

PREPARING PROPERTIES FOR SUMMER

As the weather warms and grass begins to cure/dry we see an increased risk of fires spreading and causing damage to property or people. Fortunately, there are things you can do to reduce this risk.

What is the Fire Danger Period?

The Fire Danger Period is declared annually by the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and generally comes into effect between November and April. Actual commencement and end dates vary each year depending on seasonal conditions.

For current dates and restrictions, visit: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/>.

It is important to regularly maintain your property throughout the Fire Danger Period.

Plan your property maintenance well ahead of time as mowing and slashing contractors can have quite long lead times throughout the summer period.

Fire hazard inspection program

From 1 November each year, Fire Prevention Officers from the City of Casey will inspect large vacant properties across the municipality for potential fire hazards and property amenity. The City of Casey has both CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) designated areas, thus the Fire Prevention Notice you may receive depends on where your property is located.

I own a residential property what do I need to do?

- You need to comply with the Local Law all year round which requires that the grass is less than 30cm high at all times. Make sure that your grass is being cut on a regular basis so that it stays under 30cm.
- Smaller residential properties will not usually receive a Fire Prevention Notice. These properties are more likely to receive a Notice to Comply with the Local Law. If you receive a Notice to Comply, your property has already been found to be in breach of the Local Law and an immediate fine may apply.

I own a larger commercial/development or rural/farming property what should I do?

On larger properties, fires can become intense and cause risk to surrounding properties. Here are a few simple things that you can do to reduce that risk throughout the Fire Danger Period

- Vacant commercial/development properties should be slashed/mown across the whole property
- Rural/Farming properties should create a fire break of 10m metres or more around the outside of the property. If you are grazing sufficient livestock to keep fuel load down, consider temporary fencing to strip-graze the boundaries to create the fire break. If the grass on the property is not being used for fodder or hay, then you should slash the entire property. Consider contacting a contractor who may wish to bale that grass for hay.

If Council officers determine that a property is (or may become) a fire hazard, they will issue a Fire Prevention Notice under the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 or the Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958 with instructions on what works need to be done to reduce or remove the fire risk. You must do the works by the due date. Fines of 10 times the current [penalty unit value](#), plus hazard removal charges and administrative fee apply if the works are not completed by the due date.



The property is leased or rented, who is responsible?

Fire Prevention notices are issued to the Owner/s of the property who are responsible for the property. Any lease agreements/arrangements between owners and leaseholders are between those parties.

Can I remove trees or shrubs?

If you are considering removing trees or shrubs to reduce the fire risk on your property you may need planning or environmental approvals. Contact the City of Casey planning department before undertaking any vegetation removal beyond grass/weed slashing.

Burning off?

Before the Fire Danger Period starts, consider burning off fallen branches to reduce the fuel load across your property. All burning-off in the City of Casey needs a Permit to Burn. You can apply for a permit prior to the Fire Danger Period online at www.casey.vic.gov.au/apply-permit-burn-off.

**Permits to burn will not be issued by the City of Casey during the Fire Danger Period (FDP), for Permits to burn during the FDP please apply at firepermits.vic.gov.au*

The City of Casey has some programs that help prepare for the summer Fire Danger Period:

Roadside fuel reduction slashing program

The City of Casey's rural roadsides are cut three times a year to help reduce the intensity and spread of a fire. The grass is cut to a uniform height where possible of 100mm or 120mm in high-conservation areas.

- First cut: 1 Oct – 30 Nov.
- Second cut: 1 Jan – 28 Feb.
- Third cut: 1 Apr – 31 May.

Park and reserve maintenance

- Grass in urban parks and reserves is usually cut every three weeks and managed by the Casey's Open Spaces Team
- Bushland reserves are subject to seasonal maintenance programs, which include firebreak and broader fuel management activities. The reserves are inspected each year by the Fire Prevention and City Greening Officers from the City of Casey to ensure they are managed appropriately.

What is a Total Fire Ban?

A Day of Total Fire Ban is declared by the CFA when the weather conditions for that day call for additional restrictions in place to reduce the risk of any fires starting.

Where can I get more information?

The CFA website tells you what you can do during the Fire Danger Period and on days of Total Fire Ban. Visit the below websites for more information:



casey.vic.gov.au



cfa.vic.gov.au



frv.vic.gov.au



deeca.vic.gov.au

Contact the City of Casey:

Web: casey.vic.gov.au
Email: caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au
Phone: 03 9705 5200
Post: PO Box 1000, Narre Warren VIC 3805
NRS: 133 677 (for the deaf, hearing or speech impaired)

Customer Service Centres:

Narre Warren: Bunjil Place, Patrick Northeast Drive
Cranbourne: Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre
ABN: 43 320 295 742



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