

HOT SPOTS FIRE PROJECT

Fact Sheet: The Burning Approval Process

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Bush fire hazard reduction burn © K. Taylor, Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

If you want to conduct a burn on your property you must check to see what approvals are required. This fact sheet provides you with an explanation of what you need to think about and do before you conduct a burn. You can refer to the NSW RFS publication *Before You Light That Fire* for more detailed information.

What is the reason for your burn?

If you are concerned about bush fire hazards or the amount of fuel on your property, then you may be looking at conducting a burn to reduce fuel loads. Before carrying out a hazard reduction burn you will need to get environmental approval. This not only minimises the risk of damage to the environment but also protects you from possible fines or legal action.

The easiest way to obtain an environmental approval is to apply for a free **Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate** from the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS). It will contain conditions to reduce the impact on the environment or heritage sites. In the majority of cases a Certificate will be issued for essential hazard reduction works, providing the potential environmental impact is not too great.

If the works are beyond the scope of the Certificate process, the RFS will provide advice on alternate environmental approvals. Certain agricultural practices may not require environmental approvals. Stubble burning, burning of sugar cane and diseased crops, generally do not require environmental approval. For a list of "allowable activities" and more information please contact your Local Land Service office at www.lls.nsw.gov.au/

There may be times when fire is needed to maintain or improve the variety of plant and animal species on your property; this means you are looking at conducting a

burn for biodiversity reasons. If this burn is also likely to produce bush fire hazard reduction outcomes, then you should be able to obtain environmental approval with a **Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate**. If not, then other environmental approvals may be required.

There are a range of environmental approvals that may be required under different NSW legislation depending on the nature of the work. The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) or Council will be able to assist you in working out which approvals may be required.

What is the difference between a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate and a Fire Permit?

A **Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate** is an environmental approval with conditions about environmental impacts of your works. A **Fire Permit** is a fire safety approval. You will need a Fire Permit all year round if the fire is in close proximity to a dwelling, or if you are in a Fire & Rescue NSW area. There may be conditions attached to the permit to ensure safe burning practices.

If you want to burn during a bush fire danger period, you may need to apply for both a **Fire Permit** and a **Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate**. The NSW Bush Fire Danger Period is from 1 October to 31 March. However, this may start as early as 31st of August. Please note that you are not allowed to burn on Total Fire Ban or No Burn days, and that permits are required all year round in some council areas. Check with your local RFS Fire Control Centre if you are unsure as to whether or not you need a permit.

Who do I need to notify?

Regardless of whether you require a **Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate** or **Fire Permit**, you must always give 24 hour's notice to your immediate neighbours and local Fire Control Centre prior to lighting.

What happens if I conduct a burn without the necessary approvals and it causes damage?

If you do not obtain an approval, you may face considerable penalties. If you are unsure about whether you have obtained the right approvals, please contact your local RFS Fire Control Centre and they will be able to guide you through the burning approval process.

For further information on the Burning Approval Process, please contact your local RFS Fire Control Centre or visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au.