WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

Fire Prevention Guide
Prepare Your Property

Reduce the risk on your land

Property owners must reduce potential fire hazards by clearing your land to the minimum standards outlined below and maintaining it for the duration of the declared Fire Danger Period.

You may need to carry out fire prevention maintenance on your block more than once during the fire season.

If you receive a Fire Prevention Notice you must further comply with those specific directions.

Residential Areas (blocks close to homes)

- Ensure ground fuels such as grass, bracken or weeds are maintained to a height of 100mm or less across the whole of your land, especially around buildings and along fence lines.
- Remove undergrowth, fallen branches, garden refuse and tree cuttings from your property.
- Tree branches and shrubs that overhang buildings should be pruned. Branches less than 2 metres from the ground should be pruned back to separate them from the ground fuels.

Rural Living and Farm Zones

- Create a 10m fuel reduced area around buildings by cutting and maintaining grass to a height of 100mm or less.
- Slash a 10m firebreak along boundaries where paddocks meet residential areas or neighbouring houses.
- In heavily wooded areas, ensure tree litter and ground fuels are cleared along boundary fence lines that border residential areas.

Can I remove native vegetation and trees?

A planning permit is generally required to remove native vegetation. In some circumstances you may be able to remove native vegetation without a permit for bushfire protection under the 10/30 and 10/50 rules.

Check if these rules apply to where you live by contacting our Environmental Planner on 1300 366 244.

Under no circumstances will a Fire Prevention Notice give you direction or permission to remove trees or disturb soils.

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How do I find a contractor?

Several local contractors offer fire season property maintenance services. Search online, check local business directories, speak to a neighbour or contact your local garden supply centre.

For landowners who do not live locally, we recommend asking your contractor to take before and after photos to ensure work is completed to your satisfaction.

What about my Green Waste?

Options for disposal of green waste include mulching and composting, permitted burning or transport to a waste facility.

If you engage a contractor, they will likely dispose of the vegetation as part of their service.

Please note that the fine for dumping green waste is $407. Report illegal dumping to Council on 1300 366 244.

Can I burn the green waste?

Once the Fire Danger Period commences you cannot burn your green waste. Lighting any fire in open air is a criminal offence with penalties of up to $25,092, imprisonment for 12 months, or both.

Prior to the Fire Danger Period starting you may be able to burn the vegetation you have cleared on your property.

If you live in a rural living zone or farm zone, you do not require a permit to burn on your property, but you must comply with the Standing Requirements for Every Burn.

If you live in any other zone, including residential zones, you will need to apply for a permit and must demonstrate that there is no alternative to burning.

Visit our 'Fire' webpage for more information about burning off, including the Standing Requirements for Every Burn.

What happens if I don't clean up my property?

If your property is deemed a fire risk during an inspection, you will be served a Fire Prevention Notice directing you to:

- Carry out fire prevention works to remove any specified hazards, and
- Maintain your property for the duration of the declared Fire Danger Period.

If you do not follow the directions of the Fire Prevention Notice, we will issue you an Infringement Notice (penalty $2,072).

We can also arrange for the hazard reduction works specified in the notice to be completed by our authorised contractors at your cost, plus an administration fee.

Where do I find more information?

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