Fire Ban?**

No. You cannot use power tools, including grinders and welders, or carry out any activity that causes or is likely to cause a fire in the open air, unless you have applied for and received an exemption.

### **Other**

#### **Can I use fireworks?**

No. Any activity that causes or is likely to cause a fire in the open air is banned. Licensed pyrotechnics should seek further advice from DFES or their local shire council.

#### **Can I use a hot air balloon?**

No. Any activity that causes or is likely to cause a fire in the open air is banned.

#### **Can I use blasting equipment or explosives?**

There are too many variations with regard to this activity. If it is necessary to carry out this activity you should contact your local Chief Bushfire Control Officer at your local shire council or nearest DFES office.

#### **Does the ban apply to cigarettes, cigars, tobacco and matches?**

Throwing a burning cigarette, cigar, tobacco or match away in a situation that causes or is likely to cause a fire, including from a vehicle, is banned