

Fire Season, Total Fire Ban and Extreme Heat Policies

BACKGROUND

MBW has reviewed its policies on activities in the Fire Season when there can be a high fire danger and extreme temperatures.

The review has been driven by the prolonged drought in south-eastern Australia, increasing frequency of very high/extreme fire danger, the danger of rapid escalation and spread of bushfires, the impacts of increasing numbers of days of extreme heat, and the need for the Club to have an effective risk management plan that ensures the continuing safety of all our activity participants.

The objective is to have clear, simple and practical policies that ensure the safety of all our activity participants.

Policies have been developed for the Fire Season covering Total Fire Bans and Extreme Heat. These policies will be monitored and reviewed regularly. This version has been updated taking into account the outcomes of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

Fire Season Policy

During the Fire Season (November – April):

1. All Activity participants will obey directions from the Police, Rangers, Country Fire Authority (CFA), Parks Victoria, and the Department of Sustainability and the Environment (DSE).
2. Leaders will consider their Contingency Plan in advance of the Activity taking into account the impacts of heat, fires, park closures, water availability, evacuation options, and the location of nearby designated CFA Safer Places in deciding whether the Activity may need to be cancelled, relocated or modified. Decisions will be made in agreement with the relevant Activity Coordinator/Secretary and communicated as appropriate to Participants.
3. For Activities in forest areas the Leader will check with the Ranger/CFA/DSE before the Activity to check if the area is safe to walk in.
4. All Activity Participants will take responsibility for their ability to walk in heat, wear appropriate clothing and ensure that they have adequate water, typically a minimum of 2 litres on a hot day.
5. Leaders will ensure that each Activity has an AM Radio and Mobile Phone.

Fire Danger Ratings & Total Fire Ban Districts

The *Fire Danger Ratings* and *Total Fire Ban Areas* will be used as the references for our Total Fire Ban Policy.

Fire Danger Ratings predict fire behaviour should a fire start and how difficult it will be to put it out.




Each Club Activity will be tagged with the reference Fire Ban District Code which will be used to determine if there is an applicable Total Fire Ban for the Activity. The codes are:

CN= Central,	EA=East Gippsland,	NE=North Eastern,
MA= Mallee,	SW=South West,	NC= North Central,
NY= Northern Country	WG= West Gippsland,	WI= Wimmera

Refer to the CFA Website for more information - <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/>

KNOW YOUR TOTAL FIRE BAN DISTRICT

Mallee District Buloke Shire Gannawarra Shire Mildura Rural City Swan Hill Rural City Yarramblack Shire (north of the netting fence)	Wimmera District Hindmarsh Shire Horsham Rural City Northern Grampians Shire West Wimmera Shire Yarramblack Shire (south of the netting fence)	Northern Country District Campaspe Shire Greater Bendigo City Greater Shepparton City Loddon Shire Moira Shire Strathboolgie Shire	North East District Alpine Shire Benalla Rural City Falls Creek Alpine Resort (Unincorporated) Indigo Shire Mansfield Shire Mount Buller Alpine Resort (Unincorporated) Mount Hotham Alpine Resort (Unincorporated) Mount Stirling Alpine Resort (Unincorporated) Towong Shire Wangaratta Rural City Wedonga City	Central District Ballarat City Banyule City Bass Coast Shire Bayside City Boroondara City Brimbank City Cardinia Shire Casey City Darebin City Frankston City French Island (Unincorporated) Glen Elia City Golden Plains Shire Greater Dandenong City Greater Geelong City Hepburn Shire Hobsons Bay City Hume City Kingston City Knox City Macedon Ranges Shire Manningham City Maribymong City Maroondah City Melbourne City Melton Shire Monash City Moonee Valley City Moorabool Shire Moreland City Mornington Peninsula Shire Nillumbik Shire Port Phillip City Queenscliffe Borough Stonnington City Surf Coast Shire Whitehorse City Whittlesea City Wyndham City Yarra City Yarra Ranges Shire	 Total Fire Bans Total Fire Bans are declared by CFA on days when fires are likely to spread rapidly and be difficult to control. On days of Total Fire Ban there are legal restrictions in force to reduce the likelihood of fires starting. Victoria is divided into nine Total Fire Ban districts. Total Fire Bans are declared by district and you must know which district you live in. A list of municipalities that are located in each of the districts is shown in the coloured boxes. For more information on Total Fire Bans and Fire Restrictions please call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL) on 1800 240 667 or visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au
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For more information please visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or phone the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

www.cfa.vic.gov.au  **PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.**
FireReady 

Total Fire Ban Policy

If a Total Fire Ban is declared in the Activities Fire Ban District then all Day Activities will be cancelled and Multi-Day Activities will only continue if an Exemption is obtained.

