

Thinking that you might Stay and Defend?

A decision to 'Stay and Defend' is only an option if you are well prepared. Preparation includes a written Fireplan that your household has discussed and developed together. Firstly, ask yourselves:

- Is your home well prepared to make it as safe as possible during a fire?
Work through the property protection check lists in the on-line bush fire survival plan.
- Are we putting anyone in our family at risk by staying?
If you have young children or people in your household who are vulnerable due to age, health, physical or any other reason, you should plan to leave early.
- Will we cope in an emergency situation?
In a fire it will be hot, smoky and physically draining. Even trained firefighters can find it challenging.

If you have any doubts, your plan should be to leave early.

A plan to **Stay and Defend** means you have made a plan by working through www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/bush-fire-survival-plan and:

- you know what the **triggers** will be to put your plan into action
- have all the **fire-fighting equipment** you need:
including hoses that reach around the house, a petrol or diesel pump, at least 10,000L water supply, a ladder to access the roof cavity, buckets and mops, shovels and metal rakes
- have suitable **protective clothing**:
including a wide-brimmed hat, eye protection goggles, moistened facemask or cloth, loose, long sleeved cotton shirt, gloves, long cotton pants/jeans and sturdy leather shoes or boots
- **know what to do** Before During and immediately After the fire:
Before: preparing the house and equipment; moving pets and livestock
During: protecting yourself & patrolling inside your home as the fire front passes
After: check for fire in the roof cavity, under the house, on the deck, stairs, windowsills etc
- have **defined the roles** for each member of the household and each member knows and understands what they must do
- have an **agreed backup plan** that takes into account unexpected events, including:
not all of the household are at home at the time of the fire, or electricity fails, or the fire moves faster than expected and you have not completed all your preparations

However, it is **not safe** to stay with your property if the fire danger rating is **Catastrophic** or there is an **Extreme** fire danger rating and your home is not specially designed or constructed for bush fires. **Under these circumstances, you should always leave early.**

Assess your fire risk

The RFS website www.rfs.nsw.gov.au contains a plethora of information and resources to help you understand your fire risk and to make or review your fire plan. Take a look at this useful tool at <https://assessmyrisk.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>

This online interactive tool provides an assessment of the fire risk to your home based on your address, the surrounding vegetation and geography. The tool then steps you through detailed questions relating to your house, your garden surrounds, your fire-fighting equipment and your capacity to fight a fire.

Once completed you can generate a report of your overall risk as well as a "To Do" list, where relevant, to help you manage the fire risk to your property.

Have you checked your Fire Alarm?

The three most common types of alarm all need regular testing to ensure they function when you need them most:

- 9V battery – change the battery at least annually.
- Fixed battery – check the expiry date on the alarm and replace as necessary
- Hard wired – test at least 6 monthly

Feedback

Send any feedback on this newsletter to Helen.Templeton@iinet.net.au

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Brigade activity

We have again experienced a low level of fire activity in our area over the past three months. Thanks to all our community for your diligence in managing fire and fire risk through another dry period.

February: 28th - Three members responded to a fire on Burra Road.

March: 4th – One Colinton member and two Bredbo members attended the Victorian fires for 5 days.

April: 14th – Along with other brigades in our area, three members attended a hazard reduction burn on Mt Roberts

May: 17th – Three members attended a hazard reduction burn along with other brigades along the Calabash Fire Trail.

Stay informed

Look to different sources of information to stay informed on fire activity in our area.

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

www.face-book.com/MonaroRFS

<http://esa.act.gov.au/community-information/incidents-map/>

Fires Near Me app for smart phones – Android and Apple.

ABC

Local ABC radio and television

REPORT ALL FIRES – RING 000

Having a Bonfire?

If you are planning to have a bonfire on the June long weekend you must notify the Cooma Fire Control Centre (02 64550455) and the Colinton Captain (0419 406 908) or Deputy Captain (0407 003 392) at least 24 hours prior.

You are required by law to notify all adjoining neighbours and any other residents who might be affected, at least 24 hours prior to lighting the fire.

You must only burn vegetation from the locality, not household or building material such as plastics, wooden pallets or cardboard boxes.

Note: it is illegal to burn treated timbers or tyres anywhere in NSW.

Clear an area of 2 metres around the perimeter of the fire. Your Bonfire should not be higher than 1.5 metres and not greater than 2 metres in length or width. A larger pile will produce more intense heat, will burn for longer and will be more difficult to manage safely.

Use dead and dry logs of less than 150mm in diameter. Where possible, construct the fire on level ground, as this will reduce the likelihood of burning logs rolling out of the fire.

Before lighting the fire, ensure you have suitable tools on hand such as rakes and shovels. You should also have a hose that can reach to all edges of the fire, attached to a reliable and pressurised water source.

Keep a watch throughout the night for sparks landing in grassed areas adjoining the cleared area.

Completely extinguish the fire before leaving the area. Spreading the burnt material may assist in extinguishing all embers.

Remember you are responsible for any fire you light and for any damage it causes if it escapes.



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Training

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday at 2.00 pm at the Colinton Fire Shed. Drop in and see what it's all about. Or if you need any advice on preparing your property for fire, this is a good time to catch the Captain or any of the Deputies to have a chat.

Congratulations to Fred, Liz, Elizabeth, Ian and Eilis, our newest members, who have passed their Basic Fire Fighter course.

Myth Buster

MYTH: *Standing on my roof and hosing it down with water will help protect my house in a bush fire.*

FACT: The best way to protect your roof from ember attack is to block the downpipes and fill the gutters with water. You can also hose the roof down, but the safest method is from the ground or from a well-secured ladder.

REPORT ALL FIRES – RING 000

Grass Fires – some quick facts

Grasslands cover about 80% of NSW. In our area, African Lovegrass is a significant fire threat, particularly during the winter months. Un-grazed paddocks of Love Grass may develop a deep thatch of dead stems. Fire can smoulder under this thatch and deep within the tussocks for many hours after an active fire has passed.

Grasses respond quickly to changes in humidity – absorbing moisture overnight, but losing it quickly during the day. This means that grasses can be ready to burn much earlier in the day than other vegetation.

Grass fires:

- can start quickly and spread rapidly, threatening lives, property, crops and livestock.
- are unpredictable and can move 3 times more quickly than a bushfire
- will have tall flames in tall grasses, that may reach across roads, trails or fire breaks.
- are very hot, producing huge amounts of heat that can kill anyone caught out in the open. The safest place to be during a grass fire is well away from the fire. If you are caught near a grass fire, look for the burnt ground as an area of safe refuge.
- are quick to respond to changes in wind speed and direction. Changes in local topography will also quickly affect the speed and direction of a grass fire.

Machinery such as tractors, slashers, harvesters, welders, chainsaws, mowers and grinders can start a grass fire. It is your responsibility to ensure that any machinery you use in grass, is free from any faults and mechanical defects that could start a fire.

Use grinders in grasslands with care at all times. Keep fire suppression equipment handy and where possible, dampen down the immediate area.

Download the complete 'Grassfire Fact Sheet' from

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/factsheets> (page 3)

Or read more at <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/grassfires>



Advise your intention to burn

Although the Fire Permit period has ended, you must advise the **Cooma Fire Control Centre** 02 6455 0455 and one of the **Colinton Permit Officers** of your intention to conduct any burn:

Captain Graham Povey
02 6454 4150 or 0419 406 908
Email: colintoncaptain@icloud.com

Senior Deputy Michael Burton
0407 003 392
Email: mburton64@gmail.com

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