

Lighting a fire - Quick Facts

A quick guide to your responsibilities when lighting a fire or undertaking activities that may result in a fire

There are significant penalties if you light an illegal fire, or if your fire escapes and causes damage to property or the environment. It is therefore essential that you are aware of the legal and safety requirements before you conduct a burn or use equipment that is likely to ignite a fire.

When lighting any fire you should ensure that you are wearing appropriate clothing, have a water supply available

on site and that you have a cleared area around the perimeter of the fire. You must also use all practical means to prevent or minimise air pollution.

The following table provides a general guide to what you need to consider before lighting a fire. If you require any further information, please contact the NSW Rural Fire Service or Fire & Rescue NSW.

| | General Requirements | Total Fire Ban Days |
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| Can I light a camp fire in a NSW State Forest, National Park or Regional Park? (for cooking or recreational purposes) | <p>Only in some situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forests and National Parks may place restrictions on the lighting of fires in parks and reserves. Check with your local National Park or Forestry office to determine their requirements. | <p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All camp fires are banned on Total Fire Ban days. |
| Can I light a camp fire on my property? (for cooking or recreational purposes) | <p>Yes, as long as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are burning dry, seasoned wood; and You have cleared an area of at least 2 metres around the perimeter of the fire. | <p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fire is to be lit in the open on Total Fire Ban days. |
| Can I light my own portable gas or electric BBQ in a NSW State Forest, National Park or Regional Park? | <p>Only in some situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forests and National Parks may place restrictions on the lighting of BBQs in parks and reserves. Check with your local National Park or Forestry office to determine their requirements. | <p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portable gas/electric BBQs are banned in NSW State Forests, National Parks or Regional Parks on Total Fire Ban days. <p>Note: In some cases you may be able to use gas or electric BBQs constructed by the NSW National Park or State Forest in specified picnic areas.</p> |
| Can I light a gas or electric BBQ on my property? | <p>Yes</p> | <p>Yes, as long as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is under the direct control of a responsible adult; and The ground within 2 metres of the barbecue is cleared of all materials which could burn. <p>As well as the following additional requirements for gas BBQs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is on a residential property within 20 metres of the house or dwelling; and You have an immediate and continuous supply of water available. |
| Can I carry out hot works such as welding, grinding, soldering or gas cutting in the open? (or any other work that is likely to generate sparks) | <p>Yes, as long as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have adequate firefighting equipment in working order available on site. As a minimum you must have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16L knapsack spray pump filled with water; or 9L liquid fire extinguisher; or 0.9kg dry powder fire extinguisher. | <p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General purpose welding, grinding, soldering or gas cutting works cannot be carried out in the open on Total Fire Ban days. |
| Can I carry out harvesting operations? This includes driving or using machinery in any grass, crop or stubble land. | <p>Yes, as long as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any heated area of the machinery does not come in contact with combustible matter; The machinery is in a good and serviceable condition; The machinery is fitted with a spark arrestor (steam powered machines); and You have the following prescribed fire safety equipment on site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16L knapsack spray pump filled with water; or 9L liquid fire extinguisher; or 0.9kg dry powder fire extinguisher. | <p>Yes, as long as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You follow the same general requirements (left). <p>Note: you should also check with your insurance company to understand your policy and 'duty of care' should your machinery cause a fire on a Total Fire Ban day.</p> |
| Can I light a fire in the open for burning an area of grass, stubble, weeds, shrubs or other excess vegetation? | <p>Only in some situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the Bush Fire Danger Period or when your fire is likely to endanger a building, you must have a current Permit to burn issued by the NSW RFS or Fire & Rescue NSW. You must notify your local RFS Fire Control Centre or Fire & Rescue Station at least 24 hours before burning. You must notify any adjoining neighbours at least 24 hours before burning. You may need an environmental approval for the burn. Contact the NSW RFS or Fire & Rescue NSW to determine whether an approval is required for your activity. Open burning may be prohibited in your local government area or you may need an approval for open burning (air pollution). Contact your local Council to determine whether an approval is required in your area. For more information, please refer to the NSW RFS publication 'Before you Light That Fire' available at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au | <p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fire is to be lit in the open on Total Fire Ban days. |
| Can I light a fire to burn a pile of leaves or other garden refuse? | <p>Only in some situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The same conditions apply as above in the question 'Can I light a fire in the open for burning...' For more information, please refer to the NSW RFS publication 'Before You Light That Fire' available at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au | <p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fire is to be lit in the open on Total Fire Ban days. |
| Can I light household garbage in an incinerator? | <p>Only in some situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fire must be in a properly constructed incinerator that does not allow sparks or burning material to escape. There must be a minimum 5 metre area clear of any combustible material around the incinerator. Burning in an incinerator may be prohibited in your local government area or you may need an approval for open burning (air pollution). Contact your local Council to determine whether an approval is required in your area. | <p>Only in some situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per the general requirements (left). |

This document is intended as a guide only. Exemptions may apply in some circumstances. If an approval or permit is in place, their conditions will take precedent over the above information.

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

For further information contact
 NSW Rural Fire Service - 1800 679 737
www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Fire & Rescue NSW - (02) 9265 2999
www.fire.nsw.gov.au

