

ADMINISTRATION

A 8.1 Policy on Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Bans **Revoked 20 November 2019. Resolution No: C.3820**

POLICY	Harvest bans, vehicle movement bans and/or hot works bans are decided and implemented in accordance with Attachment 9.2 to this policy.
OBJECTIVES	To minimise fire damage to personnel, infrastructure and property during periods of high fire risk.
GUIDELINES	Bush Fires Act 1954
HISTORY	Adopted: 19/11/2008 Last Review: 15/09/2010
REVIEW	Shire of Northam Bush Fires Advisory Committee

ATTACHMENT A 8.2 POLICY ON HARVEST, VEHICLE MOVEMENT AND/OR HOT WORKS BANS

1. Introduction

This policy sets forth the manner in which harvest bans, vehicle movement bans and/or hot works bans are decided and implemented.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

“Harvest Ban” means a ban imposed on the harvesting or processing of a crop by agricultural machinery during the restricted or prohibited burning period due to adverse weather conditions.

“Vehicle Movement Ban” means a ban placed on the movement of any self propelled vehicles, plant or equipment on a property, except for access to a home or shed and the emergency watering/feeding of stock using a vehicle during the restricted or prohibited burning period.

“Hot Works Ban” means a ban placed on the use of welding equipment, abrasive tools or any such equipment likely to start a fire in an outdoor area.

“Restricted Burning Period” means a period where burning is restricted by the issuing of a burning permit. Within the Shire of Northam this is 19 September until 14 November and 22 February until 13 April unless otherwise modified by Council.

“Prohibited Burning Period” means the time of year during which it is declared by the Minister under section 17 to be unlawful to set fire to the bush within a zone of the State and, in relation to any land in such a zone-

- includes any extension of those times made, or any further times imposed, under that section in respect of the whole of that zone or in respect of the part of that zone, or that district or part of that district, in which that land is situated; but
- does not include any period by which those times are reduced, or for which those times are suspended, under that section in respect of the whole of that zone or in respect of the part of that zone, or the district or part of the district, in which that land is situated or in respect of that land in particular;

“Delegated Local Government Officer” means the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Northam or another officer delegated with particular functions by the CEO or Council.

“Fire Danger Rating” means the fire danger rating of:

Low	0 – 2.5
Moderate	2.5 – 7.5
High	7.5 – 32
Very High	32 – 50
Extreme	50 – 200

“Fire Danger Index” means:

0 – 2.5

Difficulty of suppression Low: Head fire stopped by roads and tracks.

2.5 – 7.5

Difficulty of suppression Moderate: Head fire easily attacked with water.

7.5 – 32

Difficulty of suppression High: Head fire attack generally successful with water.

32 – 50

Difficulty of suppression Very High: Head fire attack may succeed in favourable circumstances. Back-burning close to the head may be necessary.

50 – 200

Difficulty of suppression Extreme: Direct attack will generally fail. Back-burning from a good secure line will be difficult to hold because of blown embers.

The fire danger index is not directly related to fire spread but can be related to the chances of a fire starting, its difficulty to control and the amount of damage it will do.

“Grassland Fire Danger Meter” means the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) modified McArthur Mark 4 Meter.

“Chief Bush Fire Control Officer” means that person appointed by the Shire of Northam to perform that role or the person acting in that position as authorised.

“Harvest Ban Officer” under the Bush Fires Act 1954 a Local Government ‘may appoint to the office of fire weather officer such member of senior Bush Fire Control Officers as it thinks necessary’ and ‘38.6 (ca)Where more than one fire weather officer is appointed by a local government the local government shall define a part of its district in which each fire weather officer shall have the exclusive right to exercise the power conferred by paragraph (h)’ and ‘38(cb)

An approved local government may appoint one or more persons, as it thinks necessary, to be the deputy or deputies, as the case may be, of a fire weather officer appointed by the local government and where 2 or more deputies are so appointed they shall have seniority in the order determined by the local government.'

3. Background

The implementation of a Harvest, Vehicle and/or Hot Works ban needs to be undertaken in a consistent and measurable manner. This Policy sets forth the circumstances of how and when such bans are implemented and the subsequent procedures that are required to be followed in arriving at this decision and the implementation of that decision.

