

Policy

Bush Fire Protection Plan



Bush Fire Protection Plan

To establish and maintain Bush Fire Brigades as a part of its organisation in accordance with part IV of the Bush Fires Act 1954 (as amended) in order to provide fire protection for the Kwinana district.

To undertake an ongoing programme of fire hazard reduction having due regard at all time for the preservation of the natural environment.

Adopted:	24/10/1990 #277
Last reviewed:	27/09/2006 #519 28/04/2010 #105 11/07/2012 #163
Legal Authority:	Local Government Act Section 2.7 – The Role of Council Bush Fires Act 1954 Bush Fire Brigades Local Law

Policy:

1. Committees:

1.1 Bush Fire Advisory Committee:

Council shall form and maintain a Bush Fire Advisory Committee to formulate for Council's consideration, recommendations and policy on matters relating to bush fire prevention, control and extinguishment. As provided for by Section 67 of the Bush Fires Act 1954 (as amended).

Composition:

- a) Two members from each of the Bush Fire Brigades registered with the City in accordance with the Act.
- b) The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and the Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officers as appointed from time to time by the Council.
- c) One Councillor nominated by the Council, plus one Deputy.
- d) One delegate from Kwinana Volunteer Fire Brigade, one delegate from WA Police Service, Salvation Army, Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA)

- e) The Committee may invite ex-officio members as necessary.
- f) Each Brigade shall nominate a Deputy to attend at Committee meetings where a member is unable to attend. It shall be the responsibility of particular member to notify his/her Deputy should he/she for any reason be unable to attend a particular meeting.
- g) One Council Officer (Management Level or above) or delegate.

1.2 A quorum shall consist 50% of members plus one.

1.3 At meetings of the Committee each member shall have one vote and in the case of an equality of votes, the question shall be determined in the negative. The Chairman shall exercise the deliberative, and may not exercise a casting vote. Observers and ex-officio members will not vote on any matter.

Observers may attend meetings of the Committee with the prior permission of the Chairman but will not be permitted to speak on any matter unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

1.4 Recommendations of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee will be referred to Council.

1.5 Chairperson:

At the first general meeting of the Committee after Council Elections, the members of the Committee shall elect one of their members to be Chairperson.

In the absence of the Chairperson, the Committee shall elect one of their members to Chair the meeting.

1.6 Terms of Office:

Nomination for membership of the Committee shall be submitted by the City's registered Bush Fire Brigades to Council not later than 31 May in each year, and if a Brigade fails or neglects to do so by that time, the Council may appoint Brigade members to the Committee. The term of office of each Committee member shall be from 1 June to following 31 May. Retiring Committee members are eligible for re-appointment.

1.7 Meetings:

Ordinary meetings of the Committee shall be held quarterly, or as required. Written notice of each meeting shall be given to all Committee members at least 3 days prior to the meeting.

Special meetings of the Committee may be convened:

- a) By the Chairperson.

- b) By written notice to all Committee Members, such notice being signed by at least four members of the Committee, giving not less than seven (7) days notice and stating purpose of the meeting.
- c) By the Council.
The time and venue of the meetings shall be determined by the Chairman or the Council having due regard to the general convenience of the Committee Members.

1.8 Minutes:

A copy of the minutes of Committee meetings shall be submitted to Council and circulated to Committee members.

1.9 Appointments of Fire Control Officers:

Committee shall recommend Fire Control Officer appointments to Council.

1.10 District Officers Advisory Committee (DOAC):

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and a Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer shall represent Council at DOAC.

2. Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades:

2.1 The Council will establish and maintain such number of Bush Fire Brigades as it deems necessary to provide proper and adequate fire protection for the district (refer to Council's Bush Fire Brigades Local Law).

2.2 Each Brigade shall hold an Annual General Meeting, at which meeting elections of Brigade officers and delegates to Bush Fire Advisory Committee shall take place. Brigades shall advise Council of the incoming officers and delegates for ratification by Council.

3. Training of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Members:

3.1 Council shall appoint suitably qualified Training Officers as recommended by the Bush Fire Advisory Committee, in accordance with Fire & Emergency Service Authority's (FESA) policy.

3.2 Council will be responsible for Basic Training of its Bush Fire Personnel through its Training Officers, utilising programme content and resources developed by Bush Fires Services and FESA.

3.3 Council will require that its Bush Fire personnel are trained as required by their level of brigade involvement.

3.4 The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO), Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer DCBFCO, Brigade Captains and Training Officers shall ensure additional training is completed as the need arises.

3.5 Records of all training completed shall be kept by Brigades and Council (on Brigade files). A copy of these records shall also be passed onto Bush Fire Services.

4. New Members:

New members shall be placed on probation until they are successful in completing the Basic Fire Fighters course and full membership is accepted by Council through the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, on the recommendation of the Brigade.

