

YOUR BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL GUIDE



Stay safe

WHAT TO DO TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND HOME



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The Courier Mail

SUNCORP



INDEX

3 TAKE ACTION NOW
 What you should do to prepare

4 BE SENSIBLE
 All the do's and don'ts

7 GET OUT EARLY
 Don't linger in the danger

8 BE HOME SCHOoled
 Your complete safety guide

9 WE'RE OUTTA HERE
 Family prepares to leave home

10 PET PROJECT
 Protecting your animals

11 ROAD RULES
 How to drive from danger

12 LESSONS IN LIFE
 Learn from past experiences

14 STAND THE HEAT
 How to treat fire victims


ON ALERT: Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk with Scenic Rim mayor Greg Christensen . Picture: Nathan Edwards

THERE IS MORE FIRE DANGER TO COME

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk delivers a stay-safe message as the state braces for catastrophic conditions.

We knew we were in for an extreme and pro-longed bushfire season.

It started a lot earlier too as we saw in September with that fierce firestorm at Peregrine Beach on the Sunshine Coast and another destructive bushfire that tore through the Gold Coast Hinterland.

Extreme temperatures, dry conditions and the long drought are taking its toll and we have no great hope of soaking rain soon.

Unfortunately, more than a dozen homes have been lost in these current bushfires. People have been evacuated and highways closed. The most damage this week has been at Cobraball near Yeppoon where at least 13 homes have been destroyed. My thoughts are with those families.

Those losses are devastating. But nothing is more important than your life and those of your family, friends and neighbours. There are no second chances with a bushfire,

so please make sure you're prepared.

The current high fire danger is expected to continue for some time. And for the first time a State of Fire Emergency exists. That means no fireworks, no campfires - nothing that could risk a spark near vegetation.

This is a marathon, not a sprint.

Our frontline firefighters, rurals and volunteers are our community heroes. While others run from danger, they run towards it, head on and without hesitation.

These past five days, 3521 of our firefighters have worked almost non-stop.

Around 110 reinforcements from the Northern Territory, South Australia, Victoria, New Zealand and Tasmania have arrived to help our fatigued crews and I thank them for their support.

The air maybe thick with smoke at the moment but the ground is thick with heroes.

I also want to thank the community for heeding the advice of authorities and remaining in good spirits through it all.

Last weekend I visited the evacuation centre at Noosaville. The local Lions club served 300 for breakfast.

I met Pamela, Joan, Rosemary, Jean and Esme from the nearby nursing home who had to sleep overnight in the library.

"They've looked after us marvellously," they said.



Their overwhelming cheerfulness was inspirational. Out of disaster, community spirit is what shines through.

Our guide to save you



Editor Sam Weir

Never forget or underestimate the brute force of a bushfire

FIRE. It's a deadly danger lurking for millions of us across our beautiful state, whether we live in the suburbs of Brisbane and the Gold Coast, our regional centres or in the bush.

The catastrophe that has unfolded this past week has tragically reminded us of a bushfire's power and lethal force.

Throughout its history, The Courier-Mail has chronicled the devastation wrought by natural disasters such as bushfires.

The danger, however, is to forget.

Memories of the dangers fade. And with them our knowledge of how to prepare for the worst.

That's why today's Survival Guide is so timely. It provides clear, concise information on how to plan for a bushfire.

It may be too late to begin preventative action to deal with the threat today.

In that case, we have the best advice on what to do if a bushfire is imminent.

There are a number of questions you may need to address.

What is your escape plan? Who are you communicating with? Is your vehicle stocked and fuelled? Do you have a route mapped out?

It is imperative we all develop a plan for hot, dry Queensland summers like the one ahead.

Are we, or anybody we know, potentially in harm's way? Do we know how soon the danger could develop? Have we formed a plan for when to leave, if necessary?

Today's guide draws on the experience and expertise of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, scientists, weather experts and our guide's partner, Suncorp, to provide you with everything you need to know to prepare and plan for fire.

This guide is intended as a keepsake to help you prepare for the rest of the fire season.

There are tips on how to minimise the risk to your home and surrounding property, what to do with your pets, emergency health tips, plus learnings from survivors of past infernos.

We hope you find this guide helpful as you plan for the season ahead.



BATTLE FRONT: Fires blaze at Peregrine Beach.
Pictures: Lachie Millard

TAKE ACTION NOW TO AVOID DISASTER

We are bracing for a challenging summer with changing weather conditions in a state where tinder-dry communities have already been savaged by long-term drought.

The message is simple and direct — start taking action now. And it can be an easy thing to do if you make the time to sit with your family and work out your strategy of how you will cope in the event of a bushfire.

This is where your Courier-Mail 16-page Stay Safe survival guide, in conjunction with Suncorp, is invaluable.

Our team has spoken to experts in their field from the Rural Fire Service to St John's Ambulance, police and emergency services.

Ensure your family has a general understanding of bushfire and bushfire safety. Then if they are in an area affected by bushfire, such as at work or on holiday, they will be able to make the safest choices.



WARNING: QFES's Michael Wassing and Annastacia Palaszczuk front the media at the Peregrine Springs

The QFES says that living with the bush is part of living in Queensland and that means we all live with the risk of fire.

And you don't need to live in, or right near, the bush to be at risk.

The toxic reach of embers means that even if your home is a few streets back, you may be in danger.



Regular statewide total fire bans will be declared in coming months.

And many residents already know first-hand the terrifying feeling of a bushfire bearing down on their property.

