

LIGHTING FIRES IN QUEENSLAND

Fire can be a useful tool for managing weeds, pastures, and reducing bushfire risk. Fire can also be used to achieve ecological outcomes such as the regeneration of some plant species or the improvement of habitat for wildlife. However, if used inappropriately, fire can endanger lives, properties and the environment.

Lighting fires on your property is regulated under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (the Act)* which is the principal legislation for fire prevention and fire protection in Queensland. The Act provides the authorisation for the use of fire throughout the state. You may require a permit to light fire to use fire on your property for debris removal (stack burn) or to burn a larger area for hazard reduction, pasture management, or other land management purposes.

Note: Smoke from your fire can negatively impact on your community and neighbours and can contribute to local and regional air pollution issues. Many Local Government Authorities have local laws in place that restrict or prohibit the lighting of fires in part or all of the local government area. Always check with your local Council if you can use fire on your property.

Contact Us

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As a landholder in Queensland you are ultimately responsible for managing fire on your land. The following information provides advice for those planning to burn vegetation or use fire on their property.

Remember - Your fire – your responsibility!

www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au



RFS 00011 05/20A



Do you need a Permit to Light Fire?

A Permit to Light Fire (permit) is required for most fires and must be obtained from your local Fire Warden to use fire on your land. There are significant liabilities and penalties for failing to obtain a permit or failing to comply with permit conditions.

The aim of a permit is to ensure your fire will be managed safely and may include certain conditions on the way the fire is lit and maintained. It also informs fire services on when and where you intend to burn ensuring that adequate measures are in place so that fires remain under control.

A permit application can be made through your local Fire Warden by using an application form, available from your Fire Warden or the Rural Fire Service (RFS) website.

Before applying for a permit you need to make reasonable steps to contact your neighbours and inform them of your intent to apply, allowing a reasonable timeframe for your neighbours to contact the Fire Warden to lodge an objection or to assist with a more coordinated property burn.

Following receipt of your application, the Fire Warden will assess the intended burn and if a permit is issued, impose a range of conditions to reduce risk or nuisance to people, property, and the environment. The Fire Warden can also refuse an application if they believe that appropriate safety measures cannot be reasonably achieved, or if neighbours have not been given enough time to raise any concerns about the intended fire.



Fires that do not require a permit

Under *the Act* there are a number of fires that normally do not require a permit. Some fires may be prohibited in your local government area under a local law or other legislation. If your local Council have fire restrictions in place contact your local Fire Warden to discuss your fire management options.

Providing that adequate precautions are taken to prevent the spread of fire, the following fires may be lit without a permit:

- Fires less than two (2) metres in all directions (these fires are not exempt during fire bans and you must obtain a permit from a fire warden).
- BBQs and campfires (for cooking), enclosed in a fireplace, constructed to prevent the escape of fire or embers.
- A fire lit for the purpose of burning the carcass of a beast.
- A fire lit at a sawmill for the purpose of burning sawdust or other residue resulting from the operation of a sawmill.
- A cane fire may also be subject to a notification and may be lit under certain conditions.

Note: You can find your local Fire Warden by using the Fire Warden Finder on the RFS website or by contacting the local RFS Area Office.

Note: if you plan to mechanically clear native vegetation to burn, you may need to obtain a separate permit for clearing vegetation under Queensland's Vegetation Management Laws.

Fire Bans

If there is a period of extreme fire danger where predicted conditions and weather forecasts indicate that fires may be difficult to control and pose a danger to communities, or if there is a rising fire emergency, a local fire ban or a State of Fire Emergency may be declared.

A **Local Fire Ban** can be declared over part or all of a local government area and generally prohibits the lighting of all or certain types of fires.

A **State of Fire Emergency** can be declared for part or all of the state. This declaration imposes stricter restrictions and prohibitions on lighting fires and can prohibit the use of certain tools and equipment that can pose a fire risk. When, declared it is published in the Queensland Government Gazette advertising the timeframe of the declaration and the areas to which the emergency situation applies. This ban remains in force until cancelled.

These bans can impose the following restrictions:

- The lighting of fires in the declared fire ban areas may be prohibited, subject to any special conditions or exemptions.
- Open fires may be prohibited (Gas and electric barbecues may be used).
- Permits to Light Fire issued in the declared area may be cancelled.
- Other special conditions (or exemptions) may be imposed.

Where can I find information on fire bans?

- Check the RFS website at www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au
- Call the Fire Ban Information Line on 1800 020 440
- Check the weather forecast and warnings at www.bom.gov.au
- Monitor your local radio station, television channel and newspaper.

Further Information

These brochures will provide you with additional information that will assist you in safely using fire on your property and are available from RFS Area Offices or the RFS website.

- Applying to Light Fires in Queensland
- Obligations and Responsibilities of Permit Holders