



Shire of Denmark

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SHIRE OF DENMARK EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades Hazard Reduction Burning on Private Property

Objective

Conducting a hazard reduction burn on private property can be an authorised power of a volunteer bush fire brigade or a Fire Control Officer (FCO), if it is directed by a Local Government in the circumstances described in section 33(4) and 33(6) of the Bushfires Act 1954.

This notwithstanding, the Council supports Brigades that wish to utilise Shire & Brigade equipment and vehicles to undertake hazard reduction burning of private property as an effective means of providing both a safe and low risk training environment and also the opportunity of recouping a small charge for the services performed to assist the Brigade fund facilities and activities, not otherwise funded through the Emergency Services Levy (ESL), as an additional means of attracting and retaining volunteer members.

The process to be followed by the Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades in agreeing to consider undertaking a hazard reduction burn on private property is as follows;

1. The land owner requiring a hazard reduction burn contacts their local brigade. (Local Government officers receiving requests should direct these requests to the relevant brigade).
2. If the local brigade is not in a position to conduct this burn, the request will be referred to the CBFCO/CESM who will consult with the local FCO as to the reasons why the burn is unable to be undertaken. If the reasons are not related to safety the CESM will place the burn out to tender to the brigades for a period of 14 days.
3. The FCO (or Authorised Brigade Officer) **must** visit the proposed burn site with the land owner/authorised agent and establish the aims, objectives, risks and hazards of the burn by completing the prescription guidelines (page 2).
4. Alternatives to burning should be identified and considered if practicable.
5. The FCO (or Authorised Brigade Officer) will complete the Request to Burn Form (attached) with the land owner/authorised agent.
6. The FCO (or Authorised Brigade Officer) will estimate the cost of burning utilising the standard cost model (see attached) and liaise with the land owner/authorised agent to confirm.

If the FCO (or Authorised Brigade Officer) wishes to charge an amount outside of the standard cost model they must first provide adequate reasons to the CBFCO/CESM in writing who will then seek to gain permission from the Shire's Community Emergency Services Manager. If the FCO does not wish to charge for the service, then the fee listed should be shown as 'Nil'.

7. Once the cost has been estimated and the Request to Burn Form has been completed by the FCO (or Authorised Brigade Officer) the form must be presented to the CESM and Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO) for review and authorising by the Community Emergency Services Manager.
8. At the discretion of the local FCO small prescribed burns up to an area of 0.25 hectares in size that do not contain standing bush may be conducted on private property as a training exercise and community service however any such burns must first be risk assessed using the Request to Burn Form and then communicated to an authorised officer for approval to proceed. Following the completion of the burn the Request to Burn Form shall be submitted to the Shire within 7 days.
9. The CEO, CESM, Director of Community & Regulatory Services and the CBFCO have the right to refuse the request or impose any changes or conditions upon the hazard reduction burn that they deem necessary.
10. Once the CBFCO/CESM has approved the Request to Burn Form he/she will then grant permission for the volunteer bush fire brigade to conduct a hazard reduction burn, in accordance with the prescription, at the requested private property. A permit to burn **must** be issued to the land owner/authorised agent (not the brigade) before any burning is conducted during the Restricted Burning Period.
11. Prior to the commencement of the burn the FCO (or Authorised Brigade Officer) will advise the CESM who will request the Shire to issue an invoice to the property owner of the amount shown on the Request to Burn Form. (Brigades are not to accept payment directly).
12. On receipt of payment the Shire will advise the relevant Brigade who is then authorised to conduct the burn. The Shire at the conclusion of each month will then remit 10/11^{ths} of the income to the Brigade, with a copy of the Shire's copy of the Request to Burn Form attached, and 1/11th to the Australian Tax Office (GST).
13. Fees generated by Brigades through private property burning may be applied by the Brigade as they see fit to provide Brigade facilities or activities that aid in the attraction and/or retention of volunteers to that Brigade. Under no circumstances however are Brigade volunteers to receive any remuneration for services in recognition direct or indirect in participating in hazard burns pursuant to this policy.

Standard Cost Model for Hazard Reduction Burning on Private Property

A Standard Cost Model has been supplied for all brigade hazard reduction burning on private property. The purpose of this cost model is to standardise the fees charged by the Shire and its Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades for conducting hazard reduction burning on private property.

Appliance	Hourly Rate
Light Tanker	\$50.00 Inc GST
1.4 Rural Tanker	\$65.00 Inc GST
2.4 Rural/Urban Tanker	\$81.00 Inc GST
3.4/4.4 Rural/Urban Tanker	\$90.00 Inc GST

(As per Fees & Charges 2021/22)