

# Bush Fire Control

## Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans

### Objective

To ensure processes are in place and followed for the issuing and advertising of Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans.

### Policy

#### Scope

The policy applies to the Shire of Koorda (“**the Shire**”) and its elected members, employees, Fire Control Officers and residents.

#### Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION												
<b>Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)</b>	That person appointed by the Shire to perform that role, or the person acting in that position as authorised.												
<b>Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer</b>	That person appointed by the Shire to perform that role, or the person acting in that position as authorised.												
<b>Fire Behaviour Index</b>	A scale of potential fire behaviour represented by a number from zero to 100-plus which is used to inform decisions (including whether a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban is to be imposed) about the fire danger rating for a district.												
<b>Fire Control Officer</b>	A person appointed by the Shire to perform that role, or a person acting in that position as authorised.												
<b>Fire Danger Rating</b>	<p>A rating system used to indicate how difficult it will be to control or suppress a fire. It is based on weather and environmental conditions including temperature, humidity, wind and fuel conditions. There are four ratings, plus “no rating” when there is low risk:</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Fire Danger Rating</th><th>Fire Behaviour Index</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>No rating</td><td>0 to 11</td></tr><tr><td>Moderate</td><td>12 to 23</td></tr><tr><td>High</td><td>24 to 49</td></tr><tr><td>Extreme</td><td>50 to 99</td></tr><tr><td>Catastrophic</td><td>100 +</td></tr></tbody></table>	Fire Danger Rating	Fire Behaviour Index	No rating	0 to 11	Moderate	12 to 23	High	24 to 49	Extreme	50 to 99	Catastrophic	100 +
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No rating	0 to 11												
Moderate	12 to 23												
High	24 to 49												
Extreme	50 to 99												
Catastrophic	100 +												
<b>Fire Season</b>	The high fire risk period roughly bounded by the beginning of the spring Restricted Burning Period (approximately 19 <sup>th</sup> September) and the end of the autumn Restricted Burning Period (15 <sup>th</sup> March)												
<b>Fire Weather Officer</b>	<p>A person appointed by the Shire to perform that role, or a person acting in that position as authorised.</p> <p>As provided for under the <i>Bush Fires Act 1954</i>, Council has delegated authority to the CEO to appoint Fire Control Officers to the position of Fire Weather Officer. For the purposes of this Policy, the role of the Fire Weather Officer is to obtain readings from suitable monitoring equipment to determine the “Fire Behaviour Index”.</p> <p>The officers are charged with the responsibility of liaising with each other and with the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer in determining a need for a ban.</p>												

	The Shire currently has two (2) appointed Fire Weather Officers. Any changes should be in consultation between the CEO and CBFCO.
<b>Harvest Ban</b>	A ban imposed on the harvest or processing of a crop by agricultural machinery during the Restricted or Prohibited Burning Period due to dangerous fire weather conditions.
<b>Incident Controller</b>	A person responsible and accountable for the management of all functions across an incident.
<b>Officer in Charge</b>	The officer for the time being in command of a firefighting crew for a given incident.
<b>Prohibited Burning Period</b>	The time of year during which it is declared by the Minister for Emergency Services under section 17 of the <i>Bush Fires Act 1954</i> to be unlawful to set fire to the bush and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes any extension of those times made, or any further times imposed, under that section in respect of the whole of that district or part of that district, in which that land is situated; but</li> <li>• Does not include any period by which those times are reduced, or for which those times are suspended, under that section in respect of the whole of the district or part of the district, in which that land is situated or in respect of that land in particular.</li> </ul>
<b>Restricted Burning Period</b>	A period where burning is restricted by the issuing of a burning permit.
<b>Vehicle Movement Ban</b>	A ban placed on the movement of any self propelled vehicles, plant or equipment on a property, except for access to a home or shed and the emergency watering/feeding of stock using a vehicle during the Restricted or Prohibited Burning Period.
<b>Volunteer Firefighting</b>	Any person not employed as a firefighter who is contributing to firefighting operations on an active fireground, irrespective of whether they are formally registered as a volunteer firefighter with DFES.