QFES Acting Commissioner Michael Wassing has warned that the state has got the worst of the fire

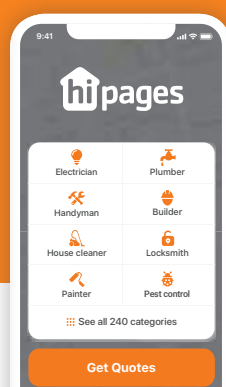
season ahead of us, we are not even in summer yet. Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk warns the unprecedented fire conditions are a worrying sign of the summer and holiday season to come.

She said Queenslanders were seeing a situation with these fires we have not seen before.

**Add this
Stay Safe
guide to
your
emergency
kit**

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ACT NOW TO CUT FIRE RISK

From cleaning up your property to preparing a bushfire survival plan, these actions can make a significant difference to the safety of you and your family

RELOCATION KIT

- » Protective clothing for the whole family
- » Battery-operated radio and spare batteries
- » Safety goggles
- » Mobile phone and charger
- » Medications
- » Wallet or purse and money
- » Clothing (two sets of clothes for each family member)
- » Identity information (passports, birth certificates)
- » Bottled water (enough for each relocated family member)
- » Family and friends' phone numbers
- » Items of importance (eg. family photos, valuables, documents)
- » Blankets (durable fibres)
- » Children's toys

SURVIVAL KIT

- » Protective clothing
- » Mop
- » Gloves
- » Torch
- » Hoses
- » Shovel
- » Towels
- » Buckets
- » Safety goggles
- » Ladder
- » Medications
- » Bottled drinking water
- » Fire extinguishers
- » Battery-operated radio
- » Spare batteries
- » Smoke mask
- » Woollen blankets
- » First-aid kit

PLAN TO LEAVE EARLY

- Leaving early means leaving before your chosen escape route is compromised by fire and smoke, or by strong winds that may bring down trees and power lines well before the fire arrives.
- The only way to guarantee this is to leave before a bushfire even starts — the night before or early in the day of a forecast fire danger day.
- QFES has developed a Bushfire Evacuation Kit on its website and a Bushfire Survival

Plan. QFES recommends that all people living in a bushfire prone area have a personal Bushfire Survival Plan. ■ Just because you live in Queensland does not mean you are not at bushfire risk. ■ When a bushfire threatens, whether you leave early or stay and defend your property, you should use a Neighbourhood Safer Places location only in the event that your Bushfire Survival Plan fails.

One of the first things people tend to lose in emergency situations such as fires is their common sense.

That can be deadly. Experts versed in decision-making under imminent fire threat maintain many who have died in bushfires across Australia perished when caught fleeing fires on the road.

The key to survival is in the preparation.

If you haven't left early for a safe place, or decided to stay to defend a well-prepared home, be mentally and physically prepared to passively defend.

The biggest enemy is the ember. It can travel at terrifying speeds and many kilometres ahead of the fire front.

"If the ember gets in, it will ignite the house and you can guarantee it's game over," fire consultant Roger Fenwick said.

"Most homes are lost as a result of the ember attack — the absolute essential is to ensure every nook and cranny of the external fabric of the house is blocked; that includes holes in metal fly screens, in windows, in the

space between the wall and the roof are sealed.

"The fire conditions will be such that fire services will be over committed, you will not get two fire engines outside your house — this is about making sure every step is taken to avoid going down."

Crucial to protecting the house is blocking vents and holes with 2mm aperture metal mesh, clearing leaves from the gutters and removing shrubs from against windows to prevent flare-ups and windows from cracking

"The wrong sort of vegetation, anything with high oil content, can catch fire easily and cause windows to crack through which embers can come streaming in," Mr Fenwick said.

"Wattles and bird-friendly vegetation are highly flammable, as are pencil pines and conifers outside the front door."

Clear firewood from beside or inside the house, and point pressure vents of gas bottles away from the house or other bottles.

Wetting the front of the house is not as effective as believed because the radiant heat from a fire will cause it to



evaporate before it has reached the house but filling buckets or containers with water inside the house will allow inhabitants, or firefighters, to later fight the flames.

If trapped inside a burning house, it is important to close all doors and windows and wait inside for the fire to roll over.

"A lack of oxygen will starve the fire

and help put it out quicker," Mr Fenwick said, adding, "A homeowner will not run out of oxygen inside a house if there's enough oxygen to keep a fire going — the fire will be extinguished first.

"Don't think 'I'll go outside with a hose and try to put out the fire', radiant heat will kill you in less than one minute."

Blocking down pipes with socks filled with sand will keep gutters full of water and prevent fires from establishing and soak towels and rugs with water and lay them on the floor across doorways.

"Most of all, try to remain calm and pre plan, the key to all of this to know what to do," Mr Fenwick said.

Preparing for the bushfire season requires physical preparation and emotional strength too.

One can prepare by understanding how the body and mind will react to stress. For example, some find it difficult to think clearly and make decisions under intense pressure. Strategies to resist the natural reaction to panic can include developing a plan after talking with family, neighbours and people who have experienced bushfires.

Developing a bushfire survival plan and practising it will alleviate stress levels and reduce the impact of panic and trauma.

Educational and developmental psychologist doctor Rose Cantali said on top of being physically and materially prepared, people should



psychologically plan for bushfires.

"[People] will go into quite a different state of functioning, or state of operating, when they're presented with the threat of a bushfire," Mrs Cantali said.

"A whole series of changes take place in the body, such as increased heart rate, adrenaline being released into the bloodstream, which gives us access to energy we wouldn't otherwise get access to.

"This alarm system allows us to adapt to an emerging threat ... but there are many other important functions that we actually lose the ability to use, or they at least become reduced.

"If you understand this better you can understand what your body is doing and recognise this is normal."

There are some simple things you can do around your home to prepare it for a bush fire. You need to prepare well beforehand as leaving it to the last minute is too late.

Here are five simple things you can do before and during the bush fire season.

