



SHIRE OF RAVENSTHORPE

FIREBREAK NOTICE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please note. There are some changes to the 2024/2025 Fire Control and Firebreak Notice to the requirements for residential and rural- residential blocks, including specific requirements for different rural-residential subdivisions.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What is the Shire of Ravensthorpe Fire Control and Firebreak Notice?	<p>The Shire of Ravensthorpe <i>Fire Control and Firebreak Notice (The Notice)</i> is a legal document under section 33 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 that instructs landowners/occupiers of the actions they must take to prepare their properties for the upcoming fire season.</p> <p>It is important to read through this document, if you are unsure about any sections of the Notice please contact the Shire.</p> <p>Landowners/occupiers who fail to comply with conditions contained in <i>The Notice</i> by the date of inspection may be issued with a penalty of up to \$5,000.00 under the Act.</p>
I didn't know what the Notice was so I threw it in the bin, what do I do?	<p>There are a few options available to you;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can pick up another copy from either the Ravensthorpe or Hopetoun Shire Office locations.• <i>The Notice</i> can be found on the Shire website www.ravensthorpe.wa.gov.au• Contact the Shire of Ravensthorpe during office hours for another copy to be posted out to you. <p>As the landowner/occupier you are the legal entity responsible for making sure your land complies with the conditions contained within <i>The Notice</i>. Not reading <i>The Notice</i> does not provide an excuse for not complying with your legal requirements.</p>
What happens if I never received a copy of <i>The Notice</i> or have misplaced it – What can I do?	<p>There are a few options available to you;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact the Shire of Ravensthorpe during office hours for another copy to be posted out to you.• Copies are available to be picked up from either the Ravensthorpe or Hopetoun Shire Office locations.• <i>The Notice</i> can be found on the Shire website www.ravensthorpe.wa.gov.au <p>Please note if you did not receive <i>The Notice</i> in the mail, you are still bound by the requirements of <i>The Notice</i> as it has been gazetted in the State government Gazette.</p>
I have only just recently purchased a property; the real estate or the previous owner(s) did not inform me of any works required to be completed on the property. Why am I now liable when I didn't know?	<p>As the new landowner/occupier you are the legal entity responsible for making sure your land complies with the conditions contained within <i>The Notice</i>.</p> <p>After settlement, all new landowners contacted by the Shire and provided relevant information, including zoning information, a copy of <i>The Notice</i> and links to sections of the Shire website.</p> <p>If you are having difficulty meeting the requirements, contact the Shire as soon as possible during business hours to discuss options for a variation or extension.</p>

I live in town – do I need to comply with <i>The Notice</i>?	Yes. All residents/landowners/occupiers of land within the Shire of Ravensthorpe, including those with land within town sites, are required and have the shared responsibility to ensure that they comply with <i>The Notice</i> .
I cannot meet the requirements by the due date deadline, can I get an extension?	Reducing the risk of bush fire is a shared responsibility between local government, state government agencies and the community. We all have our part to play. Landowners/occupiers are responsible for making sure their properties are compliant with the requirements of <i>The Notice</i> by the due date. This helps to reduce the level of bush fire risk for the whole community and, therefore, extensions will generally not be granted.
Can the Shire recommend any Contractors?	The Shire is unable to recommend/promote any particular contractor. A list of contractors can be found in the Ravensthorpe Directory. Some works may just need a mowing service while others will require slashers and/or specific machinery to do parkland clearing.
I have engaged a contractor or I have an ongoing relationship with my current contractor to maintain my fire breaks for me, what do I need to do?	As the Landowner/occupier you are the legal entity responsible for the land. It is your responsibility to understand what is required for your land to be compliant with <i>The Notice</i> and make sure the contractor fully understands what work is needed and when works need to be completed by.
What happens if I am struggling to get in contact with a contractor or get the contractor to complete required works on my property before the due date deadline?	If you are having issues with the availability/timing of contractors to complete required works on your property, please advise the Shire Office during business hours before the due date.
What do I do if I can't meet some or all of <i>The Notice</i> requirements?	If you are unable to comply with some or all of the conditions contained within the notice, you must apply for a Variation to <i>The Notice</i> before the date specified in <i>The Notice</i> .
How do I apply for a Variation to <i>The Notice</i>?	<p>There are a few options available to you;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact the Shire of Ravensthorpe during office hours for a form to be emailed or posted out to you. 2. Forms can be picked up from either the Ravensthorpe or Hopetoun Shire Office locations. 3. Variation forms are available to be downloaded from the Shire website www.ravensthorpe.wa.gov.au <p>Please note forms MUST be completed and returned to the Shire Officer by the 1st October each year.</p>
How long does a Variation last for and how will I know if I am successful?	<p>You will be notified either by phone or in writing of the outcome of your Variation request;</p> <p>If successful, your variation approval period can last up to 5 years, depending upon the results of the officer inspection.</p> <p>If unsuccessful, you will need to comply with the requirements mention within <i>The Notice</i> by the due date.</p>
Why do I have to keep applying for Variation when my property never changes?	The fire management requirements contained in <i>The Notice</i> are reviewed annually and may change from year to year, depending on local seasonal requirements or changes in the various State Government policies. This means that landowners/occupiers need to read <i>The Notice</i> each year and determine if there are any of the requirements for which they need to seek a variation.

