

Bush Fire Planning

Published	August 2020
Review Date	December 2022
Sources	<p>Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2020</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Law, February 2018</p> <p>Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017</p> <p>Guide to the National Quality Framework, January 2020</p> <p>Bush Fire Survival Plan, rfs.nsw.gov.au</p> <p>Managing Emergency Situations in Education and Care Services PSC National Alliance 2012</p> <p>Local Emergency Management Planning, NSW Justice of Emergency Management, retrieved Jan 2019</p> <p>NSW Rural Fire Service, Retrieved September 2020</p>
Consultation	<p>Peter Dyce – Community Safety Officer NSW RFS (Yass) 2013, 2015</p> <p>Mike Cliff – Gundaroo R.F.S Captain 2019</p> <p>Community Early Learning Australia – Consultancy, Review and Development of Emergency Procedures for Family Day Care Sept 2020</p>
Associated Policies	
Relevant Forms	

Policy Statement:

This policy outlines the strategies and procedures that the Service and Educators will plan and rehearse, including information about the conditions under which the Family Day Care Services will close.

Planning for Bush Fires:

Assessment of a Family Day Care Home or Venue

- Conduct an initial risk assessment of each home or venue prior to approval to assist in identifying potential emergencies relevant to the residence or venue
- Contact the local council *or* use a program (such as that available at <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/building-in-a-bush-fire-area/planning-for-bush-fire-protection/bush-fire-prone-land/check-bfpl> for NSW) to determine if a potential Family Day Care home or Venue is in a bush fire prone area
- Educators with homes or Venues in Bush Fire Prone Areas will implement Council Bush Fire Safety requirements as instructed in each jurisdiction
- Conduct annual risk assessments for each educator’s home or venue to review and refine emergency and evacuation procedures for their service, including medical emergency situations
- Provide each Educator with support and training in the establishment of Bush Fire procedures for their residence or venue based on the information in the Service’s current policy
- CCEL will identify these family day care educators in Bush Fire Prone Areas clearly in the register of family day care educators

Educator Training

- Discuss the National Education and Care Law and Regulations in relation to emergency management and Bush Fires in child care services
- New Educator Training includes explanation and discussion about the Bush Fire Policies and Procedure.
- Associated policies to be provided to new Educators to guide the development of their Emergency Plans and Procedures
- Educators in Bush Fire Prone areas are required to seek further advice and training from local councils and authorised services including Rural Fire Service NSW, in their [Guide to developing a Bush Fire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan](#), provide the following information to help you best prepare for a bushfire threat.
- Educators in Bush Fire Prone areas must ensure that they are fully informed and able to use the Fire Safety Equipment at their home or venue

Be Aware Of Bush Fire Ratings

- Country Children's Early Learning Family Day Care Homes or Venues in Bush Fire Prone Areas **do not** operate under the Catastrophic Bush Fire Ratings.
- The Approved Provider and Family Day Care Educators will consult with the Rural Fire Service throughout the Bush Fire Season and the Services will not operate if advised to close by the NSW Rural Fire Service.
- Staff and families will be informed the night before a Service closure or at the time the advice is given by the Family Day Care Educator.
- Ensure the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) is checked daily through Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology <http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/forecasts/fire-danger-ratings.shtml>

Risk Assessments

- Items to Consider for the Risk Assessment include:
 - What are your onsite and offsite evacuation procedures? Whole neighbourhoods can be impacted by bush fire and FDC Educators need to identify offsite evacuation sites not in the immediate vicinity of their home or venue
 - What assistance do you need to evacuate the children in your care? If any of your children have special needs or will require assistance to evacuate, services need to have pre-arrangements in place to ensure this assistance can be provided during an emergency. For example, is your car equipped with child restraints ready to leave
 - If you do evacuate, how will parents know where to find their children? Services need to ensure they retain access to parent/carer contact information once offsite. Services should also ensure that parents/carers know what these evacuation procedures are in advance of any emergency
 - What facilities are available at your pre identified evacuation sites?
 - How will you ensure that children are only released to persons authorised to collect them?
 - If it's not safe to evacuate, are you equipped to shelter-in-place at your usual location?
 - What mechanisms do you have in place to ensure the transfer of real-time information, such as weather forecasts, bush fire activity, site closures, and

- emergency operations? Educators need to have arrangements in place to receive and share appropriate information to respond appropriately
- How do you make visitors and contractors aware of your Home or Venue emergency response procedures?