## 1. **Establishing the need for a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban**

### 1.1. **Issuing a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban under r.24C of the *Bush Fire Act 1954***

A Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban must be imposed under r.24C of the Bush Fires Act 1954 when a Total Fire Ban has been declared and the Fire Behaviour Index is or exceeds 40.

### 1.2. **Issuing a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban under r.38A of the *Bush Fire Act 1954***

A Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban will be imposed during the Restricted and Prohibited Burning times and where no Total Fire Ban has been declared when the Fire Behaviour Index has reached or is expected to reach or exceed 40 using the Aurora Fire Behaviour Calculator.

Where the Fire Danger Rating issued by the Bureau of Meteorology is “High” or higher, Fire Weather Officers shall periodically conduct weather readings according to SOP.15 *Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans* as outlined in the Shire of Koorda *Bushfire Operating Procedures*. The two Fire Weather Officers shall monitor the Fire Behaviour Index readings, and if 40 or higher, the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer shall implement a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban.

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or the Shire CEO are all authorised to unilaterally implement a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban if they are of the opinion that regulation of the use of engines,

vehicles, plant or machinery is necessary due to a risk that their use may cause a bushfire or be conducive to the spread of a bushfire. Circumstances which may precipitate this decision may include:

- Verification of weather readings cannot be received from or taken by Fire Weather Officers, or if a significant number of Fire Weather Officers are unavailable or out of the district;
- Significant firefighting resources are deployed to fires either within or outside of the Shire;
- There is significant fire activity in the Shire, or in neighbouring Shires which may pose a threat to any part of the Shire; or
- Conditions or circumstances otherwise deem it necessary in the opinion of the aforementioned officers.

## **2. Implementing a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban**

Once the decision has been made to implement a Harvest and/or Vehicle Movement Ban, the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or Shire CEO is to advise the appointed Shire officer of the ban and whether or what time the ban will be lifted or reviewed.

The appointed Shire officer will then disseminate the information through a number of public channels according to the Shire of Koorda *Harvest Ban Communications* procedure.

## **3. Shire of Koorda plant and equipment operators**

Upon notice of a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban, all Shire employees are to stop all operation of plant while a harvest ban is imposed. Work areas should be made safe and the plant left in a condition ready for firefighting if required.

## **4. Lifting a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban**

A Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban will remain in force until the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, or the Shire CEO declares the ban lifted. In the event of inclement weather conditions or fire activity prevailing, a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban may be extended beyond the original time indicated.

## **5. Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban on Public Holidays**

Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans will be in force annually on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, irrespective of the weather conditions.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Fire Weather Officers are responsible for making themselves aware of forecasted weather conditions during the fire season, and for periodically taking weather readings on days forecast to have a Fire Danger Rating of "High" or higher.

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer is responsible for determining whether a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban is to be called, and for alerting the appropriate personnel at the Shire.

As per delegated authority (6.7 – Appoint Bush Fire Control Officer/s and Fire Weather Officer), the CEO, in conjunction with the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, are responsible for the appointment of Bush Fire Control Officers and Fire Weather Officers, as and when required. Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer is responsible for deputising for the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer in their absence.

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## **Related Documents (Legislation/Local Law/Policy/Procedure/Delegation)**

*Bush Fires Act 1954*

Shire of Koorda Bushfire Operating Procedures

Shire of Koorda Harvest Ban Communications Procedure

Shire of Koorda Delegation Register

## Review History

Date	Council Resolution	Description of review/amendment
18/06/2025	RES: 040625	Re-write and merge old policies (B6 & B7).
<b>Former Policy No: B6 Harvesting Ban Officers &amp; B7 Harvesting Ban Procedure</b>		
19/07/2000		Adoption of Policy (B6)
19/07/2000		Adoption of Policy (B6)

