City of
Bayswater

FUEL HAZARD REDUCTION FAQ SHEET

Firebreak inspections commence annually from **1 November**.

Firebreaks must be installed and maintained in accordance with the City's firebreak notice **from 1 November to 31 March** each year.

Burning of any kind is prohibited year-round within the City of Bayswater.

Property owners are reminded of their responsibility to comply with these requirements to reduce bushfire risk and ensure community safety.

QUESTION	ANSWER
What do I have to do so my property will comply with the City of Bayswater requirements for this year's fire season?	Under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, all owners and occupiers of land in the City must establish and maintain firebreaks to the following specifications: • Land with an area of 2,000m2 or more A firebreak, not less than three (3) metres wide, must be cleared immediately inside and around all external boundaries of the land. • Land with an area of less than 2,000m2 Removal or reduction of all flammable material to 50mm is required with the exception of living trees, shrubs, plants under cultivation and lawn.
I have not received the Fuel Reduction & Firebreak Notice?	Under the Act (*Bush Fires Act 1954*) the City is not required to send the notice to each property owner and resident, the City is only required to advertise the *Fuel Hazards Reduction and Firebreak Notice* in a newspaper circulating in the local district and in the Government Gazette. The City elects to include a Notice to landowners with their rates notice to ensure relevant information is received by property owners. A letter is also posted separately to high-risk landowners such as known vacant blocks. The notice is also advertised in local newspapers, as well as the City's website and social media pages. If you would like a copy, we will gladly forward a copy to you.
The Bush Fire Season has, in the past, commenced on 1 December, why is it now commencing on 1 November?	The City received many complaints from landowners, who were required to clear their block close to Christmas, when they were on holiday or their usual gardener was on holidays. In 2017 the City brought the season forward to 1 November, will make it easier for landowners to clear their block as required.

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What if I object to the Infringement?	In accordance with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* an appeal for a bushfire infringement must be made in writing within 28 days of the notice being issued. With the fire season being a very busy period for the Fire Control Officer (FCO), it is in the landowner's best interest to write to the CEO immediately so that a timely response can be made within the 60-day period (as outlined in the *Bush Fires Act 1954* section 59A), otherwise a withdrawal may not be considered.
Can you recommend a Contractor to clear my block?	The City of Bayswater is unable to recommend any contractor. There are many gardeners and landscapers, and most are familiar with bushfire prevention requirements.
I have only recently purchased a property, and the real estate/ previous owners did not inform me that I am required to have firebreaks installed?	Firebreaks are required within 14 days of becoming the owner or occupier of the land if that occurs after 1 November. Please contact the Community Safety team on 1300 360 333 should you require extra time to complete any work orders.
Why do I have to install a firebreak when I live in a suburb and not rural?	Firebreak is a generic term used to cover properties that do require a firebreak or fuel reduction. Each land area has specific requirements, please refer to your specific location requirements within the Notice and it will explain what is required of you.
I cannot find a contractor to carry out the fire-break work. If I pay the infringement will the City carry out the work for me? Will there be an extra charge for this?	If the property is re-inspected and is still non-compliant then yes, the City will carry out the work. Please note, however, you will be invoiced for these works plus you may be liable for other penalties.
Why have you issued a fine at the end of the fire season? I cleared my block at the commencement of the fire season so why was it not checked then?	Some properties are not inspected until later in the season and others may be inspected multiple times throughout the season. It is your responsibility, as a landowner, to ensure that your property is compliant throughout the entire fire season. This could mean that further work and maintenance may be required.
I have been issued with a warning; how long do I have to complete the works?	You have a further 7 or 14 days to complete the work depending on the working conditions. If you cannot clearly see the date or timeframe provided, please phone the Community Safety on 1300 360 333 immediately.
What if I am unable to complete the work myself?	You may appoint a contactor of your choice to complete the specified work at your cost. The City is not responsible for works on private property.

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Do I have to remove the cut grass from my property?	For a firebreak to function effectively, all cut vegetation must be removed from the break area. This is essential to ensure the firebreak serves its intended purpose in reducing the risk of fire spread. • On smaller properties, cut material should be raked clear of the firebreak and away from fence lines or structures. • On larger properties, it may be appropriate to bale and store the grass or vegetation well away from the firebreak. To assist residents, the City provides green waste skip bins to eligible ratepayers. Alternatively, smaller volumes of green waste can be disposed of in your FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics) bin. Proper maintenance and disposal of vegetation is a critical component of bushfire preparedness and supports the safety of the broader community.
Fire Control Officers seem to only be inspecting my area and not others?	Inspections are conducted in relation to risk. Areas that are deemed to be of high risk will always be inspected first while other areas will be inspected in relation to risk or rating as time permits. If you have any concerns regarding a property that may be of high fire risk, please contact Community Safety on 1300 360 333.
I want to find out more information about how to prepare for the fire season. Do you have any recommended publications I can review?	DFES have some great resources. Please visit www.dfes.wa.gov.au
Can I use spray to kill the grass to create a firebreak?	Please check with the City's Environmental Health Officers for information on the use of chemicals on your property. All firebreaks are to be bare mineral earth for properties over 2000sqm. If there is any hazardous material within this zone the property is non-compliant and may result in an infringement, as well as the need for more work to be undertaken.
Where do these regulations come from?	Most of the regulations stem from the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, while local modifications are developed and then endorsed by a range of key stakeholders including Bush Fire Brigade members, DFES, and internal City officers.
Explain to me how reducing the leaves on my property to 5cm are going to make any difference if a fire comes through?	By reducing the leaf litter and other dry material to 5cm this will slow the rate of spread of the fire. The 5cm depth has also been considered from an environmental point of view allowing organisms, insects and other creatures to live within this system.
The City verge adjacent to my property is overgrown and non- compliant. Will I get an	No, you will not receive an infringement notice for a non-compliant City verge; however, this

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infringement for this? Who is responsible for keeping the verge maintained? Am I allowed to clear the verge to make it compliant?	non-compliance issue should be reported to the City to ensure a work request is lodged. If you live in City of Bayswater, you are encouraged to maintain the verge adjacent to your property. Whilst the City makes every effort to keep road verges compliant, because of the sheer size of the City it is not possible to do this for every verge every year.
What does “Hazardous” mean?	Any bush, plant, tree, grass, vegetable, substance, object, thing or material that may or is likely to catch fire and burn.
What is meant by excess leaf litter? How much do we reasonably need to remove?	A simple way is if you rub your foot over an area, whatever covers your shoe is what needs to be cleared.
What does it mean by reducing fine fuel?	All plants provide fuel for fire. However, it is the fine fuels (those less than a finger’s width, approximately 6mm and less) that contribute most to the heat and speed of a fire. Fine fuel includes dry grass, leaves, twigs and loose bark but does not include larger logs or branches. Minimising fine fuels reduces the heat of a fire and its ability to spread across the ground.
Why won’t the council slash my block?	The *Bush Fires Act 1954* places the responsibility for managing the property on the landowner or occupier.
I have seen a property that I think is a potential fire hazard, what should I do?	Fire season commences from 1 November at which time you may contact the City with the address of the property and a description of the hazard. The property will be inspected by a Community Ranger and if a hazard exists the property will receive a fire hazard notice. Please note that not all potential hazards can be inspected on the first day; inspections will be undertaken gradually throughout the season as resources permit.