THE TOP 5 ACTIONS TO MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER

1. TRIM

Frequently trim shrubs and remove any overhanging branches above the house. Try to keep your front and back garden sparse, and avoid cluttering the areas with toys, furniture and other objects. This can prevent the fire from spreading to your home.

2. MOW

Mow grass and remove the cuttings. Have a cleared area around your home.

3. REMOVE

Remove material that can burn around your home (e.g. Door mats, wood piles, mulch, leaves, paint, outdoor furniture).

4. CLEAR

Clear and remove all the debris and leaves from the gutters surrounding your home. Burning embers can set your home on fire.

5. PREPARE

Prepare a sturdy hose or hoses that will reach all around your home. Make

sure you've got a reliable source of water. Block up areas where embers can enter the house.

Install metal fly screens on all windows and vents.

Install metal gutter guards.

Position gas cylinders on side of house and away from trees and gardens.

Direct any pressure valves away from house.

Move garden beds away from house.

Replace wood fences with metal fences. Use stones instead of mulch.

In an emergency call **Triple Zero (000)**.

For information on bushfires in Queensland and to contact your local fire warden, visit the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services website:

qfes.qld.gov.au

Rolling updates, news and information: **couriermail.com.au**

Local radio, local ABC/emergency broadcaster frequency, TV, newspapers

facebook.com/
QldFireandEmergencyServices



Support when it matters most.

For over 100 years the team at Suncorp Insurance have been helping to protect Queenslanders during our fiercest natural disasters – and we're more than ready to do it again.

If bushfires are heading your way and you still have time to prepare, remember to have a plan, pack supplies and check if you're covered.

But the first priority is to keep you, your family and your community safe. For alerts and more information contact your local emergency services.

Call 13 11 55 | Search Suncorp Insurance



LEAVING EARLY IS THE SAFEST THING TO DO

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The more people prepare, the better they will recover once that disaster has come and gone

Andrew Coghlan, Red Cross



A home is never worth a life. That's the message from fire experts, who say residents who are instructed to leave their property and do not possess the critical knowledge needed to save it — or more importantly, themselves — should defer to authorities.

“If somebody doesn't have a high level of experience and capability, then if you're told to leave that's probably the best advice you'll ever have,” bushfire consultant Roger Fenwick said.

“Get out early or be aware this is going to be extremely unpleasant and, if you panic, you're dead — it's pretty much that simple.”

Mr Fenwick, who's been involved in fire operations in the ACT, said many people overestimate their ability to stay and defend their home.

“When they see a wall of flame it scares the s... out of them. The other thing nobody mentions is the noise. Right in front of a high-intensity bushfire, it's unbelievable,” he said.

“A lot of people who decide 'I'm going to stay' decide to get out of there. If they leave the house I guarantee they will die because at that stage the fire is so close and so hot there's zero chance they will survive in the open.”

Mr Fenwick said another danger is that people who leave it until the last



minute to flee may drive “like a bat out of hell” and have a car accident.

He recommended residents prepared a “go-bag” of essentials and follow instructions from firefighters if they lack experience with bushfires.

“All your planning should be on getting things organised so when you do see or smell smoke, you can grab your go-bag and leave,” he said.

Red Cross national manager for emergency services Andrew Coghlan said many residents sheltering at evacuation centres have “literally got nothing but the clothes they're wearing in”.

“They've managed to survive and

have got themselves out but haven't considered items of value,” he said.

“We know from our experience and having worked across multiple emergencies the more people can prepare in advance the better they will recover once that disaster has come and gone.”

Mr Coghlan said residents should pack important items well in advance such as ID, cash, clothing, things to keep children comforted and important items of sentimental value.

He also recommended people leaving their homes consider taking with them three day's food and torches in case electricity fails.

People who plan on staying to defend their homes should also be prepared with high-energy food and access to a radio for updates.

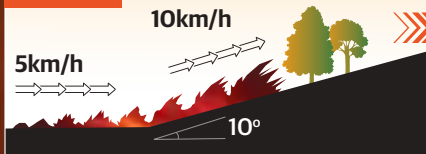
Mr Fenwick said those who stay should ensure they are fully dressed in either wool, cotton or linen and have access to an independent water pump in case the electricity is cut.

Without this, a garden hose will not work. Mr Fenwick said people must take shelter in their house away from glass as the fire front passes and then, if conditions permit, use a wet cotton mop to put out spot fires.

The Red Cross's preparedness guide can be downloaded at redcross.org.au/prepare

FIRE BEHAVIOUR

UPHILL



Fire moves faster uphill because there is less space between the flames and new fuel to burn. Also, the radiant heat caused by the fire pre-heats the fuel, making it easier to ignite.

DOWNHILL



The increased distance between flames and new fuel means fires spread more slowly when moving downhill (unless the slope of the land creates unusual air currents).

Bushfire behaviour is determined by three factors:

- Fuel
- Weather
- Topography

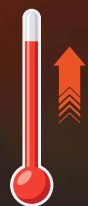
FUEL: Although fuel may be present in large quantities it is the condition of the fuel that, to a large extent, determines its flammability. The factors affecting the flammability of fuel are:

- size ■ quantity (tonnes per hectare)
- type ■ arrangement ■ fuel moisture

WEATHER: It is the difficulty in predicting fire behaviour that greatly increases the inherent dangers of bushfire fighting. The effects of weather can cause a bushfire to be unpredictable. It has the ability to cause a fire to increase in intensity and rate of spread, change in direction and fiercely erupt.

Fire behaviour can be altered by the effects of:

- Wind ■ Temperature
- Relative humidity
- Atmospheric stability
- Frontal movement
- Effects of drought



Note the angle of your property when planning your escape

DANIELLE LE MESSURIER

The main influencers of bushfire behaviour are wind and terrain, say experts who are urging residents to be mindful of where their property is located.

People who live in the bush may experience burning embers being blown towards their home while

fires in grasslands can start easily and spread quickly.

Families who live in paddocks need to be mindful fires can spread quickly over great distances while even those in coastal areas could be affected if fires start near scrub.

And residents who live in hilly areas need to be extremely careful.

For every 10-degree slope, a fire will double its speed — meaning people who live at the top of hills

should leave immediately if they see a fire approaching.

A fire travelling at 5km/h on flat ground will increase to 10km/h if it hits a 10-degree slope, according to Victoria's Country Fire Authority.

The increase in speed also triggers a spike in intensity, with the fire becoming even hotter.

The opposite applies to a fire travelling downhill — for every 10 degrees of downhill slope, the fire

will halve its speed.

Bushfire consultant Roger Fenwick stressed the importance of leaving at right angles to the direction of fire travel — which can be easily overlooked during the panic of an approaching blaze.

“People need to leave not in the direction of the fire, not directly away from the fire, but sideways to it,” Mr Fenwick said.

Wind also plays a major role in

the speed at which the fire spreads and the direction of the fire front.

It also provides oxygen, which will determine the intensity of a fire.

A sudden wind change is one of the dangerous influencers of fire behaviour, because residents who thought they had time to flee are caught unawares.

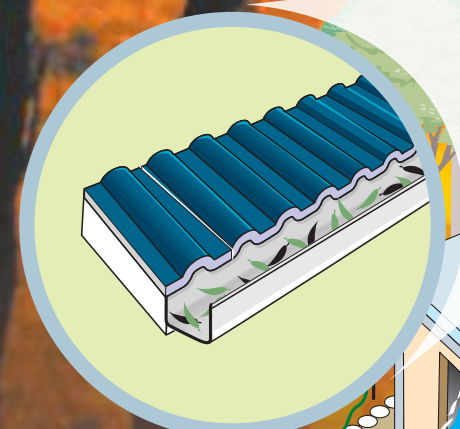
Winds also carry burning embers, which can start spot fires kilometres ahead of the main fire front.

BUSHFIRE SAFETY

SAFEGUARD YOUR HOME

ROOF

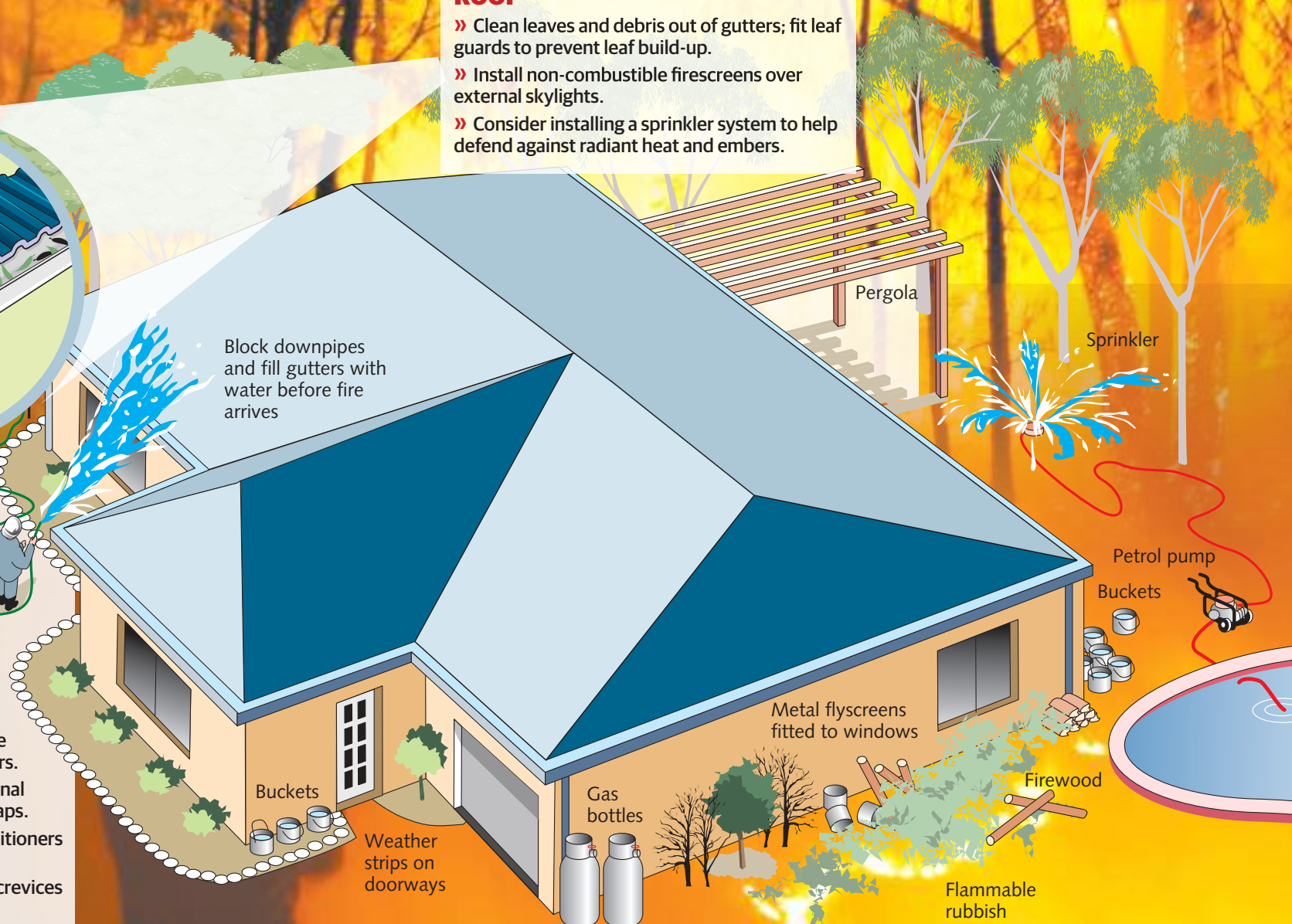
- » Clean leaves and debris out of gutters; fit leaf guards to prevent leaf build-up.
- » Install non-combustible firescreens over external skylights.
- » Consider installing a sprinkler system to help defend against radiant heat and embers.



