

BUSHFIRE EVACUATION / RELOCATION

Fact Sheet 3 – Community Risk Management. Revised 19/08/2004.

FACT: During bushfires, lives are most often lost when people make a last minute decision to flee their homes on foot or in a vehicle.

During bushfires should I Stay or Go?

FACTS:

1. Late evacuation exposes people to the dangers of smoke, radiant heat and falling debris and can lead to blocked roads further endangering evacuees and impeding access for emergency vehicles.
2. **NSW Police have authority to direct people to evacuate and will do so on the advice of fire authorities.** However, in times of extreme emergency you should not rely on Police or Firefighters to advise you what to do. It is therefore most important to have ready an **Evacuation/Relocation Plan** suited to the needs of your family or residents and your property.
3. **Research indicates that a well prepared home is often the safest place to shelter from a fire front.** Refer to Fact Sheet #2
4. **Research also indicates that well protected and prepared able-bodied people who stay to protect their homes from ember attack and spot fires are often successful.** Protection includes covering exposed skin with long tops and pants of natural fibres, solid shoes, hats, goggles and face masks.

Whether you choose to stay or go, it is very important that you make your decision EARLY.

If GOING, consider these points:

- **WHO in the household should go?**
(We recommend that the elderly, young children and the infirm)
- **WHEN should they go?**
(Early in the day and well ahead of fire entering the area)
- **WHERE should they go?**
(Arrange a meeting place a safe distance from the fire – it might be with a friend, relative, or at an official refuge)
- **WHAT should they take?**
(Have documents, valuables, medications and pets packed and ready to go)

If STAYING with your home consider these points:

- Turn off gas and power
- Block downpipes and fill gutters with water
- Hose down external walls, gardens etc before the fire arrives
- Bring hoses/fittings and other fire suppression tools inside, so they can be used later
- Fill all sinks, baths etc with water to use on spot fires in case mains water supply or domestic electric water pumps fail.
- Close all doors and windows and block gaps with damp towels
- Move flammable curtains and furniture away from windows
- Shelter in a part of the house most distant from approaching fire front until fire has passed then actively put out spot fires
- Keep a torch and portable AM/FM radio at hand to monitor weather in case power fails
- Wear long sleeves and long pants made from natural fibres and sturdy footwear
- Have eye and breathing protection available for everyone.
- Once fire front has passed, go outside to check for spot fires and ember attack

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FIRE STATION OR FIRE CONTROL CENTRE
or visit: www.rfs.nsw.gov.au www.fire.nsw.gov.au or www.esa.act.gov.au**

BUSHFIRE EVACUATION/RELOCATION SAFETY TIPS

- Stay and defend your home if you are well PREPARED or, LEAVE THE AREA EARLY in the day and well ahead of advancing fire front
- Have an EVACUATION PLAN ready - Make sure everyone in the household is familiar with the plan and what is expected from them
- Have a portable AM/FM radio with spare batteries handy and listen to weather forecasts
- Know where you, your partner and children will be on extreme fire danger days
- Have relevant phone numbers handy (school, work, friends, emergency services, RTA Info)

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000