

CFS FACT SHEET

No: 1.4

Date: 19/09/2016

PLANNING TO LEAVE EARLY

Planning to leave early requires planning and consideration, you need to understand what the triggers are to leave and know what actions you should take before leaving.

Remember to consider the Fire Danger Rating when planning to leave early.

Preparing a Bushfire Survival Plan will help you work through some of the questions below and provide you with a plan that can be practised before putting it into action under real circumstances.

When will you leave?

“Leaving early” means leaving before your chosen escape route is blocked by fire and smoke, by strong winds that may bring down trees and power lines well before the fire arrives, by road blocks, or by emergency services and others all trying to use the roads.

It may be best to leave early well before a fire starts on fire danger days either very early in the morning or even the night before. This is your safest option.

If you decide to wait until a bushfire starts in your area (an option which not considered safe on days forecast as Extreme or Catastrophic), keep a regular lookout and monitor the radio. This will ensure you leave well in advance of the arrival of the fire front.

Never wait until the last moment.



Leaving in smoky conditions is leaving too late. Do not drive or flee through smoke. The majority of bushfire fatalities occur when people leave too late in their vehicles. It is unsafe to drive or be on the road during a bushfire.



If you choose to leave your home – leaving *early* is the safest decision.

Where will you go?

On fire danger days, your safest option is to visit friends, family or attractions in a Bushfire Safer Place.

Least Safe ⇕ Safest	BUSHFIRE SAFER PLACE	Adelaide Metropolitan area, outer suburbs and rural settlements	For if you need to relocate early. Suitable for use during forecast bad fire weather or during bushfire. May be subject to sparks, embers and smoke
	LAST RESORT REFUGE	Designated ovals and buildings in rural areas.	For if your plan has failed. Not suitable for extended use and may provide only limited protection during bushfire.

More details and maps can be found:

- on the CFS website: www.cfs.sa.gov.au
- in the [Alert SA](#) mobile phone app
- or see **CFS Fact Sheet No. 1.6 ‘Bushfire Safer Places’**.

Alternatively, you may wish to shelter in your well-prepared neighbour’s house.

Do not *plan* to leave for a Last Resort Refuge: as its name suggests, this is only for a last resort if all plans fail - your safety cannot be guaranteed.

Decide in advance where you will go, and ensure that it is a safe area to relocate to. You should also work out how long it will take you to get there and plan alternative routes in case the fire or fallen trees block your way.

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How will you travel?

Travel by car if possible and if travelling with a neighbour organise it well in advance.

Consider how long it will take to travel out of the area. Remember that during a bushfire, trips that would usually take only a couple of minutes may take much longer.

Identify a number of alternative routes to take if the need arises.

Preparations should include having adequate fuel, a woollen blanket, container of water, and a first aid kit in the vehicle in case you are caught in the passage of a fire.

What will you take?

You should take your pre-prepared 'emergency kit' for your family and pets.

See CFS Fact Sheet No. 3.3 - 'Emergency Kits'.

What if family members are separated?

Plan what you will do in a range of events where the family are separated, such as your children being at school or family members are away at work. Find out the school policy if bushfire threatens. Don't allow panic to drive anyone out in life threatening conditions searching for missing family members or pets. Ensure that all members of your family are familiar with your Bushfire Survival Plan and have options in case you are separated.

What if you are unable to leave?

A situation may arise during a bushfire that makes it difficult or dangerous for you to leave, placing you in a situation where you have to stay. It is imperative therefore that you have a contingency plan to cater for such situations so you can seek refuge accordingly.

Checklist for planning to leave early

- When will you leave – have you decided what will be your trigger?
- Will your plan be different for weekdays, weekends or if someone is home sick?
- Are all members of your household going to leave early?
- Which members of your household (if any) will stay and defend?
- Where will you and your family go to ensure you are all safe? (Do you have friends, relatives or fun activities in a nearby Bushfire Safer Place?)
- What route will you take to get there?
- How long will it take to get there?
- What will you take when you leave early?
- What will you do if there are many fire risk days in one week?
- What warnings can you expect to get?
- Do your friends, family and neighbours know the details of your plan?
- What will you do with your pets and animals?
- What will be your trigger to return?
- Do you have a contingency plan if it is unsafe to leave?



Think about what you would like to take with you and pack it in an Emergency Kit.