

Outback bushfire safety

TRAVELLING THROUGH THE
OUTBACK THIS BUSHFIRE SEASON?



Information Hotline

1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677)

cfs.sa.gov.au



Government
of South Australia



Bushfire safety in outback SA

Before you go

- Seek information on outback travel and bushfire safety
- Check the CFS website; follow CFS on Facebook and Twitter. Check the radio frequencies for the area you are travelling in. You may not always have a radio or phone signal with internet access
- Check the road conditions, forecasted Fire Danger Ratings and the long range weather forecast
- Postpone or modify your travel plans when dangerous fire weather is forecast
- Carry woollen blankets, a good first aid kit, protective clothing (not synthetic), and sturdy boots in your car
- Always carry extra supplies of food and plenty of water
- Carry some other form of communication equipment – satellite phone, UHF and/or VHF radio, a signal device or personal locator beacon (PLB)
- Plan your route and take hard copies of maps
- Let someone know your plans, and if they change
- Understand the distances and remote conditions between roadhouses and townships
- Be aware that in some remote areas of the state emergency services may not be able to get to you for several hours

Do not light a fire on a Total Fire Ban day

On a Total Fire Ban day, you can only use a gas or electric barbecue if:

- The barbecue is within 15 metres of a domestic or commercial premises, or on a coastal foreshore
- It is clear of all flammable vegetation to a distance of at least four metres
- A person who is able to control the fire is present at the site of the fire until it is extinguished
- An appropriate extinguisher is at hand



During the Fire Danger Season when there is not a Total Fire Ban you can only light a campfire for comfort or cooking purposes when:

- The fire is in a 30 cm deep trench and no more than one square metre in area
- You have a four-metre cleared space of flammable vegetation around and above the fire and
- A responsible person is in attendance at all times with water and/or an extinguisher

Fires can be started accidentally when people are not careful with cars, campfires and cigarette butts.

Obey the rules – stay safe – avoid fines

While you're travelling in the outback

- Avoid travelling in areas where bushfires are burning
- Stay alert and use your senses: What's the weather like? Can you smell smoke?
- You are unlikely to have radio or phone coverage if you have left a township area

- If you have coverage, stay tuned to one of the emergency broadcasters listed or call the Information Hotline on 1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677) for information on bushfires in the area. Do not expect an official warning or help from Emergency Services in the outback
- Don't rely solely on electronic mapping devices like GPS and mobile phones, as they may be out of range or affected by smoke and local conditions
- Know the Fire Ban District you are in and check the Fire Danger Ratings every day. Limit any high risk activities on high fire danger days
- Check the regulations and find out if there is a Total Fire Ban in place before starting a campfire or using your barbecue or cooking stove
- Don't throw a cigarette butt from a car or where it will come into contact with flammable vegetation. Do not smoke within 2 metres of flammable bush or grass outside a township. You could start a bushfire and endanger yourselves and others. You could be liable and penalties apply.
- Only park in cleared areas. Never drive your car over long grass or vegetation. You could start a bushfire when your hot car exhaust comes into contact with flammable vegetation

If you see smoke

- Slow down and be aware that there could be people, vehicles and animals on the road
- Seek an alternative route and ensure you are not in the path of the fire, or
- Pull over to the side of the road and stop your vehicle in a clear area
- Turn your car headlights on and close windows and outside vents
- Keep your headlights and hazard lights on and wait until the smoke clears

If you can't escape the path of the fire

- Stay inside your vehicle – it offers better protection than being in the open
- Pull off the road to avoid collisions in poor visibility
- Park in a clear area, preferably behind a solid structure to block some of the heat
- Face your car towards the fire
- Turn the engine and air-conditioning off
- Tightly close the doors, windows and air vents
- Lie on the floor and shelter under woollen blankets to protect yourself from radiant heat
- Avoid dehydration: drink lots of water
- Heat and smoke from the fire and fumes from the car may make breathing difficult – stay under the blankets and cover your mouth with a moist cloth or P2 mask
- Stay down until the sound of the fire has passed, carefully leave the car (it will be hot)
- Move to a safe area such as a strip of land that has already burnt

If you encounter a bushfire on foot or bike

- Do not try to outrun the flames
- Head for a natural fire break, e.g. clearings or rocky outcrops
- Keep away from high ground in the path of the fire
- Cover exposed skin with natural fibres (100% cotton or wool) or shelter behind a solid object such as a rock or building

**Bushfires are unpredictable –
be prepared for the unexpected**

Know your risk in the outback

Bushfires in the SA outback

Bushfire is a natural part of the landscape in the South Australian outback often started by lightning. How big and hot a bushfire is depends on the type of vegetation and how much is available to burn. Fires may start at any time but from September to April bushfires tend to be hotter because the grass and vegetation is drier and burns more readily.