Block downpipes and fill gutters with water before fire arrives

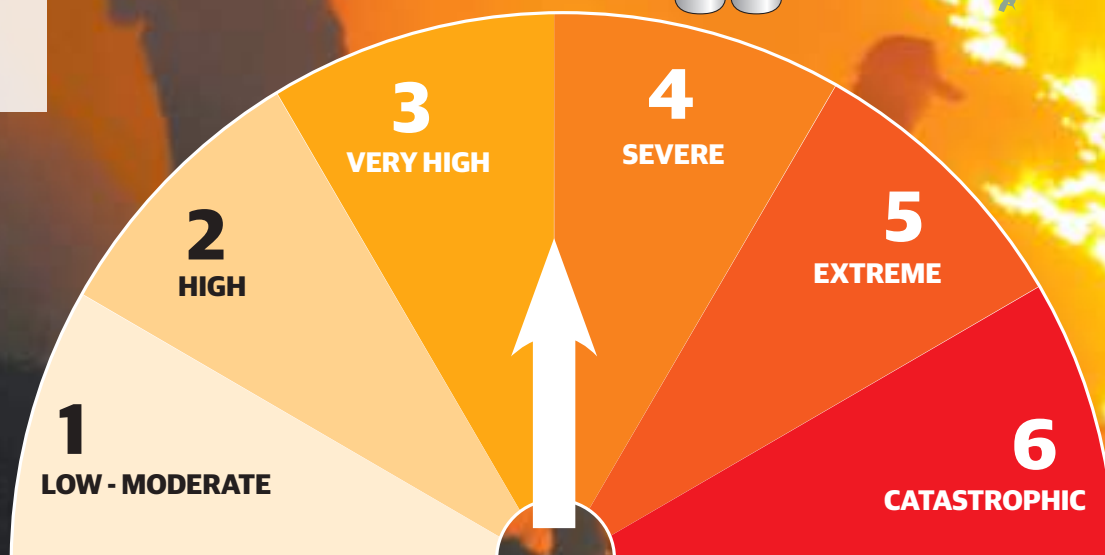
HOUSE

- » Ensure LPG cylinder vent pipes are facing away from the house.
- » Install metal screens or flywire on windows to protect against embers and radiant heat.
- » Solid core doors with metal flywire screens; non-flammable draught excluders and pet doors.
- » Regularly maintain any external timber cladding and seal any gaps.
- » Protect evaporative airconditioners with metal flywire screens.
- » Cover all external vents and crevices with metal flywire screens.
- » Pergolas should be made of non-flammable materials or be well wetted down.



FIRE DANGER RATINGS

Every day during the fire danger season, weather and other factors are used to calculate the Fire Danger Ratings (FDR) for each district. These ratings are not predictors of how likely a bushfire is to occur, but how dangerous it could be if it did occur.



RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. LOW-MODERATE 2. HIGH 3. VERY HIGH

YOU NEED TO BE PREPARED

Check your bushfire survival plan, know where to go for more information, and monitor the situation for any changes.

4. SEVERE Total Fire Ban

YOU NEED TO BE AWARE

Leaving early is the safest option for your survival. Only stay if your home is well prepared and you can actively defend it.

5. EXTREME Total Fire Ban

YOU NEED TO GET READY TO ACT

Leaving early is the safest option for your survival. Only stay if you and your property are prepared to the highest level.

6. CATASTROPHIC Total Fire Ban

YOU NEED TO ACT NOW

Leaving a bushfire-prone area the night before or early in the day is the best option for your survival.



Our plan is to leave our house

Hard drives used to preserve precious memories

VERANDA

» Remove flammable items from around your house (for example paper, boxes, crates).

SHED

» Store fuel supplies away from house, preferably in a clearly-marked shed.

» Store chemicals away from house, preferably in a clearly marked shed (separate to fuel).

YARD

» Move woodpiles away from house.

» Regularly maintain firefighting equipment (hoses, pumps, generators, mechanical devices).

» Use non-flammable materials for fencing, pergolas and lattice such as metal or brick.

» Ensure you have a sufficient water supply – 5000 litres minimum; at least 22,000 litres if you are planning on using a sprinkler system.

GARDEN

» Clear leaf litter and other fine fuels around the house.

» Mow lawn.

» Trim lower tree limbs.

» Remove flammable material within 20m of the house, or use pathways and gravel areas to provide fuel breaks.



READY: Jess Bock with her dad Andrew, mum Cathy and brother Jack fire prep their home.
Picture: Toby Zerna

**DANIELLE LE MESSURIER
KELSEY HOGAN**

THE gutters are clear, the hedges are trimmed and the portable hard drive has been loaded — as for their home, the Bock family are leaving that up to fate.

Mother-of-two Cathy, 44, says the family will have no reservations about leaving their property to a blaze if catastrophic fire conditions put their safety at risk.

Mrs Bock is no stranger to bushfires and knows when to call it quits.

"If it's close and it's moving in our direction we'd leave," Mrs Bock said.

"We're not the type that would sit here and go 'I want to save my house'.

