

LIBRARY

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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IN THE OPEN

Avoid dense bush such as that which grows around swamps and creeks because it is a prime fire hazard, and access in or out during an emergency is almost impossible.

Before going on a long bushwalk, notify the Ranger or CALM district office of your intended direction, destination and estimated time of return.

Survival on foot in a bushfire is not at all easy - even for experienced people. For the best chance of survival:

Try to move to bare ground, such as a gravel pit or a recently burnt area.

Do not run uphill or away from the fire unless you are certain that a safe area is close by.

Move across a slope out of the path of the main fire and work your way towards the back of the fire.

Do not attempt to run through flames unless you can see clearly behind them, and then only if the flames are less than 1.5m high. Use lulls in the fire to run through to the burnt ground behind.

In any fire use every means to protect yourself from heat radiation. On bare ground cover yourself with earth; use ditches, wheel ruts, big rocks or logs for shields.

If possible take cover in ponds, running streams or culverts, but avoid elevated water tanks as water in them will heat up rapidly.

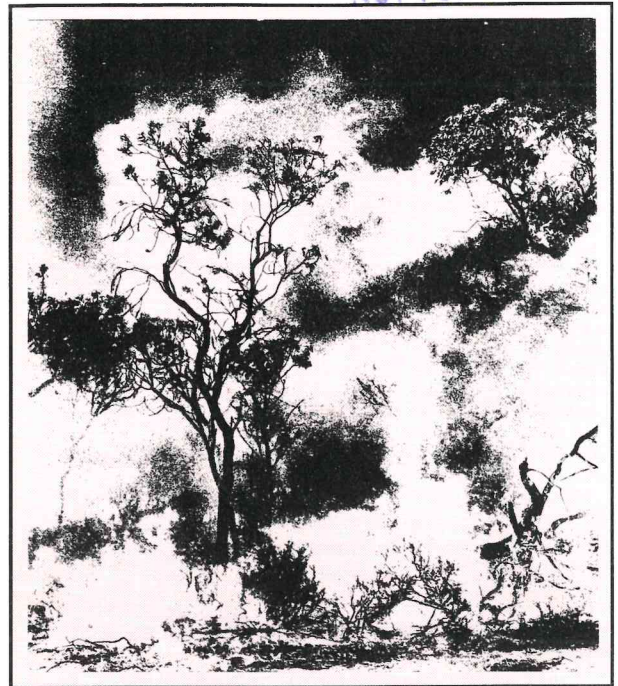
REMEMBER

Remain calm.

In the open, stay put in the area with the least amount of flammable material.

Use every means possible to protect yourself from radiant heat.

Enjoy your visit to natural areas and forests. With care both you and the natural environment will be here at the same time next year.



BUSHFIRES AND SAFETY

Bushfires are a major threat. The many thousands of people who visit our natural areas are at risk. Days or weeks of hot, dry conditions, accompanied by strong winds, increase the danger. By the end of summer the forest is a tinderbox. One of two things can provide the disastrous spark: lightning or people.

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Department of Conservation and Land Management, W.A.

Natural areas such as forests are a great attraction, especially during the summer holidays and over Easter. But unless we are extremely cautious with matches and cooking fires, there is every chance of a devastating fire. For your own safety, and that of others, please be aware of the following.

FIRE WEATHER WARNINGS

On days when the fire danger forecast for a locality is **Very High** or **Extreme**, the use of fire in the bush, for any purpose, is banned. This includes portable stoves, as well as fires for cooking and camping.

Obtain information about fire danger in the area:

Check the fire weather forecasts which are issued daily by the Bureau of Meteorology and broadcast by ABC and local radio stations.

During summer, check with the local CALM or Shire office before lighting a fire.

CAMP FIRES

It is safer and cleaner to use a portable stove. If you must light a fire, however:

Always use the fireplaces provided, especially in pine plantations.

Clear anything that may burn for at least three metres around the fire. This also applies to portable stoves.

Do not leave the fire unattended at any time.

Make sure the fire is out before leaving. Use soil and water to extinguish the embers, and bury the ashes.

BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL

The main cause of death in a bushfire is heat radiation, rather than direct contact with flames or lack of oxygen. A bushfire moves rapidly, so the peak radiation intensity only lasts a few minutes. Plan to survive those crucial few minutes:

Keep your wits about you. Panic drains physical and nervous energy and upsets your judgement.

Motor vehicles offer a safe refuge. Do not drive blindly through smoke. Switch on your headlights and park on a bare area beside the road on the opposite side to the fire.

Wind up the windows and shelter from heat radiation beneath the dashboard with a rug, floor mat - anything that comes to hand - covering your body.

The petrol tank will not explode, and even in the worst situations it will be some moments before the vehicle catches alight. If the vehicle does catch alight, get out after the peak fire has passed, but keep your skin covered as much as possible.