Dry lightning storms are common from September to December and the fires they cause can be very hot and fast moving.

Because of the sparse landscapes, most fires in the outback happen in remote inaccessible areas where it is difficult for firefighters to put out fires.

You may come across an unattended fire burning over a large area which may block your journey.

You will need to be alert, prepared and self-sufficient if you do come across an unattended bushfire. There is no radio or phone coverage in many remote areas.

Be well-prepared and equipped to cope with unexpected delays and emergency situations. Recognise the warning signs and learn what to do to stay safe.

Fire Ban Districts

South Australia is divided into 15 Fire Ban Districts. Each district has its own Fire Danger Season dates, so it is important to know which district you are travelling in and which restrictions apply.

Fire Danger Ratings

The Fire Danger Rating is an indicator of how dangerous a bushfire could be if it occurs, not the likelihood of it happening. Understand the Fire Danger Rating to assess your level of bushfire risk and decide what actions to take.

The CFS may declare Total Fire Bans in some Fire Ban Districts or even across the whole state on days when severe weather conditions could cause fires to become uncontrollable. Barbecues and camp fires are banned on these days.

Be aware of the Fire Danger Rating and know what to do

Fire Danger Rating	What should I do?
CATASTROPHIC TOTAL FIRE BAN	For your survival, leave bush fire risk areas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay safe by leaving high risk bushfire areas the night before or early in the day— do not wait and see• Your life may depend on the decisions you make even before there is a fire:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— When you will leave— Where you will go— How you will get there— When you will return— What you will do if you cannot leave
EXTREME TOTAL FIRE BAN	Take action now to protect your life and property <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check your Bushfire Survival Plan and that your property is fire ready• If a fire starts, take immediate action. If you and your property are not prepared to the highest level, go to a safer location well before the fire impacts• Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas
HIGH	Be ready to act <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be alert for fires in your area• Decide what you will do if a fire starts
MODERATE	Plan and prepare <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay up to date• Be ready to act if there is a fire

In case of emergency

Where to find information

Police, fire, ambulance
(for life threatening emergencies)
000 (TTY 106)

Note: Anyone unable to speak English should call Triple Zero (000) from a fixed line and say 'Fire'. Once connected stay on the line and a translator will be organised.

Information Hotline
1800 362 361
(TTY 133 677)

Bureau of Meteorology
bom.gov.au

For current outback roads information
dit.sa.gov.au/
outbackroads

Emergency Broadcast Partners for North and West SA: ABC Radio, Fiveaa Radio, Sky News Television, Commercial Radio Australia



cfs.sa.gov.au



@Countryfireservice



@CFSalerts



www.alert.sa.gov.au



Call 000 to report a fire

Andamooka	ABC Radio North & West	105.9 FM
Ceduna	ABC Radio Eyre Peninsula	693 AM
Ceduna	Flow FM	106.1 FM
Clare/Mid North	ABC Radio North & West	639 AM
Clare/Mid North	ABC Radio Adelaide	891 AM
Clare/Mid North	Flow FM	107.5 FM
Coober Pedy	ABC North & West	106.1 FM
Coober Pedy	Flow FM	99.7 FM
Glendambo	ABC Radio North & West	106.1 FM
Leigh Creek Coalfield	ABC Radio North & West	99.3 FM
Leigh Creek Coalfield	ABC Radio North & West	103.3 FM
Leigh Creek South	ABC Radio North & West	1602 AM
Leigh Creek South	ABC Radio North & West	103.3 FM
Marree	ABC Radio North & West	105.7 FM
Mintabie	ABC Radio North & West	88.7 FM
Port Augusta	ABC Radio North & West	639 AM
Port Augusta	5AU	97.9 FM
Port Augusta	Magic FM	105.9 FM
Port Lincoln	ABC Radio Eyre Peninsula	1485 AM
Port Lincoln	5CC	765 AM
Port Lincoln	Magic 899	89.9 FM
Port Pirie	ABC Radio North & West	639 AM
Prominent Hill	Flow FM	91.3 FM
Roxby Downs	Flow FM	97.9 FM
Roxby Downs	ABC Radio North & West	102.7 FM
Streaky Bay	ABC Radio Eyre Peninsula	693 AM / 102.7 FM
Streaky Bay	Flow FM	99.3 FM
Woomera	ABC Radio North & West	1584 AM
Woomera	Flow FM	101.7 FM
Wudinna	ABC Radio North & West	639 AM / 693 AM
Wudinna	5CC	765 AM
Wudinna	Flow FM	106.9 FM
Yalata	ABC Radio North & West	105.9 FM