



# Community Fire Safe

Working together to prepare for bushfires



Government  
of South Australia

Bushfire Information Hotline  
1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)  
[www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)



**The reality is that in a major bushfire, a fire truck will not be available to protect every home. Neighbours are often the first—the only—assistance that you can count on during a bushfire.**

**So why not start working together now to plan for your bushfire safety?**

By actively participating in a Community Fire Safe group and planning ahead, you and your neighbours are able to develop strategies that you own and that fit your lifestyle, environment and bushfire risk.

Whether you plan to leave early, or stay to actively defend during a bushfire, Community Fire Safe can help you.

## **What is Community Fire Safe**

Community Fire Safe is a flexible, community driven program supported by the SA Country Fire Service (CFS) that encourages residents living in bushfire risk areas to form small groups and work together in preparing and protecting their families and properties from bushfire.

These groups can consist of just a few families living in the same street or bushfires behave and how they can destroy lives and homes. The program provides keys to understanding the risks and tools to develop strategies to manage these risks.

Groups focus on their own individual needs but draw on the support of CFS staff and volunteers as needed. CFS facilitators help groups to become established and provide ongoing support, technical information and resources.

Groups may take the form of a series of informal meetings where the group can discuss issues such as bushfire behaviour, prevention and survival. It might also include a street walk to help residents identify local fire hazards and familiarise themselves with the fire fighting equipment on their neighbours' properties.

Armed with this understanding, groups can make decisions about the best way to protect themselves in a way that suits their lifestyle, environment, physical capabilities, values, finances and experience.

## **Why join a Community Fire Safe group?**

**There are many benefits of being an active member of a group including:**

- Learning how to prepare and protect your family and property from bushfire
- Gaining the knowledge and understanding to enable you to develop a comprehensive Bushfire Survival Plan
- Creating opportunities for meeting neighbours, sharing ideas and developing support networks that may be needed in a bushfire emergency

### **Recent research has shown that:**

- Survivors of the 2009 Victorian bushfires who were regular and active members of the Victorian version of a Community Fire Safe group were more likely to reduce their losses and have a better emotional recovery following a bushfire
- In South Australia, community meetings and Community Fire Safe groups are the most effective way of receiving detailed information, as well as practical and actionable advice

### **Additional activities that some groups have conducted include:**

- Organising neighbourhood working bees to prepare each other's properties
- Establishing telephone trees or group email lists to communicate to group members during a bushfire
- Working out new ways to share information such as social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Alert SA mobile phone app, or RSS feeds through the CFS website
- Making plans with more vulnerable members of the community
- Organising bulk buying of fire equipment, personal protective clothing and other necessary items
- Street meetings, walk throughs and property inspections
- Identifying neighbourhood safe meeting points

**Community Fire Safe recognises that people are different and that there are many "right answers" to bushfire safety.**

**Benefits of the Community Fire Safe program**

1. Get to know your neighbours, and share ideas and experiences.
2. Be part of a small group who are united and motivated towards bushfire safety.
3. Gain in-depth and expert bushfire safety knowledge in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere.
4. Learn what you can do to make your home and property safer.
5. Share your bushfire knowledge and experience with others.
6. Prepare yourself and family both emotionally and physically.
7. Know where you can access other information before and during a bushfire.
8. Know how you can prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan for your home and family.
9. Be part of the most effective way of learning how to Prepare. Act. Survive.

Community Fire Safe is a free CFS program that could save you and your family this Summer.

## **For more information contact:**

**SA Country Fire Service**

**Community Education Unit**

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