Am I able to clear my Asset Protection Zone (APZ) and firebreak area without a clearing permit?	Yes, but only around existing assets (houses, sheds, tanks, etc) and to area/dimensions as specified in <i>The Notice</i> .
I have Kwonghan shrubland on my property. Can I clear this for my APZ and firebreak?	Yes, but only around existing assets and for firebreaks. Clearing is limited to the area/dimensions as specified in <i>The Notice</i> . Clearing APZ areas for existing dwellings/buildings, driveway crossovers and firebreaks are not considered a significant impact on the TEC Kwonghan Shrubland and the development (house and infrastructure) was approved prior to TEC gazettal and through a state (Planning and Development Act) approvals process. New buildings approval to clear to the BAL assessment dimensions is granted via a planning approval.
Do I need to maintain my firebreaks and low fuel zones throughout the whole fire season?	Yes. It is the landowner/occupiers responsibility to establish and maintain their fire breaks and low fuel zones, including asset protection zones, <u>within the dates specified on the Notice</u> (unless otherwise notified). This may mean slashing, mowing or spraying any re-growth.
Do I have to clear all vegetation around my house to put in an asset protection zone?	<p>No, an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) is a 20 metre low-fuel zone around your home. This may include, but not limited to, pruning dead under storage of bushes and trees, removing ladder fuels, thinning out isolated bush clumps, etc.</p> <p>If your house is close to your neighbour's boundary line, the APZ does not need to extend beyond your property boundary.</p> <p>Additional guidance notes on establishing an APZ are available on the Shire of Ravensthorpe website.</p>
How will reducing the fuel loads on my property make a difference if a bushfire comes through?	Reducing the fuel loads around your home means that embers from a bushfire will have less chance to start a fire when they hit the ground. This will also reduce the damage caused by the fire and slow the rate of spread of the fire. The better you prepare your property the higher the chance it will survive a bushfire, even if you are not there!
Why does a fire break need to be bare earthed and need to be 3 metres wide with 5 metres vertical clearance?	<p>Fire breaks, when established, need to be a bare earth mineral break which assist in preventing the spread of fire into neighbouring paddocks.</p> <p>If erosion or other land use issues prevent a bare earth fire break being established where required, you will need to apply for a variation to that requirement.</p> <p>Current firefighting vehicles are already 2.5 metres wide and 3.5 metres in height. Breaks are required to be 3 metres wide with 5 metres vertical clearance to allow clear access to firefighting appliances. This provides enough room for vehicles to negotiate and traverse firebreaks. Vertical clearance is required to limit damage to firefighting appliances and prevent injuries from over hanging tree branches to crews working on the crew deck.</p>
Can I just use a chemical herbicide spray to kill the grass to create a firebreak?	No. All firebreaks are to be bare mineral earth. Whilst spraying herbicides will kill off weeds/plants/grasses and stop growth, the dead material also creates a flammable fuel source if the weed/plant/grass has not degraded down to bare earth.
My next door neighbour hasn't installed their fire breaks. What can I do to report it and have them comply as well?	Whilst we would like Landowner/occupiers to focus on making sure their land is compliant to the requirements mentioned within <i>The Notice</i> ; if the neighbouring property is of concern, please contact the Shire Office to lodge a complaint. This will

