

FIRE PREVENTION NOTICES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY DID I RECEIVE A FIRE PREVENTION NOTICE?

Councils Municipal Fire Prevention Officers have recently assessed your property for fire hazards and determined that you need to reduce fuel loads on your property to reduce the potential fire risk.

Although you have received a Fire Prevention Notice, we understand that most property owners are already planning to manage their grass and fine fire fuels as part of their normal maintenance program.

WHY DOES COUNCIL ISSUE FIRE PREVENTION NOTICES?

Under the Country Fire Authority Act 1958, Council has a legal obligation to reduce the risk of fire for the community. Council Municipal Fire Prevention Officers are authorised to inspect and issue Fire Prevention Notices within the municipality. The works detailed on the Fire Prevention Notice are designed to reduce radiant heat, fire intensity and ember attack and minimise direct flame impact on your home, and if relevant, your neighbour's home. They are consistent with CFA guidelines for protecting your home, however there are no guarantees of personal or property safety when it comes to fire.

CAN I REMOVE TREES AND SHRUBS?

The Fire Prevention Notice does **not** authorise you to remove shrubs and trees. If you wish to remove trees and shrubs, contact Councils Parks and Gardens Department for advice.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

You are required to do the works detailed on the Notice. This means cleaning up and reducing fine fuels such as bark, leaves, twigs and long grass either as a fire break or the entire property as directed on the Notice. Reducing the fine fuels assists to reduce the intensity of a fire if it occurs, as fine fuels are responsible for the major increase in fire intensity and spread. The required works must be carried out by the completion date and then you must maintain your property in this state for the duration of the Fire Danger Period.

WHEN IS THE FIRE DANGER PERIOD?

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) introduces Fire Restrictions known as the 'Fire Danger Period' for all private land in Victoria over the summer period each year. During this time residents are not permitted to burn off in the open air. The start and end dates for the Fire Danger Period change yearly depending on the season, however it normally operates from November to April. Declaration dates for Horsham Wimmera Shire can be found on the CFA website: www.cfa.vic.gov.au

WHAT IF I HAVE ALREADY CUT MY GRASS SINCE THE INSPECTION DATE?

There is a short delay between the Inspection date and the issuing of the Fire Prevention Notice. If you have already completed what is required on the notice, then you don't need to worry. Just ensure you monitor and maintain your property in this condition throughout the Fire Danger Period.

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MY ROADSIDE IS A FIRE HAZARD – WHAT CAN I DO?

Councils Fire Prevention Program focuses on protecting your house and outbuildings by providing a fuel reduced area around these assets as per CFA guidelines.

Council may maintain nature strips that are considered a fire risk within the township area to reduce fire hazards, with one treatment per fire season.

Council has a strategic roadside plan to aid access for the community and works with the CFA to conduct roadside fuel reduction burning in strategic areas. This creates fuel-reduced zones to help control wildfires.

WHAT IF I AM GROWING FOR HAY OR FEEDING STOCK ON THE PROPERTY?

If you intend to cut your paddock for hay or put stock on your paddock, please contact a Municipal Fire Prevention Officer to discuss your intentions before the compliance date on your Notice. You may still be required to cut a fire break or complete other works as directed.

WHAT IF I THINK MY NEIGHBOUR'S LAND IS A FIRE HAZARD?

Contact Council if you are concerned about a property. We will inspect the property and issue a Fire Prevention Notice if required. If you know the land belongs to the Crown or the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) please contact 136 186 as Council cannot issue Fire Prevention Notices to State Government agencies.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DON'T COMPLY WITH THE NOTICE?

Municipal Fire Prevention Officers conduct follow-up inspections on properties that have received a Fire Prevention Notice to ensure the works have been completed by the due date.

Almost 100% of properties issued with a notice achieve compliance with fire prevention notices when issued. However, if the required works have not been carried out to the satisfaction of the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer, a contractor will be engaged to carry out the works. Costs will be passed back to the property owner, including additional administration fees. You may also receive a fine.

Council will attempt to contact you prior to undertaking works once the Fire Prevention Notice has been issued, however this cannot be guaranteed.

WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE NOTICE OR NEED AN EXTENSION?

Contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer on 03 5382 9777 to discuss your situation **before** the compliance date on your Notice.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- 🔥 Call us on 03 5382 9777
- 🔥 Visit Councils Emergency Management webpage: <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Our-Services/Emergency-Management/Fire>
- 🔥 Visit the CFA webpage: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare>