



# **STEP 1: DISCUSS** **WHAT WILL YOU DO IN A BUSH FIRE?** **PLAN NOW.**

Get the whole household together and discuss your plan.  
This fold out takes you step-by-step through the process.





# LEAVING EARLY OR PREPARING TO STAY?

One of the most important things to do before a bush fire is to decide what you'll do if one should start. This guide can help you make that decision, and assist you with the steps in preparing yourself, your home and your family. Once you've had the discussion and made a decision, get your family to sign this document.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

### LEAVE EARLY, YOUR SAFEST CHOICE.

**When will we leave?**  
 What will be your sign to leave? It could be smoke in your area, or as soon as you find out there's a fire near you.

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**Where will we go?**  
 Where's a meeting place that's safe and away from a fire area? It might be a friend or relative's place, or even a shopping centre.

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**How will we get there?**  
 What road will you take? What's your backup plan in case the road is blocked?

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**What will we take?**  
 Make a list of what you'll take in the event of a fire. Remember to include pets, identification and irreplaceable items like photos or documents.

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**Who will we call to tell that we're leaving and that we have arrived safely?**  
 Who will we call to let them know we're leaving and that we've got there safely?

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**What is our backup plan?**  
 What if things don't go to plan? Identify a safer location nearby such as a neighbour's home that is well prepared, or a place of last resort. Is there a Neighbourhood Safer Place nearby?

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Neighbourhood Safe Places are a place of last resort, such as a sports ground or local building that has been specially identified for use during a fire.

Not all areas will have a Neighbourhood Safer Place so check [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/nsp](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/nsp) for locations.

### DECIDE TO STAY. ONLY IF YOU'RE WELL PREPARED.

**Before you start, ask your household:**

- **Is your home well prepared to make it as safe as possible during a fire?**  
Check the Step 2 property protection checklists.
- **Are we putting anyone in our family at risk by staying?**  
For example children, the elderly, or people with asthma.
- **Will we cope in an emergency situation? In a fire, it will be hot, smoky and physically draining. Even trained firefighters can find it challenging.**

**If you're not sure or aren't prepared, you should leave early.**

**Do we have all the equipment we need?**  
 Go through all the items on the Decide to Stay checklist and see what's missing. Make a commitment to get all equipment by a specific date.

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**When there is a fire, what is our sign to start defending our home?**  
 It could be as soon as you find out there's a fire near you. Do not wait for an official warning.

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**Do we know what to do BEFORE, DURING and AFTER a fire?**  
 Study the Decide to Stay action checklist.

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**Do all members of our household KNOW WHAT TO DO in all situations?**  
 Give specific roles to each person.

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**What is our backup plan?**  
 Consider unexpected events such as if one of us is home alone, if we aren't home, if the fire moves faster than expected or if the phone lines and electricity are down.

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**It's not safe to stay with your property under some circumstances, like:**

- If the fire danger rating is Catastrophic.
- There is an Extreme fire danger rating and your home is not specially designed or constructed for bush fires.
- Your property is not well maintained.
- You or the people in your home aren't mentally and physically fit and ready.

**Under these circumstances, you should leave early.**

Remember that bush and grass fires can move quickly and catch you off guard.

If you are caught in a fire, protect yourself from the heat.

The safest option is to leave early before the fire reaches you.

We have discussed and agreed with the entire household we will:

Leave early       Decide to stay

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# DECIDE TO STAY, BUT BE PREPARED

## EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Defending your home from a bush fire can be challenging and you will need the right equipment.

Check off all the equipment you will need in a bush fire emergency.

Remember, while firefighters and emergency services will do everything they can to help you, there's no guarantee that there will be a fire truck available when you need it. If you decide to stay with your property, it's your responsibility to be prepared.

### FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT WE WILL NEED:

- A hose, or hoses, that can reach all around the house
- Water supply of at least 10,000L e.g. water tank, dam, pool
- Petrol/diesel water pump and fuel in a safe, accessible place
- Ladders to access inside the roof
- Buckets and mops
- Shovels and metal rakes

### PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

- Wide-brimmed hat
- Eye protection goggles
- Moistened facemask or cloth
- Loose, long sleeved cotton shirt
- Gloves
- Long cotton pants/jeans
- Sturdy leather shoes or boots

We will make sure that we have all the equipment we need by:

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If you have not ticked off all of the items above you are not prepared to tackle a major fire.





# DECIDE TO STAY, BUT BE PREPARED

## ACTION CHECKLIST

Defending your home can be physically and mentally demanding. It's important that everyone knows exactly what to do if a fire happens.

### BEFORE (well before the fire has arrived)

#### OUTSIDE:

- Turn off gas mains and/or bottle
- Move flammable items away from the house
- Block drain pipes with socks full of sand and fill gutters with water. Don't get on the roof to hose it down
- Move animals to a well-grazed or ploughed area away from the house and wind
- Patrol the house well before the fire arrives to put out embers and spot fires
- As the fire approaches, wet the side of the house and garden that faces the fire
- Move your firefighting equipment to a place where it won't burn inside

#### INSIDE:

- Close doors, windows and vents
- Fill baths, sinks, buckets and bins with water
- Confine pets to one room
- Place ladder next to roof access hole so you can check for spot fires
- Soak towels and rugs and lay them across external doorways
- Move furniture away from windows

### DURING (as the fire is upon you)

- If flames are on top of you or the heat become unbearable move inside until the fire front has passed (usually 5-10 minutes)
- Patrol the inside of the house, including roof space, looking for sparks and embers
- Shelter in a room on the opposite side of the house from the approaching fire and ensure you have clear access to an exit

### AFTER (immediately after the fire has passed)

- Check the house both inside and out for fires, including roof cavity, under the house, deck, stairs, windowsills etc
- If possible, and safe to do so, check all your neighbours are OK
- Contact relatives or friends to tell them you are safe
- Patrol your home for several hours, looking for small fires and burning embers



Drink lots of water throughout so that you don't dehydrate.