"I'd be like, 'I'm out'. That's why we have insurance."

While the family have few possessions of sentimental value, Mrs Bock said she had prepared a portable hard drive with their most treasured photos.

There is also a folder with soft copies of family passports and birth certificates.

Her husband Andrew, also 44, will take the hard drive with him to work when bushfire warnings are present in case the family is forced to leave immediately.

Mr Bock said he used to work in IT and uses cloud storage whenever he can to minimise the risk of losing hard copies of documents and pictures.

"Whenever they give you an opportunity to opt into electronic delivery I'm right on top of that, so council rates, water bills, electrical bills all comes by email," he said.

"It doesn't matter if the computer burns down.

"Apart from photos I don't really care."

"We make sure we're using cloud storage, Google storage and a portable hard drive so that things that have sentimental value are ready."

Mr Bock said he would hate to leave the family's dog but "if it wasn't safe we wouldn't risk our lives".

"Animals are important and part of your house but there's more important things," he said.

"If I'm here, he's straight in the car with me."

Mrs Bock, who works from home, said she would have to leave the house quickly if weather conditions deteriorated as there is only one road into the property, which could block her escape route if obstructed.

"I've had a few close calls where I've had everything ready ... and

the kids weren't here thankfully at that time," she said.

"It will just be a case of keeping an eye on things and then picking the kids up instead of having them catch the bus home so that I can get out of this road because it's quite a long stretch of road."

The family have arranged a meeting point with a friend 13km away from the approaching fire front.

Mrs Bock said they have packed all their important items except for clothes, which take up space in the car and can easily be replaced.

The only outcome the family has not prepared for is staying, which they are trying to avoid at all costs.

"I can't say we are prepared for that — we've been a little bit complacent," Mr Bock said.

"We have a fire extinguisher and a fire blanket, but that's it."

**WHERE TO FIND FURTHER
BUSHFIRE INFORMATION**

More detailed fact sheets & brochures
qfes.qld.gov.au

In a fire emergency phone

000

For current warnings etc etc....
follow the QFES on Facebook and
visit couriermail.com.au



Making a pet-friendly fire escape plan can save your pet's life.

PLAN FOR PET RESCUE

With each bushfire season in Australia comes injured, burnt and dead wildlife, caught in the blazes or fleeing their habitats.

Although it can be disheartening and overwhelming to see native wildlife injured, there are definitely ways to help, whether you live in a bushfire-affected zone, or not.

Registered veterinarian PhD student Bronwyn Orr urges farmers in high fire-risk areas to plan ahead how to agist farm animals and cattle, and to co-ordinate on social media with other horse owners or councils with showgrounds to house them.

She also encourages identifying animals by stamping their numbers on hoofs so they can be later reunited with their owner.

Food and water for animals near fire zones should be placed in the centre of cleared paddocks to give them the best chance of survival. As a last resort, gates of paddocks and enclosures should be opened to free trapped animals.

Early evacuation and identification of domestic animals including backyard chooks is advised and, if injured, or suffering smoke inhalation and in shock, they should be taken to the nearest vet for treatment.

Vets advise transporting pets with their bedding, food and water, medication and a favourite toy to a safe place, either to a boarding kennel or to stay with friends. Owners are

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It's not just a simple case of opening the gates and letting the animals go

BRONWYN ORR (below), vet



advised to give their pets fresh, cold water and to provide shade where possible and for cats, rubbing damp hands over their coat or along their stomach.

Be sure to adequately restrain or confine your pet, as it may become frightened and start to panic in a fire.

Dogs should travel with collars, leads or a harness and a muzzle if aggressive.

Cats, rabbits and guinea pigs should be contained in a secure cage or a firmly tied pillow case or carry bag.

Birds, ferrets and mice should also travel in a secure cage or box with air holes.

Dr Orr said: “It's not just a simple case of opening the gates and letting the animals go, you can do it in a more controlled manner.”

Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Service board chairwoman Deborah Kerr said: “Ensure microchips are up to date, pack their food, water, medication and blankets and their crates and cages and take them to family and friends.

“If you rescue an animal that has been burned, do not attempt to feed it. Please wrap it loosely, ideally in cotton fabric, place it in a ventilated box with a lid and keep it in a dark, quiet place whilst waiting for a rescuer or for transport to the nearest vet.

“If they have burns, use tepid water, not cold, as their bodies are already in shock — and no creams that have butter or petroleum.

“A lot of animals are in shock, so approach with caution.”

Do not approach injured snakes, flying foxes, large macropods, raptors or monitors as these must be rescued by trained specialists.

For these species please call RSPCA QLD on 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625).



When preparing your bushfire survival plan, you also need to plan and prepare for the safety of your pets and livestock.





TIME TO LEAVE: Sunshine Coast motorists rush to evacuate their homes as emergency personnel try to control the fire threat to life and property. Pictures: Lachie Millard

CHECK FOR DANGER THEN HIT THE ROAD

Bushfires often cross roads and highways and smoke can reduce driver visibility. Make sure you follow these driving tips to keep safe.

Driving during a bushfire is extremely dangerous and can result in serious injury or death so always plan to leave early to protect yourself.

Suncorp Group advises the following principles for evacuation routes — do not drive towards, or away, from the fire, but at right angles to a blaze which will be travelling in the direction of the wind.

“Plan your escape route early, local radio could help here with emergency services,” Suncorp executive manager Peter McAnulty said.

“Fill the car in advance with fuel and get ahead sooner rather than later.

“If you are not able to turn around and drive to safety, position the car to minimise exposure to radiant heat by parking away from dense bush preferably in a clearing, behind a

“

If you can't drive away, position the car so you minimise exposure to radiant heat by parking away from dense bush

Peter McAnulty, suncorp

barrier such as a wall or rocky outcrop,” he said.

