

## **Why did I receive a Fire Prevention Notice?**

Council's Municipal Fire Prevention Officers have recently assessed your property for fire hazards in the lead up to the Fire Danger Period and determined that a reduction in fuel loads is required to reduce the risk of fire.

## **What do I have to do?**

You are required to clean up fine fuels such as leaves, twigs and long grass and remove any unconstrained rubbish to reduce the risk to your property and neighbouring properties from fire as per the Fire Prevention Notice. The works must be carried out by the completion date and be maintained to this standard for the duration of the Fire Danger Period. Unless otherwise stated, the Fire Prevention Notice does **not** authorise you to remove shrubs and trees. If you wish to remove trees and shrubs, contact Council's Municipal Fire Prevention Officer first.

## **But I've just cut my grass.**

There is a small delay between when the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer inspects properties to when they issue the Fire Prevention Notices. If you have already carried out what is required on the Fire Prevention Notice, then you do not need to worry. You must maintain your property to this standard for the duration of the Fire Danger Period.

## **Why does Council issue Fire Prevention Notices?**

Under the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Act 1958 and the Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) Act 1958, Council has legal powers to mitigate the bushfire and grassfire risk in the community. Municipal Fire Prevention Officers have the power to inspect properties for fire hazards and to issue Fire Prevention Notices and infringements on private property owners. Council also has the legal power to remove a fire hazard on private land where the Fire Prevention Notice is not complied with and recoup the costs incurred to Council.

## **What will happen if I don't comply with the notice?**

Follow up inspections are carried out on properties that have received a Fire Prevention Notice. If the works required have not been carried out to the satisfaction of the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer by the completion date, a contractor will be engaged to carry out the works on your behalf and the costs will be passed on to you with additional administration fees. You may also receive an infringement. Council will not contact you prior to undertaking works once the Fire Prevention Notice has been issued and the completion date has passed.

### When is the Fire Danger Period?

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) declares the Fire Danger Period for all areas of Victoria of which they are responsible. The municipality of Frankston is serviced by both CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) however the Fire Danger Period remains the same. During this period open air burning is not permitted, you should ensure your property is in a fire ready state. Fire Danger Period start and end dates vary from year to year and once declared can be found on the CFA website: [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au)

### What about the reserve behind my property?

Council is not empowered to issue Fire Prevention Notices to Government agencies. It is recommended that you contact the responsible agency and inform them of your concerns. If you believe the reserve is managed by Frankston City Council, contact Customer Service on 1300 322 322.

Parks Victoria	131 963 or <a href="http://parkweb.vic.gov.au">parkweb.vic.gov.au</a>
Department of Environmental, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)	136 186 or <a href="http://delwp.vic.gov.au">delwp.vic.gov.au</a>
Melbourne Water	131 722 or <a href="http://melbournewater.com.au">melbournewater.com.au</a>
South East Water	131 694 or <a href="http://southeastwater.com.au">southeastwater.com.au</a>
VicRoads	13 11 70 or <a href="http://vicroads.vic.gov.au">vicroads.vic.gov.au</a>

### I disagree with the assessment.

A person on whom a Fire Prevention Notice has been served may lodge an objection with the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer within 7 days of the service of the Notice stating the grounds of objection. This must be done in writing. The Municipal Fire Prevention Officer must genuinely attempt to resolve the matter by consultation. The Municipal Fire Prevention Officer has 14 days from the time the objection is received to confirm, vary or withdraw the notice. If a person is not satisfied with the confirmation or variation of the notice, the person may appeal in writing to the Chief Officer of the Country Fire Authority within 7 days of the end of that 14 day period or the date of the confirmation/variation, whichever is earlier, stating the grounds of appeal.

### Will this Fire Prevention Notice save my home and life?

There are no guarantees of personal or property safety when it comes to bushfire. The works detailed on the Fire Prevention Notice are designed to reduce radiant heat, fire intensity and ember attack and minimise direct flame impact on you or your neighbour's assets, and they are consistent with CFA guidelines for protecting your home.

For further information on what you can do to plan and prepare for fire see the CFA website: [cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/)

### I'm planning to cut my paddock for hay.

If your intention is to cut your paddock for hay or carry out other works, you must contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer to inform us of your intentions **before** the completion date on your Fire Prevention Notice. You may still be required to cut a firebreak.

### **I'm going to put stock on my paddock.**

If it is your intention to put stock on your paddock, you must contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer to inform us of your intentions **before** the completion date on your Fire Prevention Notice. You may still be required to cut a firebreak.

### **I want to complain about my neighbour's fire hazard.**

Please let us know if there is a property of concern to you. We will inspect the property and provide the owner with a Fire Prevention Notice if required. Council's fire hazard inspection program is focused on reducing fuel loads immediately around your assets (house and outbuildings). If the fire hazard you are concerned about on a neighbouring property falls outside this area, it is unlikely a Fire Prevention Notice will be issued.

### **There is long grass next door, there are snakes and I have kids.**

Snakes in a rural/urban interface are a natural occurrence. Ensure you maintain a safe area around your house and outbuildings. Snakes are attracted to the places we live as they provide shelter and food such as frogs and mice. Try to remove attractions for snakes from your property such as wood piles, stock feed and hay and maintain open areas where children play away from long grass. There is nothing we can do about the snakes as they are protected species. However, we will inspect the property and if the grass poses a fire hazard, we will issue the owner with a Fire Prevention Notice directing them to cut the grass as appropriate.

### **I am having difficulty getting the work completed by the deadline, can I have an extension?**

Contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer to discuss your particular situation. Council provide 21 days to complete the works and in some cases in the early part of the fire season we also issue warnings prior to issuing the Fire Prevention Notice. However if you believe due to extenuating circumstances you may be eligible for an extension, you may complete the extension of time form available from the council website or from a council office, this form must be submitted at least 7 days prior to the due date shown on the fire prevention notice.

**For more information contact Frankston City Council's Municipal Fire Prevention Officer on 1300 322 322.**