

standards for Windrow Burning

These standards provide general guidance for the safe conduct of windrow burns within plantations, giving due consideration to protection of the environment. These standards do not apply to the burning of windrows on non-plantation lands, but may assist with providing information to ensure that your burn is safe and effective. For more information about windrow burns outside plantation areas, contact your local council.

Purpose of a windrow burn

Windrows are dense concentrations of fine and heavy fuels which, once they dry out, become highly combustible, difficult to extinguish and may remain alight for extended periods (weeks or months in some circumstances). As such, if burning operations are not managed properly or if they catch alight during the bush fire danger period, they can represent major containment problems and sources of bush fire re-ignition.

Approvals Required

There are two types of approval you may need before conducting a plantation windrow burn:

1. Environmental approval - authorisation under the *Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999* or a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate
2. Safety approval – Fire Permit

Where the creation of the windrow is covered by an authorisation under the *Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999*, the RFS can issue a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate to burn the windrow. The RFS can not issue a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate to burn a windrow created from any other practice (eg. land clearance for development or agriculture).

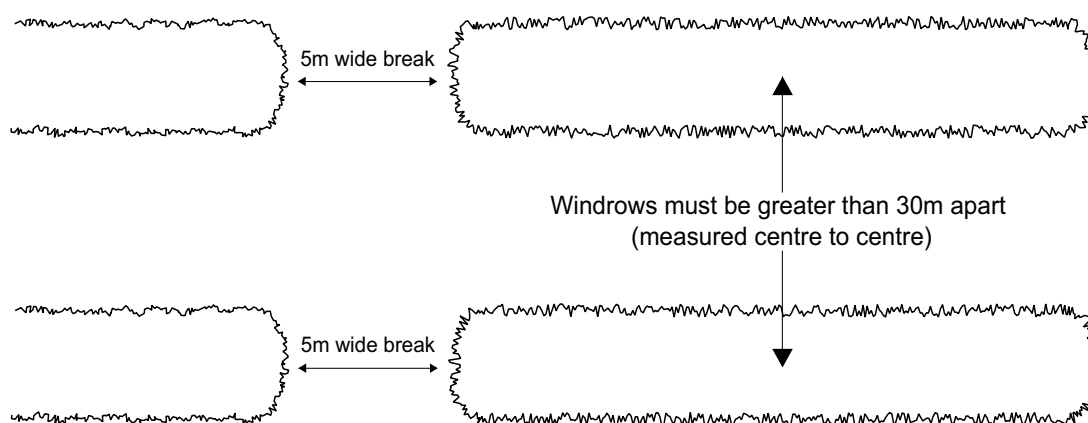
A Fire Permit is required if the burn is conducted during the Bush Fire Danger Period or if the fire could be of danger to a building. A Fire Permit can be obtained from the Rural Fire Service in rural fire districts or Fire & Rescue NSW stations in fire districts.

Construction of windrows

These standards outline general procedures for the construction of windrows in order to facilitate safe and efficient burning, with regard to the environment.

Windrows must be constructed in a manner that minimises disturbance to the topsoil and must comply with the following specifications:

- Windrows must be greater than 30m apart (measured centre to centre) as shown below.
- Windrows must not be longer than 200m without a break.
- Breaks between windrows must be at least 5m wide.



Windrows exceeding 200m in length must be broken with a break at least 5m wide at least every 200m.

Plantation windrows must be conducted in accordance with the *Plantations and Reafforestation (Code) Regulation 2001*.

As a guide, all windrows should be constructed outside the buffer zones specified below:

Feature	Buffer distance (m)
Property boundary	40
Building	50
Powerlines	25
Native vegetation retention area	20
Existing trees and vegetation	20
Wetland or river	20
Drainage line	20
Aboriginal burial site	50
Aboriginal scarred tree or stones	20
Aboriginal scarred tree or stones	20
Artefact scatter or other relic or place	10

Notification

The relevant road authority (RMS or local council) should be contacted at least 2 weeks prior to the burn to determine whether traffic will be affected and whether safety measures such as signage or constraints on traffic flow are required.

Notification must be given at least 24 hours (unless otherwise specified in your fire permit) prior to the burn to:

- all residents who adjoin the site of the windrow burn;
- residents that might be inconvenienced by the burn;
- your local RFS Fire Control Centre or your nearest Fire & Rescue NSW station.

Burn safety measures

- Before lighting the windrow ensure that you have suitable tools, resources and equipment to supervise and patrol the windrow burn and deal with any outbreaks.
- If multiple windrows are to be burnt, burn only one at a time unless adequate resources and operators are present at each windrow being burnt. Consideration must also be given to the smoke being produced if multiple windrows are ignited.
- Ideally, fuel moisture/weather conditions should allow the larger fuels in the windrows to burn yet leave the bays between the windrows unburnt.
- Weather forecast must indicate that weather conditions are appropriate for the day of the burn and the 2 days following.
- Suitable weather and moisture conditions for windrow burning are:
 - Maximum Temperature: 25°C
 - Minimum relative humidity: 40%
 - Maximum Wind Speed: 30 km/h (preferably less than 20km/h)
 - Maximum BKDI: 100
 - Max Predicted Fire Danger Index: 10

Note: These are guidelines only and should be reviewed in light of local conditions

- Do not burn on a day declared as a Total Fire Ban by the RFS.
- Do not burn on a day declared as a No Burn Day by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), unless an exemption has been provided by OEH.

For further information on windrow burns please contact your local RFS Fire Control Centre.