In the event of being caught in a blaze, the driver should ideally face the oncoming line of fire, shut all vents,

turn the air conditioning and engine off, tightly close windows and doors, cover up with woollen blankets and get down below window level — this is your highest priority.

Park off the roadway and turn hazard lights on. Car crashes are common in bushfires due to poor visibility.

Make the time to prepare yourself and your family in advance by packing the following items — food and a survival kit, portable battery-operated radio, waterproof torch, spare batteries, fire resistant blankets, cash and ATM cards, medications, items for infants, elderly, injured or the disabled and a mobile phone and charger.

Spare clothing and three litres of drinking water per person per day is also advised as well as a P2 mask or cloth (cloth nappy or muslin work well) for each person in the event of getting caught in smoke.



A bushfire at Deagon causes traffic chaos on the Gateway Motorway.

MEMORIES OF A

The loss is almost too much to bear for these young Sunshine Coast bushfire victims

FROM baby blankets passed down through generations to wooden rockers made by her late grandfather, a young mother and her family lost everything on the day they were meant to move to their new home.

Fighting back tears, mother Sarah-Mai Foreman, 26, (right) said the family was preparing to move into the property, having shifted in all but two boxes of their belongings before it went up in flames in September.

"It is heart-wrenching," Ms Foreman said.

"You (now) don't have sentimental things to pass on to your kids. I didn't have a dad growing up so my pa and pop were everything to me so seeing the things (they passed down to me) all burnt it just killed me inside. There was nothing in there that we could

salvage. "There's a chair that my pop made when I was a little girl, (it's the) little sentimental things, my daughters had crocheted little blankets that grandma made. One of them was mine when I was a baby to pass on to my children."

Ms Foreman said it was about 5am when her whole world changed.

She said the family was sleeping at her in-laws' house nearby on the same piece of land when she saw a jerry can explode nearby.

She woke up her husband, Brendan, and rushed her three kids – nine-week-old Chad, Charlotte, 1, and Grace, 6, – out the backdoor. Ms Foreman's stepdaughter Lailah was not home when the fire broke out. "To me it was just surreal," Ms Foreman said. "My first thought was 'as long as my kids are all right, everything is OK'."

GUTTED: Sarah-Mai Foreman and partner Brendan Donahoo in the remains of their home (right and below). Pictures: Lachie Millard



MICHELLE Spencer's unit was the worst hit in her David Low Way, Peregrine Beach complex.

Her back wall was scorched and pipes melted, having succumbed to the extreme heat being produced by the intense blaze that ripped through the coastal suburb.

"I bought the place 16 years ago," Ms Spencer said as she assessed the charred remains of her back deck

and outdoor area. Adam Smith's mother lived next door. He said firefighters had been on her veranda, using the elevated position to try and beat back flames which were approaching the nearby Puma service station.

Mr Smith's wife said the backdraft from the fire on Monday had sounded "like a jet engine", with embers raining down on them.

Ms Spencer said she'd spoken with her insurer after seeing the damage, and was now waiting to see what help came.

LIFETIME LOST



HEROES: Firefighters at the scene of an out-of-control bushfire at Peregian Beach. Picture: Lachie Millard

‘THERE WERE FLAMES, EMBERS, SMOKE, PEOPLE IN UTTER PANIC’

THEY are the heroes of Peregian, the firefighters whose miraculous efforts held back the flames that had the potential to burn right through to Noosa’s iconic Hastings Street. More than 300 firefighters and emergency services poured in to Peregian on the Sunshine Coast in what was called fastest-growing fire emergency in Queensland history.

Starting in bushland on the afternoon of September 9, in just hours it would displace hundreds of people, threaten homes, destroy one, and at its height, stoke fears it could reach as far as iconic Noosa National Park and Hastings St.

With near perfect fire conditions, it jumped roads and roared through scrub, headed to Peregian, homes and people.

Peregian runs in a narrow strip between the beach and David Low Way, with a housing estate off the left hand side, an IGA, pub and hardware store bulging west into scrub and bush.

There is also a 50m-deep stand of paperbark trees that lines the road.

Once the fire hit them, the paper bark became millions of flying wicks, lit bits of paper that were soaring away in the tearing wind before lodging in roofs and gutters, yards and gardens and setting them alight.

In the rural line was Pete Garrett from Maroochy River with rural brigade comrade Scott Brook from Valdora-Yandina Creek.

“There were flames, embers, smoke, people in utter panic,” First officer Garrett said.

“The paperbark would light and then get thrown a kilometre and then start a fire a kilometre in front of where you were.”

“The visibility was down to zero,” First officer Brook said.

“It was like a freight train coming through, or even an aeroplane.

“We were trying to keep the

flames down, keep the road open to evacuate.”

They would fight for hours, at one stage thinking they had lost 10 houses.

“I was shattered. It wasn’t until we turned up again the next day and found out it was only one, I was pretty sure we’d saved a lot of houses on David Low Way. Without the urban service being here and helping them out, it would have been just devastating,” Mr Brook said.

“It’s been amazing. As I leaving, just as the residents had been let back in, I came past the pub with the Valdora truck. We got a standing ovation. Just the roar of it. It was like the Queensland team running on for the State of Origin. We were nearly going to do a couple of laps just to keep it going but flicked our lights on, and the traffic parted. It was really awesome.”

Their work, and those of hundreds of others, had stopped the fire at Woodlands, and also in the dunes, slowing it enough to be tackled the next day from the air. Without it, North Coast fire service Inspector Bernie Massingham said it would have run 10km further north.

Others have said it would have directly threatened Noosa, even Hastings St.

