

# Bushfire Risks and Dangers

Bushfire Fact Sheet

## Be careful with fire

**Bushfires happen every summer;** they can start suddenly and without warning. If you live in or near bushland you need to understand the risks and dangers that bushfires cause. Remember that flames are not the only risk you face in a bushfire.

## Ember Attack

Ember attack occurs before, during and after a fire front passes. Embers are pieces of burning bark, leaves or twigs that are carried by the wind around the main fire creating spot fires. Spotting can be carried over half a kilometre from a fire. Embers can land in areas around your home such as your garden, under or in the gutters of your home and on wooden decks. If not extinguished, your house could catch fire.

## Radiant Heat

The hotter, drier and windier the day, the more intense a bushfire will be and the more radiant heat it will generate. Radiant heat can cause injury and death from burns and cause the body's cooling system to fail, leading to heat exhaustion and possible heart failure. It is important that you include water and appropriate clothing in your emergency kit and consider where you will shelter during a bushfire to protect yourself from radiant heat.

## Smoke

Lung injuries and suffocation can occur where the body is exposed to smoke and super-heated air. It is important to seek shelter when heat and smoke are most intense. Your nose and mouth should be covered with a dust mask, wet towel or scarf.

**A special filter mask should be included in your survival kit for people in your family who suffer respiratory conditions such as asthma.**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly all structural damage caused by a bushfire is due to ember attack.

## First Aid

Accidents often happen during bushfires due to poor visibility, high stress and increased adrenalin levels. This leads to confusion, poor decision making, loss of concentration and tunnel vision. You should be aware of the likelihood of injury while carrying on fire protection/suppression activities (eg burns, cuts, and falls).

You should ensure that you have a well-stocked first aid kit as part of your survival kit, know what contents are in the kit and how to treat potential injuries such as burns, cuts and falls.



**For more information visit [dfes.wa.gov.au](https://dfes.wa.gov.au)**  
or contact DFES Community Engagement – 9395 9816

The information contained in this material is provided voluntarily as a public service by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES). This material has been prepared in good faith and is derived from sources believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publication. Nevertheless, the reliability and accuracy of the information cannot be guaranteed and DFES expressly disclaims liability for any act or omission done or not done in the reliance on the information and for any consequences whether direct or indirect, arising from such act or omission. This publication is intended to be a guide only and viewers should obtain their own independent advice and make their own necessary inquiries.



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Fire & Emergency Services**

