

New South Wales Fire Brigades Operations Bulletin 2009/05 Fire Danger Ratings and bushfire alert messages



New national bushfire ratings and warnings

Following the devastating bushfires in Victoria in February 2009, fire services across Australia have agreed to adopt new standard Fire Danger Ratings and accompanying alert messages to warn the community of the risk of bushfires.

The new ratings and messages:

- emphasise leaving as the safer option
- provide better descriptions of the scale and severity of the bushfire threat, and
- give more direct instructions to the community.

Fire Danger Ratings

The Fire Danger Rating (FDR) is an assessment of the potential fire behaviour, the difficulty of suppressing a fire, and the potential impact on the community should a bushfire occur on a given day.

The FDR is determined by the Fire Danger Index (FDI). The FDI is a combination of air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and drought. The new FDRs are aligned to different points in the FDI and provide the community with better information for making the decision on whether to leave early or stay.

Severe and Extreme

The previous Extreme rating has been divided into two. The Severe rating now has an FDI of 50-74. Extreme applies when the FDI is 75-99.

Catastrophic

The new FDR of Catastrophic applies when the FDI is above 100.

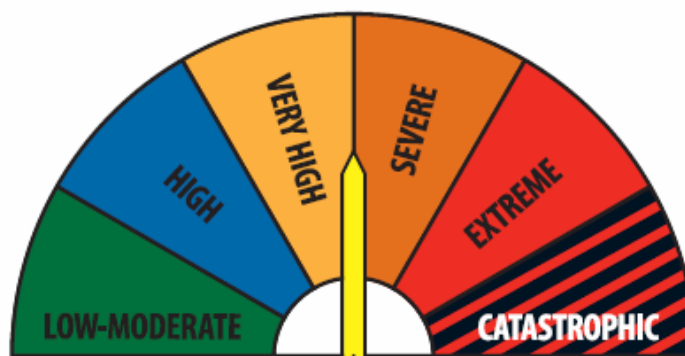


Figure 1: Fire Danger Ratings

On these days, there is the potential for significant loss of life and property. Well-constructed and defensible homes may not be safe during a fire. Construction standards do not go beyond an FDI of 100.

Leaving early is the safest option for survival. People who choose to stay and defend their properties should understand and accept the very real risks involved.

For more information see NSWFB [Fact sheet No 22 – Bushfire: Fire Danger Rating \(FDR\)](#).

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Bushfire alerts

When a fire occurs, fire services will issue standard emergency warnings to the community, triggered by the FDR combined with the time to impact. The triggers are shown in the [National Framework for Scaled Advice and Warnings to the Community](#) posted on the [2009/10 Bushfire Season intranet site](#).

There are three types of alert messages:

- **Emergency Warning** - '*Bushfire Emergency Warning*' message - you are in danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted by fire. An emergency warning will usually be preceded by the [Standard Emergency Warning Signal \(SEWS\)](#) to get people's attention before the message is broadcast on radio and television.
- **Watch and Act** - '*Bushfire Watch and Act*' message - a fire is approaching you, conditions are changing; you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.
- **Advice** - '*Bushfire Advice*' message - conditions are changing, a fire has started - general information to keep you up to date with developments.

For more information see NSWFB [Fact Sheet No. 23 Bushfire: Alerts](#).

Noted, Station Commander	A	B	C	D	Other

Contact Officer	File Number	Date
Manager Bushland Urban Interface Unit Superintendent Darryl Dunbar Ph (02) 9742 7348	NFB/02379-1 CHO/06238-2	17 November 2009

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