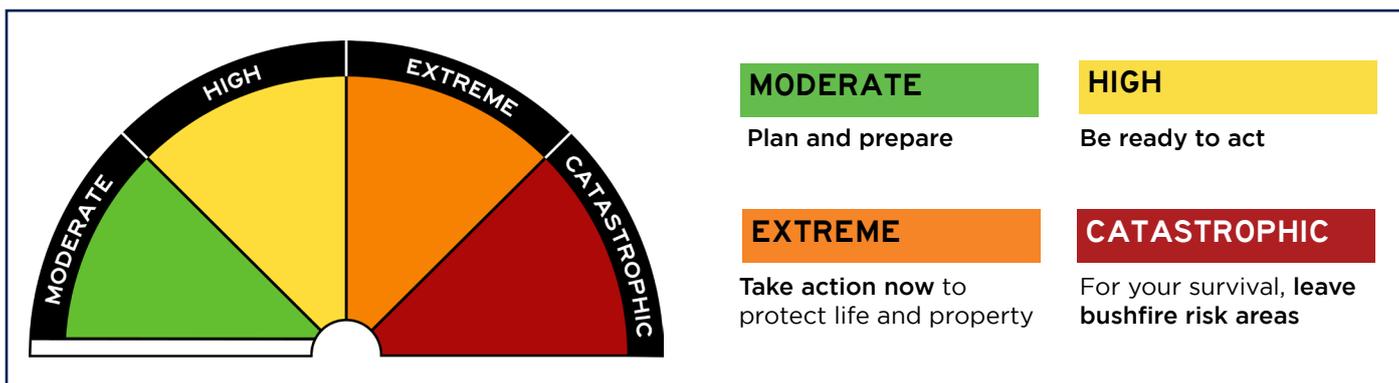


Introducing the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFRDS)

Fire danger ratings describe the potential level of danger should a bushfire start.

They are important because they provide people with information so that they can take action to protect themselves and others from the potentially dangerous impacts of bushfires.

From September 1, Australians will have a simplified, action-oriented Fire Danger Rating System.



- The AFRDS will also introduce 'no rating' for days where no proactive action is required by the community. On these days, you will still need to abide by local seasonal laws and regulations, but there is less risk of a fire that starts spreading in a dangerous or life-threatening way.
- The AFRDS is informed by one of Australia's largest social research projects which found that most Australians do not understand the current system, and would prefer a simpler, action-oriented set of fire danger ratings.
- The AFRDS is being implemented consistently across Australia and will mean that wherever you are across the country, you will be able to understand the threat posed on any given day and make appropriate decisions to keep you and your family safe.

CHANGING THE SCIENCE

- The current Fire Danger Rating System is largely based on science that is more than 60 years old. New technology and research have greatly improved our ability to accurately predict fire behaviour and the potential threat to the community.
- The AFDRS uses the latest scientific understanding about weather, fuel and how fire behaves in different types of vegetation to improve the reliability of fire danger forecasts. This strengthens the ability of those working in emergency services to be better prepared, make improved decisions, and provide better advice to the community.
- The new fire danger rating system is designed to be continuously updatable so that the system can take advantage of improving science, data and information into the future.
- By better understanding fuel types and fire behaviour on any given day of fire risk, agencies will be in a stronger position to respond to fires, adopting specific firefighting suppression strategies.

BENEFITS

AFDRS is redesigning the forecasting of fire by:

- Improving the scientific accuracy behind fire danger predictions.
- Improving the way that fire danger is communicated.
- Providing government and industry with better decision-making tools.
- Reducing the costs associated with bushfire impacts.

The key benefit is a more prepared and resilient community resulting in a reduction in loss of life, property, and human harm.

The AFDRS calculates fire danger at a finer geographic scale than ever before so more relevant and specific information can be provided.

Significant cost savings are expected due to improved fire danger information leading to better decisions and more appropriate and timely action. It will also improve cross-border operations and support sharing of firefighting resources.

This is a national program funded by the Commonwealth and all the States and Territories and delivered by local implementation teams. The AFDRS is being coordinated by NSW RFS and AFAC (Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council), with support from the Bureau of Meteorology. A National Program Board, with representation from each of the State and Territories' fire agencies, is overseeing the program.