

Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban and Total Fire Bans

Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban

From time to time during the Restricted and Prohibited Burning period the Shire of Northam may impose a ban on the use or operation of any engine, vehicle, plant, equipment or machinery in the area. This ban is commonly referred to as a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban (HVMB).

A HVMB is imposed to restrict activities that are likely to cause a bush fire or contribute to the spread of a bush fire when the expected weather conditions indicate that if a wildfire was to start, it would be dangerous, destructive and difficult to stop once started.

On days when the fire danger index for the area is or exceeds 35, a HVMB must be imposed. During the bush fire season, the fire danger index is monitored throughout the day through various means including through physical weather readings taken in the field and through the monitoring of weather stations.

The following is an example of the activities **NOT PERMITTED** during a HVMB:

- harvesting operations are not permitted
- any “hot works” (eg welding, grinding, cutting, heating etc) in the “open air” are not permitted
- other – Use or operation of any engine, vehicle, plant, equipment or machinery in the area likely to cause a bush fire or contribute to the spread of a bush fire (eg motor bikes, quad bikes or other motorised vehicles in bush or off-road areas including paddocks)

The following is an example of the activities **PERMITTED** during a HVMB:

- movement of Vehicles on “gazetted roads” - as described in *Bush Fires regulation 24A(1) and Road Traffic Act 1974 section 5.1*
- movement of vehicles on a lane, driveway, yard or other area that provides access to, or a parking facility at, any residential, farming or business premises, if the area has been sufficiently cleared of inflammable material to prevent the escape of fire.
- use or operation of a vehicle if it is for the prevention of an immediate and serious risk to the health or safety of a person or livestock, and only if all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent the activity from creating a bush fire danger
- use or operations of vehicles and undertaking of “hot works” by those persons holding a current Exemption under *Bush Fires Act 1954 s. 22C* (exemption from Total Fire Bans).

HVMBs are declared locally and announced on ABC 720AM as well as on Shire of Northam website, Social Media feeds and through the Shire of Northam SMS service.

It is the responsibility of the person/s Who wish to carry out the work to ensure that a HVMB has not been declared.

Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban and Total Fire Bans

Total Fire Ban

A Total Fire Ban (TFB) is declared by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) in consultation with local government and implements restrictions due to:

- the existing weather conditions in an area of the State are conducive to the outbreak or spread of bush fires
- such weather conditions in an area of the State are imminent
- it is otherwise necessary to declare a total fire ban in respect of an area of the State (eg limited firefighting resources available).

You can find out if a TFB has been declared by:

- going to the dedicated TFB page at www.dfes.wa.gov.au, DFES twitter account or by subscribing to the DFES RSS feed
- checking www.northam.wa.gov.au, the Shire of Northam Facebook page or on the Fire Danger Rating Road Signs on major road entry's to Shire of Northam
- by phoning the TFB Information line on **1800 709 355** or listening to **ABC 720AM**.

During times of a TFB it is illegal to light a fire in the open air or use any appliance that consumes a solid fuel including kettle barbeques, wood fired pizza ovens, wood fired spit roasters etc.

Other activities that **NOT PERMITTED** during a TFB include:

- hot works such as welding, grinding and cutting of metal in the open air
- use of any internal combustion engine powered equipment in areas near or in areas of bush
- no use of motor bikes, quad bikes or other motorised vehicles in bush or paddocks unless it is for the feeding or watering of stock.

A full list of the type of activities restricted during a TFB is available at www.dfes.wa.gov.au or by phoning the TFB information line on **1800 709 355**.

If you have planned to carry out an activity that may pose a fire risk even if it is not explicitly prohibited by a TFB or a HVMB in the interests of community safety please consider postponing the activity until conditions have improved and the restrictions have been lifted.