

## What I Need to Know

- While bushfire is a natural occurrence, it can have a devastating impact on the community and the environment. Fortunately its impact can be mitigated through appropriate hazard reduction programs to reduce the amount of fuel available.
- Fuel management must be applied with due consideration to the fuel type and the growing season.
- Fuel management can include grazing, slashing, mowing, ploughing of fire breaks, physical removal or burning off.
- Burning off can only be carried out by the land owner or by another party with the landowner's consent.
- A Permit to Light Fire is issued in the name of the land owner, lessee, or occupier as agent for the owner of the land on which the burning is to be carried out.
- The Queensland Government legislation, which enables the use of legitimate use of fire for hazard and land management purposes, is the Fire and Rescue Service Act, 1990 (the QFRS Act). The powers and functions of Fire Wardens and Chief Fire Wardens, the granting of permits to light fires, and the role of Rural Fire Brigades in fire prevention are set out in this legislation.

## How I do it

- Inspect your brigade area well in advance of the fire season to identify areas with a history of wildfire events that would benefit from a fuel reduction operation.
- Consider a range of strategies to reduce wildfire risk.
- Refer to the relevant land owner and any fire or land management plans that might apply.
- Ensure that a Permit to Light Fire is issued where appropriate.
- For roadside hazard management, refer to the information below.
- Ensure that signage and roadside safety issues are considered and adopted.
- Obtain a weather forecast and ensure that conditions are suitable to meet the objectives of the burn before lighting up.
- Inspect fire breaks and control lines prior to commencing the burn.
- Ensure that resources for lighting up, controlling the fire and mopping up are adequate.
- Consider environmental issues in the burn plan. Refer to the section on protecting the environment.
- Inspect the burn to ensure that objectives have been met.
- Complete and submit incident report (RF14). Refer to section on incident reporting.

## Reference Materials

Area Reference Manual - Business Rule: A2.5 Manage Area Hazard Reduction Programs

*Operations Doctrine*, QFRS

*Field Incident Guide* (FIG)

## **ROADSIDE HAZARD MANAGEMENT**

### ***Burning Off on Shire Roads***

- A brigade or a neighbouring landholder may carry out burning off on a shire road to reduce the fire risk. Authority must be sought from the respective local authority to carry out the burning off. The Permit to Light Fire is issued in the name of the local authority.

### **How**

1. Monitor the fire risk of shire roadside vegetation in your district or brigade area.
2. Apply to the local authority for consent to carry out the burn-off on their behalf.
3. Apply for a Permit to Light Fire on behalf of the local authority from the Fire Warden whose District contains the shire road reserve section.
4. Carry out the burn-off, complying strictly with all conditions of the Permit to Light Fire and those stipulated by the local authority.

### ***Burning Off on Main Roads***

- The Department of Main Roads (DMR) is responsible for the management of State-controlled road reserves throughout Queensland.
- Fire threat on State-controlled road reserves is controlled by District-based, Fire Threat Management Programs, including, where necessary, provision for burning off activities.
- Where burning-off is used to reduce fire fuel loads, DMR's preference is that it be carried out by Rural Fire Brigades and not by individuals.
- All burning on State controlled road reserves requires the permission of DMR as land owner (under s.65 of the QFRS Act).
- DMR will set appropriate conditions to meet traffic safety and for the protection of roadside property infrastructure and environmental values. DMR will also liaise regarding the need for traffic control during the operation. These conditions are in addition to the conditions contained in the Permit to Light Fire issued by the local Fire Warden under the QFRS Act.
- Activities undertaken within a State-controlled road reserve normally require the operator to provide Main Roads with an indemnity (Transport Infrastructure Act, 1994). An indemnity is not required where:
  - Permission has been granted by DMR
  - A lawfully obtained Permit to Light Fire under the QFRS Act is held
  - All conditions on the lawfully obtained Permit to Light Fire are complied with.The indemnity then is provided under the QFRS Act.
- Some Main Roads Districts have developed a Permission to Conduct a Controlled Burn form, which enables brigades and landholders to apply to Main Roads for authority to conduct a controlled burn on their behalf.
- All arrangements for traffic control should be made through DMR. In some DMR Districts, the Main Roads engineer organises this at Main Road's expense
- All Permits to Light Fire issued for burnoffs on main road reserves are issued to the Department of Main Roads as the land owner.
- Main Roads may consider requests for burnoffs on sections of roadway not identified as requiring a hazard reduction treatment.
- Main Roads will meet reasonable costs of Rural Fire Brigades in carrying out burning off operations in State-controlled road reserves conditional on:
  - Rural Fire Brigades requesting reimbursement of these costs;
  - the burn-off being at the request of Main Roads or associated with requisitions under s.69 of the Fire And Rescue Service Act, 1990;
  - the rate of reimbursement being in accordance with Main Roads Fire Threat Management Reimbursement Guidelines (Attachment 4); and
  - cost of traffic control being requested prior to the burn-off.

## **HOW**

1. Monitor the fire risk of roadside vegetation in your district and brigade area where appropriate.
2. Prior to each burn-off, apply for a Permit to Light Fire on behalf of the Department of Main Roads from the Fire Warden whose District contains the road reserve section.
3. Apply to Main Roads to carry out the burn-off. Use the DMR "Permission to Conduct a Controlled Burn" form where it is available (Attachment 3). Request DMR arrange traffic control where required or indicate costs will be claimed.
4. Carry out the burn-off, complying strictly with all conditions of the Permit to Light Fire and those stipulated by DMR.
5. If applicable, apply to Main Roads for reimbursement in accordance with Roadside Fire Threat Management Reimbursement Guidelines (Attachment 4).
6. Main Roads Districts that develop a comprehensive Fire Threat Management Plan should send to each Rural Fire Brigade maps and a list of treatments proposed by Main Roads for road reserves within their Brigade District annually by the end of April. These proposals should be reviewed, and Main Roads contacted to:
  - negotiate changes and/or confirm acceptance to carryout proposed burn-offs
  - notify intention of brigade to request reimbursement of costs
  - request Traffic Control or notify brigade's intention to claim the costs incurred.