

Veldfire information sheet for Home Owners:

Reducing Veldfire Risk

- The nature of the veldfire problem
- What can you do to reduce your exposure to veldfire?
- What can you expect during a veldfire?
- How aware and prepared are you for a veldfire?

What is fire?

- Chemical reaction

(Organic substances into simpler inorganic compounds)

- Elements that must be present
 - Oxygen
 - Heat
 - Fuel

Veldfire behavior

- Veldfires all start small but their rate of spread and heat generated (intensity) depends on the weather, the terrain and the condition of the available fuel.
- The more intense the veldfire the more difficult it is to control.
- Spread faster uphill than downhill
- Spread with the wind rather than against it
- Spread faster where the vegetation contains quantities of dead plant material
- Spread faster in fine fuels
- Spread faster where the vegetation canopy is intertwined
- Doubling the fuel load will double the rate of spread, resulting in the intensity of the fire increasing fourfold.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO VELDFIRE?

Some questions to ask yourself:

- Do you live in a veldfire prone area?
- Have you identified and dealt with high fire risks around your property?
- How are you going to stay informed of fire conditions on high fire risk days?
- Do you have an adequate and reliable source of water?
- What assistance can you expect if there is a veldfire?
- If you decide to evacuate what route, will you leave by and what will you take.
- If you decide to stay, do you know how to protect yourself from radiant heat?
- Do you have appropriate clothes ready for everyone if you stay?

Where your house is located on your property is important.

- Some parts of your property will be safer.
- Flat ground is safer.
- Properties situated next to dense vegetation and / or on ridges are at greater risk

Why do houses burn?

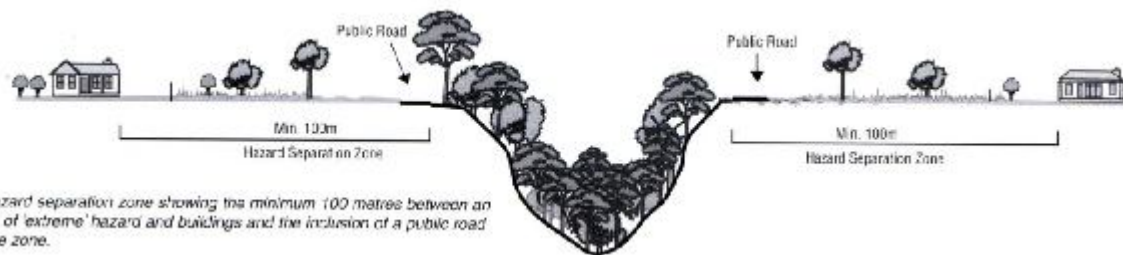
- Burning embers landing on or near the house
- Radiant heat ahead of the fire
- Direct contact from flames





Fuel Reduction

- Reducing fuel will reduce the threat.
- Reduce fuels ahead of the fire season.
- Reduce fuel for at least 20 metres around buildings
- Beware of “fingers” of vegetation that penetrate your property.



A hazard separation zone showing the minimum 100 metres between an area of 'extreme' hazard and buildings and the inclusion of a public road in the zone.

Firebreaks

- Firebreaks are areas of reduced fuel allowing for access of fire fighters and equipment to attack an oncoming fire.
- Do not rely on a firebreak to stop a veldfire.
- Their effectiveness depends on its positioning and regular maintenance.

Preparing firebreaks

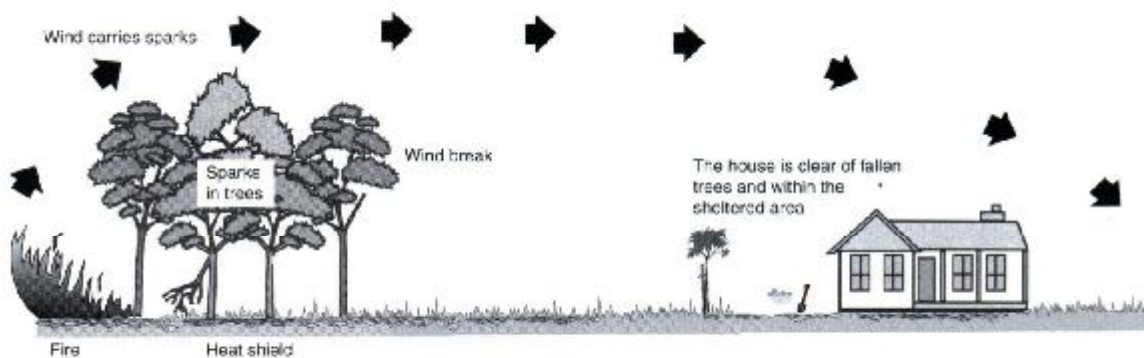
- Ploughing
- Grazing
- Mowing and slashing
- Herbicides
- Burning

Incorporate existing features



Landscaping the garden for fire protection

- Plant approved screening trees and/ or approved fire wise plants.
- Build stone walls, as a radiant heat shield
- Position low fire risk features between houses and the most likely approach direction a veldfire.
- Maintain fire wise plants or gravelled areas beneath trees
- Remove dead trees, branches and leaves



Building protection zones must be maintained around all buildings.

- Prune lower branches to avoid continuous fuel from ground to canopy
- Remove trees close to house or overhanging or touching house
- Ensure trees are a safe distance from buildings and power lines at a distance.
- Avoid dense clumps of trees and remove highly flammable trees