

Policy Statement

This policy acts to ensure that:

- Strategies and procedures that the Service and Educators will plan and rehearse
- Strategies and procedures are in place for the Service and Educators to follow, including information about the conditions under which a Service will close
- The service is considered to be a safe refuge area and well prepared to withstand a bushfire

Goals

- To have clear procedures in place in the event of a bush fire

Strategies

Planning for Bush Fires

Assessment of a Service, Family Day Care Home or Venue

- Conduct an initial risk assessment of each service, 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>) to determine if a potential Service or Family Day Care home or Venue is in a bush fire prone area
- Services and Family Day Care 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 Service to review and refine emergency and evacuation procedures for their service, including medical emergency situations
- Provide each Service 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 the Family Day Care Educators in Bush Fire Prone Areas clearly in the Register of Family Day Care Educators

Policy Created
February 2016

Policy Last Updated
May 2023

Policy Review Date
May 2025

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
- Family Day Care 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
- Family Day Care 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 Services 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 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 Service or 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 Services 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, for Family Day Care Educators - 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

- Services 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

Family Day Care - 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 service, home or venue and on the Services Mobile Phone and/or iPad:

- Emergency Services 000
- RFS Bush Fire Information Line 1800 679 737
- NSW Rural Fire Service Website
- Fire Danger Ratings
- 'Fires Near Me' App

Prepare Children in Your Care

- Have a service bushfire survival plan and discuss it with the children in your care
- Keep your plan 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 for Family Day Care

- Bush Fire Equipment at a home or venue in a bush fire prone area will be determined by an authorised company and 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 and cups
- 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
- Wipes

Rehearsal of Evacuation Plans and Procedures

- Maintain the emergency and evacuation procedures through conducting practice drills at least every 3 months
- Emergency and evacuation drills 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 Operational Diary including:
 - Date and time
 - How many people evacuated
 - First and last names of children and Educators 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

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Bush Fire Emergency Evacuation

1. Refer to and follow your Bush Fire Survival Plan
2. Listen to Alerts and Fire Danger Ratings
3. Gather children
4. Collect the Emergency Kit
5. Evacuate early as quickly and calmly as possible
6. Evacuate to a Safe House, a Neighbourhood Safer Place
7. Contact Country Children's Early Learning Ph: 0410 529 392
8. Contact the Children's Families

Bush Fire Emergency Lockdown

1. Refer to and follow your Bush Fire Survival Plan
2. Listen to Alerts and Fire Danger Ratings
3. Ensure you have torches ready
4. Shelter in a room that is on the opposite side of the house from the approaching fire and that has a clear exit out of the house
5. Patrol inside the house looking for sparks and embers
6. Drink water to keep hydrated
7. Close doors, windows, vents, blinds and curtains to prevent flames, smoke and embers from entering
8. Put tape across the inside of the windows so they stay in place if they break
9. Shut off gas at the meter or bottle
10. Move furniture away from the windows to prevent any embers that enter the house from igniting
11. Fill baths, sinks and buckets with water for putting out any fires that may start inside
12. Place wet towels around the window and door edges to stop smoke and embers from entering
13. Put a ladder next to the access hole to the roof space so you can check for spot fires

After The Bush Fire Emergency Is Over

- Consider counselling services for anyone affected by the emergency
- Notify Parents of the emergency event prior to the collection of their children
- Review current plan to ensure it still meets all your needs, and make any revisions where necessary

Continual Monitoring and Improvement

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Approved Provider and Coordinators accessing current relevant information
- Approved Provider, Coordinators and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

LINKS TO:

- **Education & Care Services National Law Section 167**
- **Education & Care Services National Regulations 84, 85, 86, 87, 97, 98 168, 169, 170**
- **National Quality Standards/Elements: 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 4.2.1, 7.1.2**
- **Child Safe Standards 1, 2, 3 4, 5, ,6,7, 8, 9, 10**

SOURCES

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations - December 2021](#)
- [Education and care Services National Law - January 2022](#)
- [Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations - October 2017](#)
- [Guide to the National Quality Standard - January 2020](#)
- [Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services](#), NSW Department of Education, 2021
- A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 2020
- ACECQA – FDC Approved Provider compliance responsibilities – October 2017
- [Be You](#)
- My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- The Early Years Learning Framework
- ECA Code of Ethics
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Peter Dyce – Community Safety Officer NSW RFS (Yass), 2013, 2015
- Mike Cliff – Gundaroo RFS Captain 2019
- Community Early Learning Australia – Consultancy, Review and Development of Emergency Procedures for FDC
- [Bush Fire Survival Plan](#)
- Managing Emergency Situations in Education and Care Services PSC National Alliance
- Local Emergency Management Planning, NSW Justice of Emergency Management
- NSW Rural Fire Service

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Child-Safe Environment
- Communication
- Emergency & Critical Incident Post Reporting
- Emergency Evacuation & Lockdown
- Governance & Management
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Privacy & Confidentiality
- Staff Code of Conduct