5. Administration:

Fire Occurrence Statistics:

All fire/incident reports shall be forwarded to the CBFCO, who will retain a copy and forward a copy to the Bush Fires Services. An annual summary of the fire/incidents shall be given to Council by the CBFCO.

6. Clothing and Footwear:

Serviceable safety helmets, eye protection, overalls and protective footwear shall be worn at all times whilst actively engaged in fire protection activities, such as training, burning off, fire suppression and assisting other emergency services etc.

7. Communications:

7.1 Council shall be responsible for the provision of two-way radios, mobile phones and radio land lines to establish an efficient radio network for fire fighting communications.

7.2 Council shall provide each Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade unit with radios fitted with the Fire Services frequencies and mobile phones.

7.3 Council shall be responsible for the maintenance of all Council owned two-way radios and mobile phones.

7.4 The appropriate call signs shall be used at all times.

8. Purchase and Maintenance of Fire Fighting Equipment:

8.1 Funding of Brigades

Each year at the designated time brigades shall prepare a budget for the coming year. The budget shall be forwarded to the Bush Fire Advisory Committee for endorsement prior to its recommendation to FESA by the City. Council will try to obtain such funding from FESA via the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) to cover all operational costs of each Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

8.2 Council shall also provide funds within the annual budget for emergency refreshment, fire capital items and other areas of fire management as deemed necessary.

8.3 Council will consider any additional request for funds not covered by the ESL.

9. Vehicles:

9.1 Repairs:

Any mechanical repairs pertaining to the fire vehicles should be directed to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer as soon as practicable, by a Brigade Officer.

The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer shall ensure vehicles are repaired as soon as possible so vehicles are able to respond to emergencies.

No major modifications or additions are to be made without consulting the Chief Executive Officer via the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

9.2 Maintenance:

Brigades shall be responsible for the reasonable care of their vehicles and equipment. Council shall allocate funds for maintenance and repair of vehicles, which are reclaimable from the ESL.

Fire units shall be inspected each April and September by Council's mechanic by arrangement with Brigade Captains. Fast Attacks with special overweight licences shall be inspected before examination in July each year.

9.3 Replacement:

The CBFCO in consultation with the brigade captains, shall work with FESA regarding the regulatory replacement of vehicles from the ESL.

9.4 Licensing:

The Council shall be responsible for the licensing and insurance of Brigade vehicles and equipment.

9.5 Housing:

Each Council owned unit in the control of Brigades to be housed in a garage, shed or other suitable building where possible.

9.6 Private Use:

On no account are Council owned units to be used for private purposes.

9.7 Fuel:

Council shall pay the total fuel costs of all its approved bush fire vehicles on operational duties. Council shall also provide fuel for other Council vehicles assisting at fires or emergencies within its bush fire districts.

9.8 Brigades shall keep a vehicle log for all units.

9.9 The Brigade Captain will at all times keep the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer informed of any change of the day to day location and operational status of the Brigade's appliances.

9.10 A fire fighting appliance shall be manned by no less than two persons while actively engaged in fire fighting or fire control activities.

9.11 The driver of any Council fire fighting appliance or fire control vehicle will hold a current Driver's Licence of the class appropriate for the appliance or vehicle being driven and be either:-

- (a) A Council employee.
- (b) A registered member of the Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.
- (c) Any person authorised by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, his Deputy, or a Brigade Captain or Bush Fire Control Officer.

No vehicle shall be driven under emergency conditions unless the driver has completed an approved emergency driving course.

10. Telephone Expenses:

10.1 Council shall pay for the telephone rental for fire stations, the ERS 7 emergency call out system and Brigade Captains.

10.2 Telephone rental for Fire Control Officers shall be paid for by Council from 1 October until 31 May each year.

10.3 Council shall pay the rental and maintenance fee of all bush fire pagers.

11. Electricity Expenses:

Council shall pay the cost of electricity for fire stations.

12. Insurance Cover:

In accordance with FESA's Emergency Services policy, the City of Kwinana's policies for fire fighters are as follows:-

1) Bush Fire Insurance Interest Insured:

Injury/Disability to fire fighters and assistants whilst engaged in or travelling to or from any bush fire or normal brigade activities.

Location:

Anywhere within the District of the Local Authority and as maybe further extended by the Bush Fires Act 1954 and amendments.

Limit of Indemnity:

Injury/Disability – in accordance with the benefits and provisions of the Bush Fire Act 1954 and amendments.

2) Personal Accident Travel Insurance – Voluntary Workers Interest Insures:

Death or personal injury of insured persons whilst carrying out official duties or proceeding to or returning from official duties.

Capital Sum: \$200,000

3) Motor Vehicle & Plant Insurance

Bush fire brigade and members vehicles and volunteers based on market value.

NOTE: THIS IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH FESA'S POLICIES THAT EXIST AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT.

13. Council Workforce - Fire Fighting:

Council will provide available personnel from its workforce in accordance with the Fire Suppression Plan (Page 30).