There is recognition that topographical and geographical differences do exist throughout the Shire of Northam and historically the Shire has been divided into Zones 4 and 5, commonly referred to as East and West. It is also historic that Harvest and Vehicle Movement bans have been implemented at different times for different periods.

In the past the CBFCA has consulted the CEO on the need to impose such bans, this policy seeks to establish specific criteria which requires the imposition of such bans.

4. Fire Weather Officers & Harvest Ban Officers

As provided for under the Act, Council can appoint Fire Control Officers to the position of Fire Weather Officer and Harvest Ban Officer.

For the purposes of this Policy, the role of the Harvest Ban Officer is to obtain readings from suitable monitoring equipment to determine the 'Fire Danger Index'. The officers are charged with the responsibility of liaising with each other and the CBFCA in determining the need for a ban.

Council will appoint a Fire Weather Officer, 2 Harvest Ban Officers in Zone 4 and 2 Harvest Ban Officers in Zone 5.

a) Establishing the need for a Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Ban

Where the Fire Danger Rating issued by the Bureau of Meteorology is 'Very High' or 'Extreme' the appointed Harvest Ban Officer shall periodically measure the day temperature, relative humidity and maximum wind speed within the designated area. The data collected is to be inputted into the Grassland Fire Danger Meter to determine the Fire Danger Index.

If the Fire Danger Index has reached or is expected to reach or exceeds 32 the Harvest Ban Officer shall contact the CBFCO as soon as practical. The CBFCO shall implement a Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works ban for the zone in which the ban has been imposed. The CBFCO will contact the delegated local government office and instruct a ban be implemented.

All bans implements are to be imposed until 6.00pm or until they are officially removed on agreement between the CBFCO and Harvest Ban Officers. The Delegated Local government is notified accordingly.

Following the implementation of a ban the Harvest Ban Officer shall continue to take readings at timely intervals to determine the Fire Danger Index. Should any two consecutive readings fall below 32 the Fire Weather Officer should contact the CBFCO and the delegated Local Government officer.

It is Shire Policy that a Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works ban shall be in place for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day. Other public holidays may have similar bans imposed at the discretion of the delegated Harvest Ban officer after consultation with the CBFCO.

6. Method of implementing a Harvest, Vehicle Movement and/or Hot Works Ban

- 6.1 All bans are to be advertised on ABC radio 531AM, RadioWest 864AM and the Bushfire Radio Network.
- 6.2 A notice is to be placed on Council's local notice boards and website.
- 6.3 A pager message is to be broadcast advising all pagers of the ban.
- 6.4 A group facsimile is to be sent to the agencies listed in Appendix A.
- 6.5 All bans are to be sent via SMS to all mobile phone numbers listed on the www.smsr.com.au website. Note: All ratepayers may request for Council's Ranger Service to list them on this website.
- 6.6 All bans are to be in place as soon as practicable and any ban imposed is effective until they are officially removed on agreement between the CBFCO and Harvest Ban Officer, and the Shire are notified accordingly.
- 6.7 A phone in service (which is to be operational by 2009/2010 Bush Fire Season) is to include a recorded message which will advise at any given time if there is a Ban in place.

7. Exemption from Vehicle Movement Bans and/or Hot Works Bans

Council can exempt certain activities from the requirements to comply with the Vehicle Movement Ban and Hot Works Ban providing they meet the following criteria:

- 7.1 The property is inspected by an authorised Local Government officer and a Fire Control Officer to ensure compliance with these conditions;
- 7.2 The property must comply with Council's Fire Break Order;
 - a. The access road in and out of the property must have a minimum width of 6 metres trafficable surface clear of all flammable materials;
- 7.4 Any vehicle, truck or plant being used within the license area must have a suitable operational fire extinguisher fitted;
- 7.5 A fire unit operated by at least one (1) adult must be on site at all times during the ban period when any vehicle, truck, or plant is being used within the license area;
- 7.6 Each vehicle being operated within the license area shall have an operational communications device fitted that is capable of contacting the emergency services either by phone or VHF radio.
- 7.7 The license area will be inspected annually by Council staff prior to any exemption being issued.
- 7.8 Any exemption issued shall expire on April 30 each following year.