	ensure the required steps are taken after the inspection date, for the land to be made compliant.
I have recently purchased a property and I was not aware of the fire management requirements. What do I do?	If you have recently purchased a property and you are unable to comply with the requirement contained in <i>The Notice</i> by the due date, please contact the Shire Office as soon as possible and prior to the due date. Consideration of your circumstances may be given at inspection time.
What is a Bush Fire Management plan?	<p>Within the context of <i>The Notice</i>, a Bush Fire Management Plan is a document submitted by developers at the time of creating a new sub-division which provides details of the bush fire mitigation measures that are to be put in place for that sub-division. This may include strategic fire breaks, low threat vegetation, emergency access ways, or fire services routes.</p> <p>A Bushfire Management Plan is also a plan adopted as part of a Planning Approval for a new house which replaces the usual requirements of <i>The Notice</i>. A Bush Fire Management Plan needs to be produced by an accredited person and must be approved by Council. Please adhere to the timing limitations for submission</p>
I have purchased land in a sub-division that has its own Bushfire Management Plan, which requirements do I need to adhere to?	Landowner/occupiers of land within a sub-division with an individual Bushfire Management Plan will need to adhere to those specific requirements first. Landowner/occupiers will still need to adhere to Asset Protection Zone (APZ) requirements of <i>The Notice</i> as it is a requirement under State Planning Policy 3.7.
Who will check my property and can they enter my property without my permission?	<p>The Shire engages external qualified inspectors and uses local Fire Control Officers to carry out inspections in the Shire for compliance to <i>The Notice</i>.</p> <p>As authorised Fire Control Officers under the Bush Fire Act 1954, they are permitted to enter your property to undertake inspections to ensure compliance with <i>The Notice</i>.</p>
What happens if my property is not compliant?	<p>The Shire of Ravensthorpe considers non-compliance with <i>The Notice</i> to be a serious offence as it compromises the safety of the whole community and the individuals occupying that land. If you fail to meet the requirement stipulated in <i>The Notice</i>, you may;</p> <p>Receive an Infringement of \$250.00, and an additional 7 calendar days in which to ensure your property is compliant.</p> <p>After receiving an infringement, your property will be re-inspected. If your property still fails to comply the Shire will engage a contractor to carry out the work and you will be billed for this work along with any associated administrative cost.</p> <p>Works Orders can be issued at any time throughout the compliance period.</p>
Why am I receiving a notice when I did the right thing and made sure the contractor had my block compliant by the due date?	<p>It is appreciated that your property is made compliant by the due date, but your property is only assessed on the day of inspection. Unfortunately, the South Coastal weather patterns can contribute to a high growth rate under the right conditions and established low fuel areas may grow back if not maintained. In these circumstances a warning letter will be sent.</p> <p>Please remember properties need to be compliant and maintained to the requirements of <i>The Notice</i> until 30 April of each year.</p>

<p>Why am I receiving a notice when the contractor has advised me that the required works has been completed?</p>	<p>Your property is only assessed on the day of inspection. If works are not completed to the satisfaction of the authorised inspecting officer and there has been no correspondence from the landowner/occupier outlining any issues or delays, a warning/infringement notice would have been issued based upon the inspection on that day.</p> <p>The Landowner/occupier is the legal entity for the property and as such needs to be fully aware of the requirements mentioned within <i>The Notice</i>. As the landowner/occupier it is your responsibility to make sure the contractor is aware of what works are required and the date they are due.</p>
<p>Can I receive my infringement via email similar to my rates as I work/live away?</p>	<p>As per the Bush Fires Act 1954, a warning or infringement notice can be served to the offender personally or by posting it to his/her last known address held by the Local Government.</p> <p>The Shire requires permission in writing from the responsible person to email their infringement correspondence.</p>
<p>Why am I only receiving a notice via the post with only couple days left to comply?</p>	<p>As required by the Bushfires Act, the Shire does post-date infringement notices to allow for a couple days passage via Australia Post. Unfortunately, the Shire does not have any control as to when or how postal service gets to your address.</p>
<p>Why is the compliance due date earlier compared to other Shires?</p>	<p>This is due to local seasonal factors and conditions meaning our high threat period (prohibited burning times) is upon us sooner compared to for example, Perth's high threat period.</p>
<p>Where do these regulations come from? Who decides that we must do this?</p>	<p>Most of the regulations stem from the Bush Fires Act 1954, with additional local requirements based upon local weather patterns and topography. These are considered by a range of key stakeholders including Bush Fire Brigade members, DFES and internal Shire officers, before being recommended by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee to be endorsed by Council.</p>
<p>Explain to me how reducing fuel loading is going to make any difference if a fire comes through?</p>	<p>By reducing the ground fuels this will slow the rate of spread of the fire. Please note this will not stop the fire but gives Firefighters the chance to save lives and properties!</p>

**ARE YOU
BUSHFIRE
READY?**

