

# FIRE PREVENTION NOTICES

## Frequently asked questions

### Why does Council serve Fire Prevention Notices?

Under the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*, Council has a legal obligation to reduce the community's risk from bushfire. Council's Fire Prevention Officers are authorised to inspect private land and serve Notices directing owners to take necessary hazard reduction works. Council also has the legal right to do anything necessary to remove a fire hazard on private land and recoup the costs.

Fine fuels, including long grass, are responsible for most bushfire spread and intensity. Grass slashing and mowing across private land is an effective way of significantly reducing the threat of fire. However, there are no guarantees of personal or property safety when it comes to bushfires. Make sure you, your family, your pets and your home are prepared for the fire season by visiting [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare).

### Why did I receive a Fire Prevention Notice?

A Council Fire Prevention Officer assessed your property for fire hazards in the lead up to the summer [Fire Danger Period](#) and determined that you must reduce hazardous fuel loads on your property.

### What do I have to do?

Your Fire Prevention Notice will tell you what "TYPE" of work is required with further details on the back. In general, all Notices will require you to mow or slash long grass, weeds, or bracken across your entire property or to create a fire break. Occasionally, you will be directed to complete additional work such as tree pruning or rubbish removal, so it is important that you read your Notice carefully and ensure you understand **all** the work that is required.

The works must be carried out by the completion date specified on your Notice and must be maintained in this state for the duration of the Fire Danger Period.

### When is the Fire Danger Period?

The Country Fire Authority introduces summer restrictions during the Fire Danger Period for all private land in Victoria. Start and end dates vary between council areas, based on actual risks or conditions. Visit the CFA's 'Warning and Restrictions' page [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions) for further details.

### What if I have already cut my grass?

There is often a small delay between our inspections and the service of Fire Prevention Notices. If you have already carried out the works specified on the Notice, then you don't need to worry. Just ensure you maintain your property in this state for the duration of the Fire Danger Period.

### Can I remove trees and shrubs?

A planning permit is normally required to remove native trees and shrubs. In some circumstances you may be able to remove vegetation without a permit for bushfire protection under the 10/30 and 10/50 rules. Contact Council's Environmental Planner on 1300 366 244 to check if these rules apply to your property.

### What if I disagree with my assessment?

Contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer to discuss your situation before the due date on your Notice.

## I am having difficulty getting the work completed by the deadline, can I have an extension?

Contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer to discuss your situation before the due date on your Notice. You must have a valid reason to request an extension.

## What if I have stock in that paddock or plan to cut it for hay?

If you intend to cut your paddock for hay, put stock on your paddock or carry out other works, contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer and inform us of your intentions before the completion date on your Notice. You may still be required to cut a fire break or complete other works as directed.

## What will happen if I don't comply with the Notice?

If the works required have not been carried out to the satisfaction of a Fire Prevention Officer during a follow up inspection, all individual owners will receive a Fire Infringement Notice (\$1,612 penalty) because the fine is against the owner(s) who did not comply, not against the property itself.

Council may then engage an authorised contractor to carry out the hazard reduction works specified on the Notice with the full costs and an administration fee charged back to landowner. Once a fine has been issued, we will not contact landowners prior to contractors undertaking clearance works.

## Can I burn off?

If you want to conduct a burn during the Fire Danger Period, you will need to apply for a burn permit from the CFA by visiting [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or contacting the CFA District 10 office on (03) 5149 1000.

## What if I think my neighbour's land is a fire hazard?

You can contact Council if you are concerned about a property. A Fire Prevention Officer will inspect the property and if they deem it a fire hazard, the owner(s) will be served a Fire Prevention Notice.

Our fire prevention inspection program is focused on reducing fuel loads immediately around homes and dwellings. If the reported fire hazard is not adjacent to a dwelling, is a single tree or is just unsightly, it is unlikely a Fire Prevention Notice will be served.

## What about snakes living in the long grass?

Snakes in the country are a fact of life. They are a protected species and cannot be harmed. To protect you and your family, ensure you maintain a safe area around your home and along boundary fences. Snakes are attracted to areas that provide shelter and food, such as logs, woodpiles, stock/pet feed and chicken coops. Try to remove these attractions for snakes or at least keep them away from the home.

If you encounter a snake in your house or yard, the best thing to do is leave it alone and contact Customer Service on 1300 366 244 who can put you in touch with a local snake catcher.

## What about the Crown land/Parks land behind my property?

We cannot serve Notices to statutory bodies such as State Government agencies. If you have a concern about fire hazards on Crown land, contact the agency that manages the land.

## Where do I find more information?

- Visit Council's 'Fire' webpage [www.wellington.vic.gov.au/fire](http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/fire)
- Visit the CFA 'Prepare your Property' webpage [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/prepare-your-property](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/prepare-your-property)
- Contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer on 1300 366 244 for specific advice

### Sale Service Centre

18 Desailly Street (PO Box 506), Sale Victoria 3850  
Telephone 1300 366 244

### Yarram Service Centre

156 Grant Street, Yarram Victoria 3971  
Telephone 03 5182 5100

### Contact Us Online

Web [www.wellington.vic.gov.au](http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au)  
Email [enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au)

