

### **6.1.19 Fire Protection**

#### Aim

Minimise the risk from Bushfire to life, property and community assets.

#### Objectives

- a. To control the location and use of land to avoid placing inappropriate developments in fire hazardous areas.
- b. To guide the siting of development on properties to minimise risk from bushfire.
- c. To ensure the implementation of appropriate fire management measures to mitigate bushfire.
- d. To ensure that all buildings by virtue of materials and design are reasonably fire resistant.

#### Application

This policy applies to development of land in the Special Rural, Special Residential, Short Stay Residential, Special Use and Multiple Occupancy Zones and to 'AA' uses in the Rural Zone.

#### Policy

##### 1. Location

Council shall have regard to the suitability of particular areas for development, and shall consider the potential fire hazard when assessing such proposals.

In considering the suitability of a particular site for development, the potential fire hazard may be assessed according to the following factors:

- Frequency of fire season
- Length of fire season
- Slope - steepness
- Vegetation; ground cover
- Vegetation; average annual dry state
- Fire history
- Density/type of development or land use
- Access to the site and surrounding area
- Fire fighting services and facilities
- Characteristics of abutting sites
- Direction of prevailing summer winds

2. Submission Detail

Applications for rezoning and development of land in rural areas shall incorporate a strategy for fire protection, unless the Council and other relevant authorities determine otherwise. The strategy shall incorporate a fire management plan and written fire management proposal.

3. Siting and Design of Buildings

Location of building(s) on a property may impact on its safety during a wild fire. In determining a planning application Council shall therefore have regard to the following;

- a. Council may require modifications to the siting, design and construction of buildings to comply with fire protection objectives.
- b. Where the site abuts forested areas and Department of CALM estate a minimum setback of up to 100 metres may be required to protect from falling trees.

4. Fuel Reduction

Research (5) has shown that high fuel loads within 50 - 100 metres of development, presence of combustible objects near houses and presence of trees over 5 metres tall within 40 metres of a house are three out of the six most significantly important causes of house loss due to bushfire.

Council shall therefore have regard to the need to reduce fuel levels around buildings, and in doing so shall consider imposing the following standards:

- a. Recommended fuel loadings shall be less than 8.5t/ha Jarrah (or Jarrah/Marri) and 19t/ha for Karri (or mixed Karri/Marri types) prior to any development taking place. Further, fuel loadings shall be required to be maintained below the recommended levels at all times in the Fuel Reduction Zone.
- b. All dead/dead top trees or hollow butted trees that pose a significant threat to wild fire control shall be removed within 100 metres of the property boundary where it abuts Department of CALM estate or other forested areas where the potential fire hazard is considered high.
- c. All flammable material for up to a minimum distance of 20 metres shall be cleared around each habitable building.

- d. A Fuel Reduction Zone of up to 200 metres from the forest edge may be required.

5. Access

In assessing any proposal Council shall have regard to access for fire fighters and egress for residents. This refers to not only access within the site but access to and from the site. The following performance standards shall apply when considering access:

- a. There should be a minimum of one trafficable exit road from the site in addition to the principle access road. This shall be required to be maintained in a trafficable condition.
- b. Exit roads shall be sign posted as 'fire exit' whilst dead end or non trafficable roads shall be sign posted 'no through road'.
- c. Access to water points should be suitable for larger fire trucks, and shall be sign posted 'water point'.
- d. Maximum grades of tracks shall not exceed 15% (1:7. and preferably not more than 10% (1:10).
- e. Access roads shall be so located, formed and constructed to minimise soil erosion and to control runoff.

6. Fire Breaks

Firebreaks shall be strategically located to enable safe and unobstructed access to and from fire. To ensure this is possible the following performance standards shall apply:

- a. Strategic fire breaks may only be fenced where a gate of 3.0 metres minimum length is provided. Gates across strategic fire breaks must be able to be opened easily and shall be left unlocked at all times.
- b. Minimum width of strategic firebreaks shall be 5.0 metres unless specified otherwise.
- c. Firebreaks shall be located, formed and constructed to minimise soil erosion and control runoff.

7. Water Supplies

Water supplies for fire fighting purposes shall be provided to the satisfaction and specification of Council and the Bushfires Board. In particular, regard shall be had to a gravity fed system for water supply.

8. Equipment

Council shall ensure fire fighting equipment and services are increased and upgraded as a consequence of any proposal increasing the population and buildings in an area. Council shall consult with the Bushfires Board and Bushfire Advisory Committee to determine what equipment and services are required in the general location of the subdivision/development.

In the case of holiday accommodation, Council shall require a suitable size dry chemical fire extinguisher for emergency domestic use be provided in each habitable building used for holiday accommodation, where it is considered the fire risk necessitates this.

9. Western Power

Underground power may be required to be provided to subdivisions and developments in forested areas.

10. Education

- a. Copies of the brochure 'Siting and Design Guidelines With Relation to Fire Protection in Special Rural Zones' (June 1991. and "The Home Owners Bushfire Survival Manual' (September 1989) shall be put on display and made available at the front counter of the Council offices.
- b. An 'In Case of Fire Procedures' manual shall be provided and displayed in each habitable dwelling used for holiday accommodation.

REFERENCES

1. State Planning Commission (July 1990). 'Guidelines - Planning for Better Bushfire Protection'.
2. Department of Conservation and Land Management (WA) (2nd August, 1991).  
  
'Discussion Paper - Fire Management for Special Rural Subdivision (Adjacent To Near CALM Managed Lands) Within the Southern Forest Region'.
3. Bushfires Board (June 1991).  
'Siting and Design Guidelines With Relation to Fire Protection in Special Rural Zones'.

4. Department of Planning and Urban Development of WA  
Bushfires Board of WA (September 1989). 'The Home Owners Bushfire Survival Manual'.
5. NSW Department of Bushfire Services (May 1991)  
'Planning for Bushfire Protection'.

**RENUMBERED 23 OCTOBER 2003**

**The Administration of this policy has been delegated by the Chief  
Executive Officer to:**