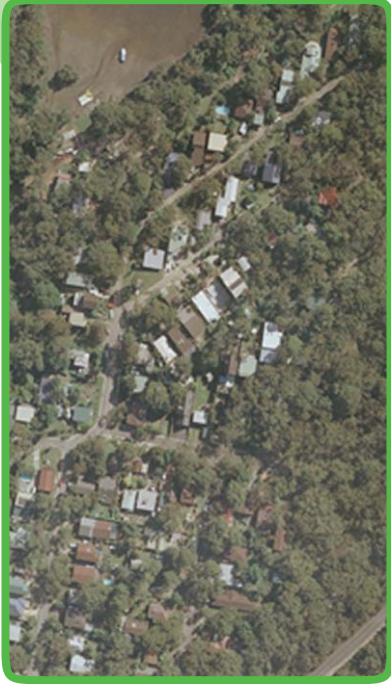


# Bushfire Awareness & Preparing your Property



## Introduction

Let's explore what happens to a house during a bushfire and how you can prepare your property.

You could make an action plan that lists what needs to be done to get your home ready for bushfire season.

## How do bushfires affect a home?

Statistics show that if residents stay with well prepared houses during a bushfire, their property has a greater chance of survival. This is because embers set most houses on fire. If residents are available to defend their home from ember attack, then small fires can be stopped and won't destroy the house.

People who are well prepared and take shelter in their homes have an excellent chance of surviving a bushfire.

**It is recommended that all home residents and owners complete RFS's Bush Fire Survival Plan document, and to be so guided in the event of a fire as personal life/safety and survival is of the highest importance.**

Bushfire affect houses in several ways:

1. Ember attack - usually occurs up to 30 minutes before the arrival of the fire front and for several hours afterwards.
  - Burning debris such as sparks and embers are carried by strong winds ahead of the fire front. They can fall on or around the house, igniting small spot fires where they land. If not extinguished quickly, they can grow into a major fire that will eventually destroy the house.
  - 'Fine fuels' such as mulch, dry grass and pine needles feed spot fires.
  - Timber surfaces are more likely to catch fire if there is a build up of leaf litter or other debris against it or under it.
2. Direct flame contact and radiant heat - arrives with the fire front and lasts 10 – 15 minutes.
  - Radiant heat (the heat from the fire) causes objects on and around your property to heat up and burn. Think about what can burn in and around your home. Be careful when choosing materials to build a new fence, deck or roof. Select fire resistant plants. Store chemicals, wood and compost piles away from the house.
  - Exposure to radiant heat can cause heat exhaustion and may kill you. Wear your overalls and PPE or cover exposed skin with a long sleeved shirt and pants made of natural fibres, wear solid shoes, a hat, goggles and a face mask. PPE should not be Plastic



Embers  
threaten your  
property over  
a longer period of  
time than radiant  
heat or direct flame  
contact

## Ways bushfires can affect a home



Woodpiles, mulch and leaf litter near the house may be ignited by embers



Plastic bins and awnings may melt from radiant heat. Timber fences can catch fire



Embers can lodge in sub floor areas



Wooden decking can ignite



Embers can enter through open garage doors and ignite combustibles

Patrol regularly before  
and after the fire front  
passes



## Ways bushfires can affect a home



Timber pergalos and shade cloths may ignite from ember attack



Leaves can build up in complex roof lines and ignite



Dried out and overgrown lawns may catch fire



Leaf litter on roof may ignite. Embers may enter through open wall spaces



Timber lattice may catch fire and spread to other structures

Clean your  
gutters  
regularly



## Preparing your property

If you follow these simple guidelines you can reduce the threat of embers and bushfire affecting your home.

