

Fire Inspection program FAQs

October 2018

When is the Fire Danger Period?

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) introduces fire restrictions (Fire Danger Period) for all private land in Victoria over the summer period each year. Fire Danger Period start and end dates change yearly. In the Mildura region the Fire Danger Period will begin at 1am on Monday 15 October 2018. If you are in a different municipality you will need to check the dates on the CFA website.

Why did I receive a clean-up notice?

Council's Civic Compliance Officers have recently assessed your property for fire hazards and determined that you need to reduce fuel loads on your property to reduce the potential fire risk.

What do I have to do if I receive a clean-up notice?

You are required to clean up and reduce fine fuels such as bark, leaves, twigs and long grass, either as a fire break or the entire property as directed by the notice. Reducing fine fuels helps lower the intensity of a fire, as fine fuels are the major contributors to fire intensity and spread. The required works must be carried out by the completion date and you must then maintain your property in this state for the duration of the Fire Danger Period.

Can I remove trees and shrubs?

The Notice does not authorise you to remove shrubs and trees. If you wish to remove trees and shrubs, contact Council's Planning Department for advice regarding vegetation or Councils Parks and Gardens Department regarding nature strip/street trees

But I've just cleaned up my property

There is a small delay between Council's Civic Compliance Officers inspecting your property for fire hazards and the issuing of the notice. If you have already carried out what is required on the notice, then no further action is required.

Why does Council issue notices?

Under the Country Fire Authority Act 1958, Council has a legal obligation to reduce the risk of fire for the community. Council's Civic Compliance Officers have the power to inspect properties and issue notices within the municipality. However, there are no guarantees of personal or property safety when it comes to bushfire. The works detailed on the notice are designed to reduce radiant heat, fire intensity, ember attack, and minimise direct flame impact on you or your neighbour's assets. They are consistent with CFA guidelines for protecting your home.

What if I disagree with the assessment?

Contact Council's Civic Compliance Department to discuss your situation before the completion date of your notice.

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

Give Council's Civic Compliance Officers a call to discuss your situation. In most cases an additional week may be considered, although we must hear from you before the completion date on your notice.

What if I'm planning to cut my paddock for hay or putting stock on the paddock?

If you plan to cut your paddock for hay, carry out other works, or put stock on your paddock, call Council's Civic Compliance Department and inform us of your intentions before the completion date on your notice. You may still be required to cut a firebreak or complete other works as directed by Council.

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

Council's Civic Compliance Officers conduct follow up inspections on properties that have received a notice to ensure the works have been completed and maintained throughout the Fire Danger Period. If the works required have not been carried out to the satisfaction of Council's officers by the due date, you may receive an infringement. A contractor may then be engaged to carry out the required works and the costs will be passed on to you with additional administration fees. Council may not contact you prior to undertaking works once the notice has been issued.

My roadside is a fire hazard. What can I do?

Council's inspection program focuses on protecting your house and outbuildings by providing a fuel reduced area around these assets as per CFA guidelines. You must have permission from Council before removing native vegetation from a roadside.

What if I am concerned that my neighbour's land poses a fire hazard?

Please contact Council if there is a property of concern to you. Council's officers may inspect the property and provide the owner with a notice if required. Council's inspection program is focused on reducing fuel loads immediately around assets such as houses and outbuildings. If the fire hazard you are concerned about on a neighbouring property falls outside this area, it is unlikely a notice will be issued.

What about snakes living in long grass?

Snakes in the rural areas 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 house and outbuildings as snakes are attracted to areas that provide shelter and food, such as frogs and mice. Try to remove wood piles, stock feed or hay, and maintain open areas where children play well away from long grass. If a snake enters your home, please contact a licenced snake handler for advice.