

Hazard reduction burning on private land

Frequently Asked Questions

What is hazard reduction burning?

Hazard reduction burning, prescribed burning, controlled burning and planned burning are interchangeable terms that describe burning in a predetermined area for the management and control of fuel loads.

Hazard reduction burning mitigates the severity of wildfires/ bushfires and reduces the potential impacts to the community and the environment by burning selected vegetation and ground fuels such as leaf litter, grasses and Grass Trees/Balgas.

These types of fires are generally 'cool' and are undertaken in appropriate weather conditions so that the fire burns slowly at low intensity.

What are fuel loads?

Fuel loads are the amount of combustible material in an area and can accumulate over time. Dead material is more flammable than live material and includes the dry dead skirts on Grass Trees/Balgas, dead grasses and dead leaves and bark that fall from trees and shrubs. Fuel loads are expressed in terms of tonnes per hectare (t/ha).

Hazard reduction burning can reduce fuel loads providing increased safety for nearby residents and assets.

Can I burn garden refuse or rubbish within the City of Joondalup?

No. The burning of garden refuse or rubbish is not permitted at any time within the City under the provisions of section 24G of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*. This includes burning garden refuse or rubbish in an incinerator, on the ground, or by using any other apparatus, device or home made construction.

Who can conduct a hazard reduction burn for bushfire mitigation purposes on private land?

Landowners can apply to the City for a permit to burn. However, as part of assessing the application, the City will take the following into consideration:

- Size of the land;
- Objectives of the burn;
- Experience of burn operators; and

- Appropriate planning for the burn, including risk assessment, traffic management, smoke considerations, weather conditions, and environmental impacts.

How do I obtain a permit to burn for bushfire mitigation purposes?

Permit to burn applications for bushfire mitigation purposes must be made in writing to the City and will be assessed on an individual basis. The City is under no obligation to issue a permit to burn.

A permit to burn will not be issued during the City's Prohibited Burning Times from 15 December to 31 March inclusive each year.

If a Total Fire Ban has been declared by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, any burning permits that residents or landowners have are fully suspended until the ban is over.

What are prohibited and restricted burning times?

Prohibited Burning Times refer to the times of the year during which it is declared by the Minister, under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, to be unlawful to set fire to the bush.

The prohibited burning period for the City of Joondalup is between 15 December to 31 March inclusive, each year.

Restricted Burning Times refer to the times of the year during which it is declared by the Minister, under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, to be unlawful to set fire to the bush except in accordance with a permit to burn.

The restricted burning period for the City of Joondalup is in effect all year round from 1 January to 31 December.

What is a Total Fire Ban?

A Total Fire Ban is declared by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services on days of extreme weather or when widespread fires are seriously stretching firefighting resources. The need for the ban is assessed throughout the day and the ban may be revoked if weather conditions ease.

Check the Emergency WA website after 6.00pm to see if a ban has been declared for the next day.

When a Total Fire Ban is declared, it prohibits the lighting of any fires in the open air and any other activities that may start a fire.

Any burning permits that residents or landowners have are fully suspended until the ban is over.

For more information on Total Fire Bans, visit DFES.

How do I check if there is a Total Fire Ban in place?

Use any of the following to check:

- Visit the Emergency WA website [emergency.wa.gov.au](https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au);
- Visit the Department of Fire and Emergency Services website [dfes.wa.gov.au/totalfirebans](https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/totalfirebans);
- Call 13 DFES **133 337**;
- Call the Total Fire Ban Hotline **1800 709 355**;
- Follow the Department of Fire and Emergency Services on Facebook or Twitter;
- Listen to ABC local radio and other media outlets; and
- Look out for Main Roads WA variable message signs.

Will a hazard reduction burn create a lot of smoke?

A hazard reduction burn will create smoke; however, as part of the burn planning there are appropriate procedures to reduce the impact of smoke. Burns should only be carried out:

- During mild, cooler weather conditions;
- When the soil has a higher moisture content;
- During low wind conditions and with suitable wind direction to minimise impact to the community; and
- As low intensity 'cool' burns.

What can I do to minimise the impact of smoke to me and my family?

To minimise the impact of smoke the following are recommended:

- Shut doors and windows;
- Turn off air-conditioners;
- People with asthma, pre-existing respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses and conditions exacerbated by smoke should take precautions in line with their medical advice; and/or
- Visit the Department of Health website for more information at [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)

Who do I contact for further information?

For further information on hazard reduction burning on private land please contact City Rangers on **1300 655 860** or email info@joondalup.wa.gov.au