



VEHICLES: HOW THEY CAN BOTH PROTECT YOU AND CAUSE BUSHFIRES

Whether you are a rural worker or a traveller, you should be aware of the potential dangers associated with vehicles and bushfires and the added protection vehicles can afford people trapped by fires.

Your car or vehicle can provide protection when caught in a bushfire.

If you are planning a trip during the Bush Fire Danger Season, check to see what the weather conditions will be like in the area. Listen to local radio stations for news of any fires in the area.

Do not go sightseeing in areas where there is bushfire.

If you are caught by a bushfire STOP immediately.

- Look for a clear area, preferably off the road. Areas clear of grass or bush will not sustain fires of high intensity. These areas are safest. Never attempt to drive through smoke or flame. Many accidents occur when drivers attempt this, only to find that they run off the road, strike stationary obstacles, such as trees or other cars, or are involved in accidents with other vehicles attempting to drive through from the opposite direction.
- Put your headlights on so that you are as visible as possible to other vehicles, especially fire tankers.
- Do not leave the vehicle. Many people have lost their lives by exiting the vehicle only to be trapped on foot in the open. Your vehicle will help to protect you from radiant heat, the chief danger.
- Close all windows.
- Close all vents or turn the vents to recycle.
- Switch the ignition off. It is highly unlikely that a vehicle's fuel tank will explode from the heat of a passing bush or grass fire.
- Everyone must get down on the floor, below window height, and cover all exposed skin with a wool or cotton blanket. Do not use synthetics as they can give off toxic vapours or melt.
- Stay in the vehicle until the fire front has passed. Generally this will take between 30 seconds and one minute.

For more information on bushfire safety, visit the Rural Fire Service website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or call the RFS Education Line on 1 800 654 443 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm).



- At this time it will be very hot, very noisy and very frightening. It will last a short time even though it may seem longer.
- If you have water - drink it!
- Once the fire front has passed, exit the vehicle and inspect it for damage before proceeding.
- Do not proceed until you are satisfied that the fire has passed and that you are not likely to be trapped a second time.
- Falling trees and branches are a hazard after intense fires. Do not park or drive under trees.
- Exit the area as quickly as possible. REMEMBER fire vehicles will be trying to enter the area and your presence may hinder firefighting operations.

You and your vehicle can cause bushfires.

A vehicle or any 'motorised machine' driven or used in any grass, crop or stubble must be fitted with safety guards so constructed as to prevent any heated areas from coming into contact with flammable matter.

The heated exhaust from vehicles has been responsible for lighting fires in grassland areas.

Drivers unfamiliar with these areas may be unaware of the potential threat that their vehicle might pose.

It is illegal to drop or throw a lighted cigarette or match or anything burning during a Total Fire Ban at all, let alone from a moving or stationary vehicle. Heavy fines apply for the breach of these rules.

Specialised vehicles such as harvesters and slashers are required to comply with other standards.

Driving in the Australian countryside is an enjoyable pastime. You can make it more enjoyable by ensuring that you are not responsible for the lighting of fires.

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