Emergency Evacuation Plans and Procedures

- Family Day Care homes or Venues in Bush Fire Prone Areas must have an Evacuation Plan that has been developed in consultation with an authorised body such as the NSW Rural Fire Service
- Bush Fire Plans and Procedures to be reviewed every 12 months or in the event of an identified issue during rehearsals or a significant change to the home or venue environment

Maintain The Home Or Venue Environment:

- Insurance – maintain adequate levels of home and contents insurance
- Cut back trees or shrubs that are overhanging the house and dispose of cuttings appropriately
- Check the condition of your roof and replace any damaged or missing tiles
- Clean leaves from the roof, gutters and downpipes and fit quality metal leaf guards
- Non-combustible fences are the most effective at withstanding the intense heat generated by a bush fire
- Plant trees and shrubs that are less likely to ignite due to their low oil content
- If you have a water tank, dam or swimming pool, consider installing a Static Water Supply sign (SWS)
- Enclose underfloor areas
- Store wood piles a safe distance away from the house and keep covered
- Have a non-combustible doormat
- Install metal flywire or solid screens to the outside doors and windows
- Check the condition of external walls and cladding, seal any gaps
- Remove and store any flammable liquids away from the house
- Keep garden mulch away from the house
- Keep the grass short
- Ensure you have a hose which is long enough to reach every part of the home
- Make sure the pressure relief valves on LPG cylinders face outwards (so the flame is not directed towards the house)

Contacts

Keep these contacts displayed at the home or Venue and in the Educator Mobile Phone and iPad:

- Emergency Services 000
- RFS Bush Fire Information Line 1800 679 737
- NSW Rural Fire Service Website www.rfs.nsw.gov.au
- Fire Danger Ratings www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fdr
- 'Fires Near Me' App

Prepare Children in Your Care

- Have a service bushfire survival plan and discuss it with your children. Keep it up to date and make sure that all family members know what to do. If your bushfire survival plan affects others, you need to include them as well. Make sure:
 - You have up-to-date contact details (mobile phone number, email address and alternative contact number) for families
 - Review the list of key contacts and people authorised to collect a child with families
 - Practice your bushfire survival plan with the families and children in your care
 - Talk to children in your care about what will happen if a bushfire emergency occurs

Emergency and Protective Equipment

- Bush Fire Equipment at a home or venue in a bush fire prone area will be determined by an authorised company will be placed and secured in accordance with the authorities' advice
- Educators in Bush Fire Prone areas must ensure that they are fully informed and able to use the Fire Safety Equipment at their home or venue
- Ensure there is access to an operating telephone or other similar means of communication (fixed-line telephone, mobile phone, satellite phone, 2-way radio, video conferencing equipment) at all times
- Ensure the home or venue property has water available in water tanks

Evacuation Kit

- The location of the Emergency Kit must be identified on the Emergency Plan
- The contents of the Emergency Kit must be checked at least once a month
- The contents of the kit for Bush Fires should also include any protective equipment based on Authorities advice

The Emergency Kit Must include:

- First Aid Kit
- Water
- Family Contact Information
- Country Children's Early Learning Contact Information
- Emergency contact details for each child
- Child attendance register
- Working torch with spare batteries
- Educator/child medication and medical information
- Mobile phone and charger
- Nappies
- Gloves
- Nappy wipes

Rehearsal of Evacuation Plans and Procedures

- Maintain the emergency and evacuation procedures through the practice of three monthly rehearsals
- Emergency and evacuation rehearsals should take place at various times of the day and week, using a variety of scenarios

- Emergency and evacuation rehearsals must be documented in the Educators Family Day Care Service Operational Diary including:
 - Date and time
 - How many people evacuated
 - Names of children who evacuated
 - Length of time it took to evacuate/conduct the drill
 - Purpose of evacuation drill
 - Problems encountered
 - Additional comments
- Discuss changes that may affect the Emergency and Evacuation Procedures and Plan with an authorised company and CCEL where required

Review of Emergency Plans and Procedures

- Bush fire Plans and Procedures are to be reviewed every 12 months, in the event of an identified issue during rehearsals, or a significant change to the home or venue environment

Continual Monitoring and Improvement:

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Co-ordination Unit Staff accessing current relevant information
- Co-ordination Unit Staff and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

Policy Review

Date Revised	Comments