“Just where the fire started, it had that little channel and that was just happened to be the way the wind was blowing,” Insp Massingham said.

“When I handed over control at lam, I got in my car and went for a drive around the entire scene and all the different sectors to see what damage had been sustained.

“And it was remarkable driving through the streets to see there were fences burnt, there was a Kombi burnt and the one house that was unfortunately lost but to see all the crews all vigilant, to see all bar one property still standing, it was incredible.”



WAITING GAME: Michelle Spencer (left), with friend and nearby resident Adam Smith. Michelle’s unit was savaged by fire at Peregian Beach (above).

**HOW TO TREAT
FIRE VICTIMS**
IF ON FIRE
**Stop, Drop, Cover
and Roll**

- › Smother the flames with a blanket
- › Move away from heat source


DANGER!
Evaluate potential dangers

- › Make sure you have neutralised any hazard before you try to treat a burn victim.
- › When you are able to reach the victim, check for a response.

**FIRST AID FOR
BURN INJURIES**

- › For all burns apply cold running (tap) water for at least 20 minutes
- › If running water not available, wet 2 cloths and alternate them onto the burn every 2 minutes
- › Keep the rest of the body warm
- › Do NOT use ice, butter, creams, etc.
- › Remove clothing and jewellery as they can hold heat on the burn and jewellery can stop blood flow to the burn.
- › Seek medical attention

**SMOKE
INHALATION**

- › Try to get near cleaner air and/or oxygen. Stay indoors, with windows and doors closed, or stay in airconditioned premises, if possible.
- › Reduce physical activity.
- › Cover your nose and mouth if going outdoors

- › Prolonged exposure (hours) to smoke from bushfires usually causes mild irritation. However, most people with smoke inhalation should be assessed in an emergency department.

- › This applies particularly to pregnant women and people with existing health problems.

- › Most people make a full recovery without any long-term adverse effects.

- › Less commonly, smoke can cause serious medical problems. Blood tests or a chest x-ray may be taken to investigate whether this is happening.

HEAT STROKE A FIRE KILLER



BATTLE FATIGUE: Queensland's firefighting heroes take time out from battling blazes on the Sunshine Coast. Pictures; Peter Wallis, Lachie Millard

Bushfires can create large clouds of smoke particles in the air, even if the fire is many kilometres away. And that spells many breathing problems.

The best way to avoid inhaling smoke is to remain inside with the windows and doors closed, preferably in an airconditioned building. You can buy 'P1' or 'P2' face masks at chemists and hardware stores which may reduce exposure to particles in the air.

Basic first-aid skills and common sense can make all the difference in times of bushfire strife, with Australian Paramedics Association president Chris Kastelan listing the most common injuries as heat stroke, or smoke inhalation, as well as traumas such as being struck by falling branches.

“

Before you help someone, you've got to ensure you assess the situation and make sure you're not putting yourself in one that's critically dangerous.

Australian Paramedics Association president Chris Kastelan

“If the victim is in imminent danger, remove them from the vicinity if you can and call triple-0, as well as apply systematic first-aid principles approved by the Australian Resuscitation Council like the recovery position and the DRSABCD action plan (Danger, Response, Send for help, Airway, Breathing, CPR, Defibrillation),” said Mr Kastelan.

St Johns Ambulance clinical standards officer Ben Tory said to prioritise airway and burns treatment for victims but to avoid fallen power lines.

“Make sure to check if the person's breathing. If they're wheezing, the airway may be burned and you should call triple-0,” Mr Tory said.

“For burns, run water on the affected area for 20 minutes if possible.

“People don't realise that even after they stop feeling the burn, it's still

damaging the flesh, so they need to keep the area iced and cool ... For victims suffering injuries from falling objects, emergency services should be called.

“Rescuers should not approach fallen power lines but provide verbal aid if possible.”

Seek out shaded areas to escape intense heat.

Cover your nose and mouth with a water-soaked cloth to alleviate symptoms of smoke inhalation.

“Before you help someone, you've got to ensure you assess the situation and make sure you're not putting yourself in one that's critically dangerous,” Mr Kastelan added.

“It's fantastic to see all these volunteers helping community members and critically stricken areas.

“But ensuring you don't become a casualty yourself is most important.”

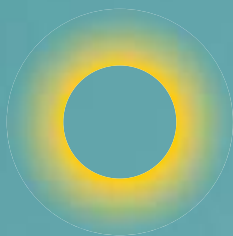
Affected by the bushfires?

Our team is here for you.

If you're a Suncorp Insurance customer who has been impacted by the bushfires, get in touch with our team to lodge your claim.

Call 13 11 55 | Search Suncorp Insurance

SUNCORP



Insurance is issued by AAI Limited ABN 48 005 297 807 trading as Suncorp Insurance.



It's been a ferocious and tragic start to this year's early bushfire season across Queensland.

With more than 100 years' experience, Suncorp knows first-hand the devastating impact these bushfires have on people and communities.

The heroic efforts of our emergency services and members of the public to protect lives and property has been nothing less than extraordinary. As the State remains tinderbox dry, we expect the current bushfires to continue, so please listen to emergency services. When it's safe to return to your home, contact us to lodge an insurance claim.

We also have a financial relief package available for our impacted Suncorp Bank customers which offers flexible finance options in times of hardship, including deferring loan repayments and credit card repayments. I encourage our bank customers to phone us on **13 11 55**.

It's times like this where our priority is to rally behind those impacted and our teams stand ready to help our customers, their families and communities to recover and rebuild. I want to assure you, we will work closely with local businesses, government and community groups to support a recovery effort that puts communities back on their feet as quickly as possible.

While we know this will take time, we will continue our support until the recovery is complete.

Sincerely,

Steve Johnston
Suncorp Group CEO