- Clean leaves from gutters, roofs and downpipes regularly and fit quality metal leaf guards.
- Open and unscreened windows mean that embers can lodge on window sills. Install metal screens over both the window and frame.
- Seal gaps around external doors.  
Close all internal doors within the house
- Screen vents on roof voids with fine metal wire mesh.
- When installing LPG cylinders around your home, make sure that pressure relief valves face outwards so that the flame is not directed towards the house.
- Keep woodpiles covered and well away from the house.
- Cut back overhanging trees and keep grass short. Rake up flammable leaves, twigs and cuttings.
- Do not put tree loppings, grass clippings etc behind your property into council reserves or bushland.
- Ensure your garden hoses are long enough to reach the boundary of your property.
- Plant trees and shrubs that are less likely to ignite due to their lower oil content.
- If you have a swimming pool, put a Static Water Supply sign on your front fence. Contact your local fire station for information.
- Make sure that any fire hydrants near your home are easily located and not obstructed.
- During a bushfire, patrol the house to check on areas of risk and to put out spot fires.

If you live in a bushfire prone area, keep the ground around your home clear of leaves and other litter





Face gas valves away from house



Clean gutters regularly



If you have a swimming pool or dam, put a static water supply sign on your front fence



Take your garden hose inside



Clear vegetation from around your property



Keep woodpiles covered and away from the house



Clear leaves from gutters and valleys



Take your ladder inside. You may need it after the fire front passes



Cut back overhanging trees



Install metal screens on windows and keep them closed

The NSWFB & RFS have prepared a Home Bushfire Survival Plan Fact Sheet that can help you and your property to be prepared. It is included your cabinet or trailer.

# Conclusion

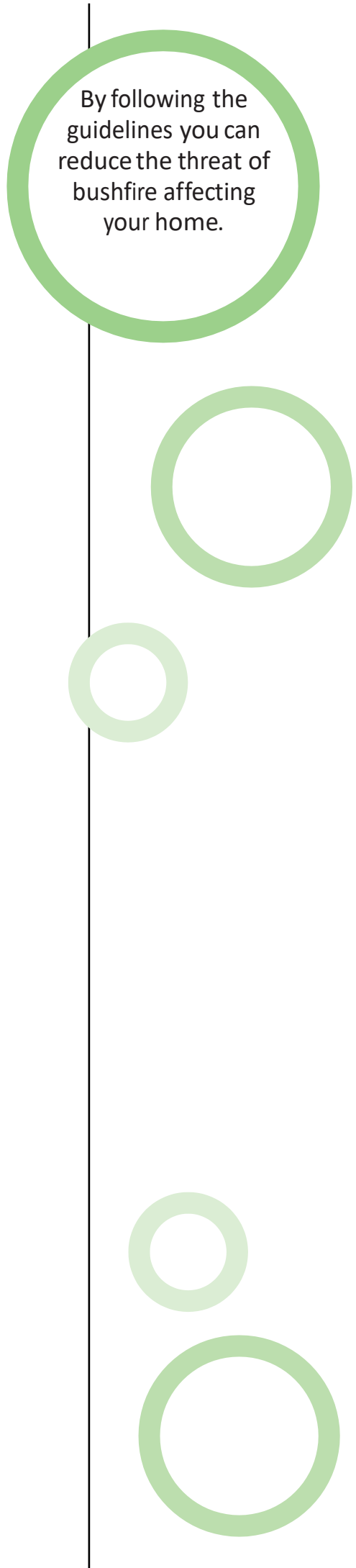
A well prepared property can provide a safe shelter for people during the passage of a fire front. Make sure that you complete your to do list well before the fire season begins.

Following the guidelines will help you to reduce the threat of embers and bushfires affecting your home.

***Remember, the danger of direct flame contact and radiant heat arrives with the fire front and only lasts for 10-15 minutes. The threat from ember attack exists for much longer.***

Embers can threaten a home up to 30 minutes before the fire front arrives, during the passage of fire and for many hours after it has passed. Always be on lookout for spot fires caused by embers and extinguish them straight away. Many houses survive the main fire but are lost to ember attack afterwards.

**In any fire emergency call 000**



By following the guidelines you can reduce the threat of bushfire affecting your home.