



<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	-	<b>4.4</b>
<b>POLICY SUBJECT</b>	-	<b>Hazard Reduction Burning by Bush Fire Brigades</b>

## 1. POLICY PURPOSE

To reduce risk to Bush Fire volunteers, equipment, and the community during hazard reduction burns.

## 2. POLICY SCOPE

The policy applies to volunteers registered with a Shire of Merredin Bush Fire Brigade conducting hazard reduction burns within the Shire of Merredin.

## 3. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

*Bush Fires Act 1954*

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

### 4.1 Hazard reduction burns

The purpose of hazard reduction burns include reducing potentially dangerous fuel loads in the event of a bushfire and providing Bush Fire Brigades with training opportunities.

Hazard reduction burns may only take place under the following conditions:

- Bush Fire Brigades must seek and receive approval from the Emergency Services Officer or a member of the Senior Management Group at the Shire of Merredin.
- Hazard reduction burns may not take place during the Prohibited Burning period.
- Hazard reduction burns may take place during a Restricted Burning period, subject to the issuing of a *Permit to Set Fire to the Bush*.
- A Bush Fire Brigade intending to carry out hazard reduction burns under permit may not use a permit issued by a Fire Control Officer in the same Brigade.
- Hazard reduction burns may not take place during a Total Fire Ban, a Harvest & Vehicle Movement Ban, or on a day when the Fire Danger Rating is “High” or higher.

### 4.2 Back burning during a bush fire incident

If back burning during a bush fire incident is to be carried out it must be in accordance with *SOP.16 Back Burning During Bushfire Incidents* of the Shire of Merredin *Bushfire Operating Procedures*.

## 5. KEY POLICY DEFINITIONS

**Chief Bush Fire Control Officer:** That person appointed by the Shire of Merredin to perform that role, or the

person acting in that position as authorised.

**Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer:** That person appointed by the Shire of Merredin to perform that role, or the person acting in that position as authorised.

**Fire Control Officer:** A person appointed by the Shire of Merredin to perform that role, or a person acting in that position as authorised.

**Fire Danger Rating:** A rating system used to indicate how difficult it will be to control or suppress a fire. It is based on weather and environmental conditions including temperature, humidity, wind and fuel conditions. There are four ratings, plus “no rating” when there is low risk:

Fire Danger Rating	Fire Behaviour Index
No rating	0 to 11
Moderate	12 to 23
High	24 to 49
Extreme	50 to 99
Catastrophic	100-plus

**Harvest Ban:** A ban imposed on the harvest or processing of a crop by agricultural machinery during the Restricted or Prohibited Burning Period due to dangerous fire weather conditions.

**Prohibited Burning Period:** The time of year during which it is declared by the Minister for Emergency Services under section 17 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* to be unlawful to set fire to the bush and:

- Includes any extension of those times made, or any further times imposed, under that section in respect of the whole of that district or part of that district, in which that land is situated; but
- Does not include any period by which those times are reduced, or for which those times are suspended, under that section in respect of the whole of the district or part of the district, in which that land is situated or in respect of that land in particular.

**Restricted Burning Period:** A period where burning is restricted by the issuing of a burning permit.

**Senior Management Group (SMG):** Any person currently employed by the Shire of Merredin as the CEO or an Executive Manager.

**Vehicle Movement Ban:** A ban placed on the movement of any self propelled vehicles, plant or equipment on a property, except for access to a home or shed and the emergency watering/feeding of stock using a vehicle during the Restricted or Prohibited Burning period.

**Volunteer Firefighter:** Any person not employed as a firefighter who is contributing to firefighting operations on an active fireground, irrespective of whether they are formally registered as a volunteer firefighter with DFES.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Fire Control Officers are responsible for seeking Shire approval before carrying out hazard reduction burns, ensuring that all Shire conditions on such burns are met, and ensuring the hazard reduction burns are carried out safely.

The Emergency Services Officer is responsible for the approval of brigade hazard reduction burns.

The custodian of this Policy is the Executive Manager Strategy and Community.

## 7. MONITOR AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by the Executive Manager Strategy and Community and Emergency Services Officer every two years.

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