

Bushfire Season - Preparation

This factsheet is designed to help your preparation for bushfire season in the ACT. If you have concerns about bushfire season, how to legally prepare, or what your rights and obligations are, please call the free **Legal Aid Helpline** on **1300 654 314**.

What can you do to legally prepare?

You should be legally prepared at all times for a bushfire. This is as a preventative measure to minimise damage and ensure you remain as protected as possible. There are several things you can do to legally prepare. For example, you can:

- ensure your insurance is up to date and has the correct cover for fire and flood so that you are prepared to lodge an insurance claim if need be;
- keep a list of emergency contacts you may need for dealing with recovery from a disaster. These may include the ambulance, legal services and your insurance company;
- prepare a folder of important documents to take with you in case you need to evacuate;
- devise a bushfire survival plan so you are as well prepared as possible if affected by a bushfire.

What important documents should I compile?

It is worth taking some time to compile an important documents folder now to save you time in an emergency situation. This is in the best interests of your safety in the situation that you need to urgently evacuate, as you will likely not have time to compile these documents in such a situation.

Create a hard copy folder you can take with you if you need to evacuate. In your hard copy folder, you should try to include original documents and copies of the originals. You may also want to create a soft copy. It is also a good idea to store a backup copy of your folder on a USB stick to take with you if you need

to evacuate. Your hard copy folder of documents, as well as your soft copies, should be stored somewhere easily accessible if you do need to evacuate.

Some documents you should include in your folder include:

- wills
- title deeds/mortgage documents
- birth certificates
- marriage certificate
- passports
- powers of attorney
- lease documents
- insurance policy documents
- superannuation details
- investment details
- bank account details
- tax file number
- medicare/health insurance number and details
- a list of emergency contact numbers
- a description of your house and photos of your house
- a list of valuable items in your home
- any other documents that are important to you

Bushfire Survival Plan

The ACT Government and ACT Emergency Service Agency encourage you to create a Bushfire Survival Plan in order to protect you and your family and assist you in preparing your home to survive a bushfire.

As a first step, you should discuss with others in your household what you would do in a bushfire. Some points to discuss include:

- whether you will defend your home and how you will do this
- how to prepare your surroundings for a bushfire (eg. installation of hoses, removing materials that may burn)

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- how you will stay up to date on conditions in your area.

You should familiarise yourself with any websites, radio stations and apps that provide useful information and resources on bushfires and appropriate survival plan measures. Some examples include **Access Canberra** (13 22 81), the **Emergency Services Agency** website (esa.act.gov.au) and the **Fires Near Me** phone application or website.

Legal Aid ACT acknowledges it has reproduced some of this information from the Disaster Legal Help

Victoria website -

<https://www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au/get-help/being-legally-prepared>