

PERMITS TO LIGHT FIRE

Under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (the Act)*, it is illegal to light a fire that is not exempt by legislation without an authorised Permit to Light Fire (permit). Lighting a fire without a permit or not adhering to permit conditions can attract serious penalties, including on the spot fines or prosecution.

A permit helps ensure fire is used safely, responsibly, and under conditions aimed to minimise the impact on people, property, and the environment. A permit sets out the rules around how a fire is lit and maintained and lets the fire service know when you are using fire on your property.

As a permit holder it is expected that you understand and meet your obligations on using fire in a safe and responsible manner.

Protection from liability - For fires that require a permit, individuals will not incur any liability under *the Act* or common law for any loss, injury or damage caused by the fire providing they comply with the conditions and directions of the permit unless it can be shown that they acted recklessly or maliciously.

FIRE PERMITS AND FIRE BANS

Bushfires are more likely to spread and cause damage on days when the weather is very hot, dry, and windy. These conditions make for very high to extreme fire danger days. To reduce the risk of fires damaging or destroying life, property, and the environment Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) may declare a local Fire Ban or during extreme fire danger conditions, a State of Fire Emergency. While a ban is active the lighting of fire may be prohibited and any permits issued are automatically cancelled.


All Fire Bans and State of Fire Emergency declarations are widely broadcast locally and on the QFES website and social media.

Rural Fire Service Area Office Contacts

Barcaldine	(07) 4651 1190
Bundaberg	(07) 4154 6120
Burnett	(07) 4172 8700
Caboolture	(07) 5420 3733
Cairns	(07) 4232 5468
Caloundra	(07) 5293 4206
Darling Downs	(07) 4592 5306
Emerald	(07) 4843 9020
Gladstone	(07) 4899 2200
Innisfail	(07) 4063 4004
Mackay	(07) 4967 4357
Maryborough	(07) 4122 0337
North West	(07) 4796 9082
Rockhampton	(07) 4932 8129
South Coast	(07) 5587 4101
Townsville	(07) 4796 9082
Warrego	(07) 4578 0045
West Moreton	(07) 3294 4944
Western Rivers	(07) 4596 9403

OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERMIT HOLDERS

 @QldFES

 @QldFireandEmergencyServices

 www.qfes.qld.gov.au

RFS00012 05/20B

Information for holders of a
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Permit to Light Fire.



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WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?


A permit is a legal document that can only be issued by a Fire Warden or Chief Fire Warden in their area of responsibility. It authorises an individual to light, maintain, and use fire during a set period of time on the land described in accordance with the permit conditions. A permit can be amended, cancelled or suspended at any time.

A permit is only issued for burning vegetation including large area burns for hazard reduction, managing grazing lands, timber production management, weed control, and burning accumulated vegetation. You cannot burn any materials that are toxic or hazardous such as rubber tyres, plastics, and paint. In addition, the fire must not cause air pollution by producing excessive amounts of smoke.

As a permit holder you need to ensure you are aware of any fire bans or fire restrictions that could potentially restrict or prohibit the lighting of a fire or clearing of native vegetation.

Permit holders:

- must have the permit in their possession before lighting the fire and may need to produce a copy if requested
- must ensure that someone with the ability and resources to extinguish the fire is in attendance at all times while the fire is alight
- must comply with all conditions detailed on the permit, and
- cannot alter anything on a permit without the consent of the Fire Warden.



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.

WHO DO I NEED TO NOTIFY?

As a permit holder you would have already contacted your neighbours before submitting your application to the Fire Warden. However, it is also good practice to let your neighbours know before you light the fire so they can make arrangements to avoid smoke, move stock, or undertake any other preparations they deem necessary.

For all permitted burns, you also need to contact:

- The local QFES Fire Communications Centre (Firecom). Just before you light the fire call the free call 1800 number written on the permit. Firecom is responsible for taking reports of fires (Triple Zero calls) and allocating resources accordingly. They need to know of any planned fires in an area to avoid unnecessary responses.
- The local Rural Fire Brigade, if identified as a condition on the permit. As they are likely to be the first response unit to be aware of the fire.
- The Fire Warden may also include a condition that requires you to notify certain parties of your intent to burn, if this is the case, you are obligated to do so.

WHEN DO I LIGHT THE FIRE?

Permit holders must follow the conditions of the permit when lighting and maintaining a fire, throughout the entire burn.

If no time restrictions are detailed on the permit, you can choose the most suitable time. To ensure you maintain control throughout the burn, you need to be aware of the weather conditions for the duration of the planned fire, not only at the time of lighting.

Wind, temperature, humidity, and rainfall are weather elements that affect the behaviour of bushfires. These variables are used by fire agencies to determine a Fire Danger Rating (FDR) which relates to the difficulty of controlling and putting out any fires which may occur.

Check the local weather forecast prior to lighting to ensure the current and forecast conditions will not be outside those detailed on the permit.

Visit the Bureau of Meteorology website at www.bom.gov.au and use the 'MetEye' application to access current and forecast weather conditions for your location, including temperature, relative humidity, and wind strength and direction.

MANAGING THE FIRE

It is your responsibility to ensure that any fire you light does not negatively impact other persons, properties, or the environment. As a permit holder, the Fire Warden is satisfied with how you plan to manage, contain, and control the fire. Make sure you follow the plan and abide by all permit conditions. It is important to ensure your fire doesn't smoke out your neighbours or become a nuisance or health issue. Consider where the wind will take the smoke of your fire and who it is going to affect.

If you are concerned the fire may get out of control or escape from its boundaries, you must:

- take all reasonable steps to extinguish or control the fire, and
- as soon as practical, report the fire by calling Triple Zero (000).

HOW LONG DO I SUPERVISE THE FIRE?

You need to supervise the fire for as long as necessary to ensure that it does not escape. Your permit states: "After burning, the perimeter of the burn must be made safe and the fire patrolled until there is no longer any risk of the fire escaping". You can cease patrolling when the burnt area is cool, with no remaining heat source.

If you are at all concerned about the behaviour of the fire, act early and call Triple Zero (000)



Visit the QFES website for further information at www.qfes.qld.gov.au