



Department of
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Western
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Commission

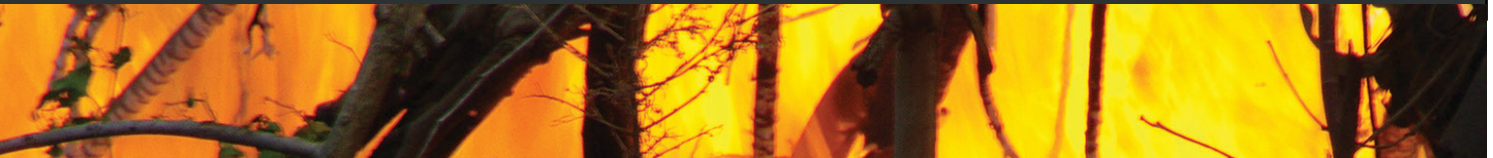
INACTIVE

REPEALED

18 November 2024

PLANNING IN BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

BUSHFIRE POLICY FRAMEWORK



SPP 3.7
Planning in
Bushfire
Prone Areas

Guidelines for
Planning in
Bushfire
Prone Areas

FACTSHEET

Version 3, April 2016

BUILDING A HOUSE IN OR NEAR A CITY OR TOWN

Development assessment requirements for a single house or ancillary dwelling on a site 1,100m² or greater in the Perth, Peel, South West or Great Southern regions and within 50kms of a regional city or town.

If you are proposing to build a single house or ancillary dwelling (e.g. granny flat) on a site that is designated as bushfire prone on the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas*, and your property is covered by a local planning scheme and equal to or greater than 1,100m²; you will be required to undertake a BAL assessment before you can commence development.

WHAT IS A BAL ASSESSMENT AND WHAT DOES THE BAL RATING MEAN

A Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessment is an assessment set out in *Australian Standard 3959 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-Prone Areas* (AS 3959) which determines the BAL rating for a proposed building.

A BAL is one way of determining a proposed building's potential for bushfire exposure and is used to establish the construction requirements you can use to improve the protection of your building from bushfire attack.

BAL ratings include:

- **BAL-LOW**

If the BAL assessment indicates that the development is rated BAL-LOW then there are no further bushfire planning or building requirements.

- **BAL-12.5 to BAL-29**

If the rating is between BAL-12.5 and BAL-29 you will need to build your house to the corresponding standard set out in the Building Code of Australia.

- **BAL-40 or BAL-Flame Zone**

If the rating is BAL-40 or BAL-Flame Zone (BAL-FZ) then you will need to lodge a development application with your local government. The development application will need to address the bushfire protection criteria in the *Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas* with the aim of achieving BAL-29 or less for the site. You will then need to build to the corresponding construction standard set out in the Building Code of Australia.

DO I NEED A BAL ASSESSMENT

You can use the '*What do I need to do*' tool to determine if you need a BAL assessment. Alternatively, you can follow these three easy steps to determine if you need to undertake a BAL assessment for planning purposes:

1. check to see if your property is located in a designated bushfire prone area;
2. determine if the lot size is 1,100m² or greater; and
3. check to see if your property is located in an area covered by a local planning scheme.

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STEP 1: CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN A DESIGNATED BUSHFIRE PRONE AREA

The bushfire planning requirements only apply to properties in designated bushfire prone areas.

You should check if your property is located within a designated bush fire prone area by finding your property on the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas*. If any section of your property is shaded pink on the map then it is designated as being bush fire prone.

If your property has been designated bushfire prone for 4 months or more you may be required to undertake a BAL assessment. You will be able to find the designation date by typing in your address in the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas.

STEP 2: DETERMINE IF THE LOT SIZE IS 1,100M² OR GREATER

The bushfire planning requirements only apply if you are proposing to build a single house or ancillary dwelling on a lot 1,100m² or greater. You should check your Certificate of Title to confirm the size of your property.

If your property is in a bushfire prone area and equal to or greater than 1,100m², the requirement to undertake a BAL assessment may apply to you.

However, even if your property is less than 1,100m², you may still need a BAL assessment or have other bushfire building requirements under the Building Code of Australia. You can find further information on building in bushfire prone areas by visiting the Building Commission's website www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission.

STEP 3: CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN AN AREA COVERED BY A LOCAL PLANNING SCHEME

The bushfire planning requirements only apply to properties which are covered by a local planning scheme.

You should check with your local government to find out if your property is covered by a local planning scheme.

If your property is in a bushfire prone area, equal to or greater than 1,100m² and covered by a local planning scheme, the requirement to undertake a BAL assessment will apply to you.

However, even if your property is not covered by a local planning scheme, you may still need a BAL assessment or have other bushfire building requirements under the Building Code of Australia. You can find further information on building in bushfire prone areas by visiting the Building Commission's website www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission.

BAL ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

If a BAL Contour Map already exists for your lot, you may be able to use this in place of undertaking the BAL assessment. If one exists, you may be able to obtain a copy of the BAL Contour Map and accompanying compliance certificate or report from the developer of the subdivision or a previous owner.

Where the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas* identifies a property as being within a bushfire prone area but the property is no longer within 100 metres of bushfire prone vegetation you may be able to complete a BAL assessment (basic). This may be where the surrounding land has been cleared to create new residential lots since the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas* was released. See Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas fact sheet: BAL assessment (basic) for further details.

In all other circumstances a BAL assessment will need to accompany any development or building approvals.

WHO CAN DO A BAL ASSESSMENT

It is strongly recommend that you use an accredited Level 1 BAL Assessor or an accredited Bushfire Planning Practitioner to undertake your BAL assessment.

The Fire Protection Association Australia (FPAA) provides guidance on suitably qualified consultants offering services in Western Australia. You will be able to find a list of accredited Level 1 BAL assessors on the FPAA's website www.fpaa.com.au.

For properties not within the Perth, Peel, South West and great Southern Regions, more than 50kms from a gazetted townsite refer to the Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas fact sheet: Building a house in a remote area.

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

If your BAL assessment indicates BAL-40 or BAL-FZ, you will require development approval. Your development application should include a copy of your BAL assessment and a statement/report that incorporates the bushfire protection criteria requirements from the *Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas* with the aim of achieving BAL-29 or less for the site. This may be in the form of a Bushfire Management Plan.

You will then need to build to the corresponding construction standard set out in the Building Code of Australia.

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SPECIAL CONTROL AREAS

You should consult your local government if your lot is located in any of the following local government areas – City of Armadale, City of Busselton, City of Cockburn, Shire of Mundaring and Shire of Kalamunda. These local governments have specific rules, through special control areas relating to bushfire and may have additional requirements.

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find further information about when a BAL assessment is required by visiting the Department of Planning's website www.planning.wa.gov.au/bushfire.

You can also find information on building in bushfire prone areas by visiting the Building Commission's website www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission or by contacting your local government.

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