1. Activity Participants should check the News and/or the CFA Fire Bans the evening before an Activity from November to April (Total Fire Bans are normally declared at 4pm). If unsure contact the Leader.
2. For Sunday Bus and Sunday Private Transport Walks the walk will be cancelled and the Leader will both contact the Sunday Walks Secretary to cancel the Bus booking and attend the departure point prior to 8:45am to advise walkers of the cancellation
3. Non Sunday Walk Activities Leaders will notify all participants of a cancellation or a relocation
4. To obtain an Exemption, Multi-Day Activity Leaders must check with the CFA/DSE/Ranger that it is safe in that area and get approval from the designated Activity Coordinators or Committee Member/Officers.
5. No Exemptions will be allowed for 'Severe', 'Extreme' or 'Code Red' fire danger warnings.
6. Any Activity in progress when a 'Core Red' is declared in that area will cease and exit by the safest route when safe to do so.
7. If a Multi Day Activity has commenced then the activity will either cease and exit by the safest route when safe to do so, be suspended or obtain an Exemption to continue.
8. For Base Camps and Lodges the Group may stay at the Base Camp/Lodge if considered safe by the CFA/DSE/Rangers.
9. The only exception for a Day Activity will be if it is in Melbourne and it has been previously approved to continue by an Activity Coordinator.

During Periods where there are warnings of 'Extreme' or 'Code Red' Fire Danger the Club Committee may cancel Club Activities for a specified Period.

Temperature Reference Sites

The Bureau of Meteorology provide temperature forecasts for a number of sites across Victoria. These sites will be used as the reference for the Extreme Heat Policy.

Each Club Activity will have a Reference Temperature Site listed which will be used to determine the forecast temperature in the area of the Activity. Note the Mt Dandenong forecast is under Melbourne.

The forecast issued on the morning of the day before the Activity will be used



Temperature Reference Codes:

aw=Albury-Wodonga
 be=Bendigo
 ec=Echuca
 ge=Geelong
 lv=Latrobe Vly
 mi=Mildura
 sa=Sale
 sp=Shepparton
 wn=Wonthaggi

me=Melbourne
 bn=Bairnsdale
 fc=Falls Creek
 ha=Hamilton
 md=Mt Dandenong
 mh=Mt Hotham
 se=Seymour
 wb=Warrnambool
 yg=Yarra Glen

ba=Ballarat
 co=Colac
 fr=Frankston
 ho=Horsham
 mb=Mt Buller
 or=Orbost
 sh=Swan Hill
 wg=Wangaratta

Refer to the BOM Website for current information - <http://www.bom.gov.au/>.

Extreme Heat Policy

If the temperature is forecast to be 38° C or greater at the Reference Temperature Site then Day Activities will be cancelled and for Multi-Day Activities the Leader may cancel the Activity, modify it to reduce the impact of heat, or relocate it to a cooler area.

1. Activity Participants should check the News and/or the Bureaux of Meteorology forecasts the day before an Activity to check the temperature. If unsure contact the Leader
2. For Sunday Bus and Sunday Private Transport Walks the Leader will both contact the Sunday Walks Secretary to cancel Bus booking and attend the departure point prior to 8:45am to advise unsure walkers of the cancellation
3. Non Sunday Walk Leaders will notify all participants of a cancellation or relocation
4. Where practical the Multi-Day Activity Leader will discuss with the relevant Activity Coordinators whether to cancel or modify the Activity. This should be arranged in advance of the Activity.

Policy Coverage:

- All Day activities – Sunday Bus Walks, Sunday Private Transport Walks, Week Day Walks, Dandenong Explorers, Cycling, etc
- All Multi-day Activities – Pack Carrys, Lodge Weekends, Base Camps, Lilo Trips, Canoeing, Weekend Cycling etc
- All Activity Previews

Refunds and Credits:

- Members and Visitors may cancel their Activity without penalty where a Total Fire Ban is declared in the area of the Activity or where the Temperature at the Reference Site is 38° C or greater. Alternatively they may attend a modified Activity if one is arranged.
- Credits will be provided for cancelled Sunday Bus Walks.
- Refunds will only be provided for other activities if the Leader can easily obtain a refund for any costs or fees they may have paid.
- The Leader will be refunded by the Club for losses resulting from Total Fire Bans or Extreme Heat Cancellations.