

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES

Increasing the safety of you and your family in the event of a bushfire requires a range of options. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) recommends that all people living in bushfire prone areas have a personal Bushfire Survival Plan.

When a bushfire threatens, whether your decision is to leave early or stay and defend your property, you should use a Neighbourhood Safer Place only as a place of last resort.

A Neighbourhood Safer Place is a local open space or building where people may gather, as a last resort, to seek shelter from bushfire. Use of a Neighbourhood Safer Place may be your contingency plan when:

- » your Bushfire Survival Plan has failed
- » your plan was to stay but the extent of the fire means your home cannot withstand the impact of the fire and it is not a safe place to shelter, or
- » the fire has escalated to an extreme or catastrophic level and evacuation is your safest option.

The main purpose of a Neighbourhood Safer Place is to provide some level of protection to communities from the effects of a bushfire. Your Neighbourhood Safer Place will not guarantee safety in all circumstances.

The following limitations need to be considered if you plan to use one as a last resort:

- » Firefighters may not be present if they are involved in the operational response at other locations.
- » Neighbourhood Safer Places do not cater for animals or pets.
- » Neighbourhood Safer Places do not provide meals or amenities.
- » Neighbourhood Safer Places may not provide shelter from the elements, particularly flying embers.

If you have special needs you should give consideration to what assistance you may require at a Neighbourhood Safer Place.

Although QFES cannot guarantee an immediate presence during a bushfire, every effort will be made to provide support as soon as resources are available. As part of your Bushfire Survival Plan, you should identify the travel time and distance to your identified Neighbourhood Safer Place. You should update your plan every year prior to the bushfire season and confirm that your identified Neighbourhood Safer Place has not changed location. You should not drive through fire affected areas to get to your Neighbourhood Safer Place.

Visit the Rural Fire Service website and click on your local government area to view the designated Neighbourhood Safer Place locations in your area. If there is no Neighbourhood Safer Place currently identified for your area, continue to monitor the website for updates.

Once you have arrived at an Open Space Neighbourhood Safer Place, some actions to consider include:

- » Continually listen/seek/monitor further information in relation to the fire by whatever means of communication you may have (radio, mobile phone, internet etc)
- » As fire approaches – seek protection from radiant heat and embers as best you can. Attempt to cover any exposed skin with blankets/clothing. You should lie flat on the ground during the passage of the fire front.
- » Remain vigilant for possible new fire fronts from other directions.

Remember to complete your Bushfire Survival Plan to ensure that you and your family are prepared and know what to do in the event of a bushfire. For information about how to develop your own Bushfire Survival Plan visit www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au.