14. Fire Hazard Reduction Burning:

Where Brigades do protective burning for landowners and occupiers, the following procedure is to be adopted:-

14.1 All Brigades to be supplied with relevant forms ie Application to Abate and/or Remove Fire Danger and Membership Forms.

14.2 Following contact with the landowner/occupier the Brigade to complete quotation section of form and have owner/occupier complete action request section, and return it to the Brigade.

14.3 The Brigade to have authorisation section completed by Chief Bush Fire Control Officer or his/her Deputy.

14.4 All sections of the above process to be completed before protective burning takes place.

14.5 At the end of each Restricted Burning Season, Brigades to forward details as to the number of burns carried out.

NOTE: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS PROCEDURE IS STRICTLY ADHERED TO IN ORDER THAT PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE COVER IS EFFECTED.

15. Fires Outside City Boundaries:

A Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade established by the City of Kwinana shall not attend any fire outside the bush fire district of the Council unless they are authorised to do so by the Chief/Deputy Chief Fire Control Officer. Should the appropriate Officer not be available the Senior Brigade Officer shall have discretion on all occasions and Chief/Deputy Fire Control Officer shall be notified at the first opportunity. It is extremely important that some resources be kept in or near the City's bush fire district at all times.

16. Fire Control Officers:

16.1 Council shall restrict the number of accredited Fire Control Officers per Brigade, to two.

16.2 Plant:

Fire Control Officers must follow the procedure of engaging the use of plant through the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer, in accordance with the Fire Suppression Plan (refer to Page 30).

The same procedure must be adopted before any plant from any source is engaged.

NOTE: THE FIRE CONTROL OFFICER MUST KEEP ACCURATE RECORDS OF ANY PLANT ENGAGED, INCLUDING DETAILS OF THE DRIVER, STARTING AND FINISHING TIMES.

17. Permits:

All permits to burn shall be issued by Council's appointed Bush Fire Control Officers.

18. Publicity:

A pamphlet referring to bush fire protection shall be provided to every new property owner within the district of City of Kwinana.

19. Welfare:

In the event that meals are required for volunteers on duty at the scene of a fire, Council's Chief or Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer are authorised to purchase required meals. Council will provide funds annually in Budget for this purpose.

20. Firebreaks Notice:

Council's Firebreaks Notice shall be printed in a newspaper each year by Council as part of the Fire Publicity and in a pamphlet and distributed within the district.

21. Firebreaks:

21.1 Council requires, as a condition of subdivision, the provision of properly constructed firebreaks on newly created Rural and Special Rural lots.

21.2 Council supports the concept of strategic firebreaks where they use such features as drainage reserves, waterways and road reserves for fire control purposes but that such strategic breaks are in addition to the normal firebreaks required by Council's Firebreaks Notice. Where firebreaks are inappropriate, land owners shall provide an alternative fire protection plan. The CBFCO, in consultation with Fire Control Officers, has authority to approve or reject such alternative plans.

21.3 Council's Rangers, Fire Control Officer or other suitably qualified person nominated by Council shall carry out a firebreak inspection of all properties each year.

21.3.1 Firebreak inspections shall be done early each summer in accordance with the CBFCO instructions.

21.3.2 Where a parcel of land is found not to conform with firebreak/hazard notice, a fire control officer shall:

- Immediately request a contractor to do the required work at the property owner's expense.

OR

- Immediately request the owner to comply with the fire notice. If they fail to do so, a contractor is to do the work at the owner's expense.

Where a Fire Control Officer is required to employ a contractor to enforce the firebreak notice, the landowner/occupier shall be liable for all costs incurred. Legal action shall also be taken for failure to comply with the Fire Notice.

21.3.3 In accordance with the Bush Fire Act, a Fire Control Officer can request additional work to that listed on the fire notice, if it is deemed to be necessary to protect the property from a fire.

22. Bush Fires Act Infringements:

22.1 Brigades shall report breaches of the Bush Fires Act including details taken of Officers' action, to the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer who shall report annually to Council.

22.2 Bush Fires Act Infringement Notices shall be issued to the owner of land where adequate firebreaks have not been installed.

22.3 Where a person has been found to be illegally burning, brigade officers shall obtain as much information as possible regarding the incident, including:

- Dates, times and location of offence(s).
- Name, address, and telephone number of alleged offender and witness.

This information shall be passed onto a Ranger immediately or at the earliest possible time. Where there has been major damage or injuries the CBFCA shall be notified immediately.

22.4 Persons failing to pay the fine indicated on Infringement Notices as required, shall be issued with a Summons to appear before a Court of Competent Jurisdiction to answer charges. As an alternative, the unpaid infringement can be passed onto the Fines Enforcement Registry to follow up.

22.5 Warrants shall be issued for non-payment of fines and penalties imposed by the Courts resulting from action taken by Council under the provisions of the Bush Fires Act 1954 (as amended) and Regulations.