

Permits to Burn

The ACT Rural Fire Service Chief Officer has issued this standard operating procedure under Section 38(1) of the *Emergencies Act 2004* – A Chief Officer may determine standards and protocols.

Purpose

This standard operating procedure (SOP) is to be used when inspecting and issuing a permit to burn for areas of the ACT under the responsibility of the ACT Rural Service (ACTRFS) under the *Emergencies Act 2004*.

Applicability

This SOP is applicable to RFS HQ personnel engaged with activities around inspecting and issuing a permit to burn.

Background

A permit is required under the *Emergencies Act 2004* to light and maintain any fire during the declared bushfire danger period within the ACT. All permit holders must adhere to the conditions outlined on the permit as issued by the Service.

All current permits to burn are suspended if the actual FDI from the Bureau of Meteorology for any area of the ACT reaches Very High (FDI 25) or greater, and for the duration of any day the forecast FDI is greater than 25 during the 24-hour period. This shall be written as a condition on all issued permits to burn.

All current permits to burn are revoked on the declaration of a Total Fire Ban (TOBAN) for the period of the TOBAN.

The RFS Chief Officer (RFS CO), the RFS Duty Officer (RFS DO) or the RFS authorised inspector may at any time, and for any reason, revoke a permit to burn.

Responsibilities

RFS Chief Officer (RFS CO)	Appoint authorised inspectors. Issue permits to burn.
RFS CO / RFS Duty Officer (RFS DO) / Authorised Inspector	May revoke a permit to burn at any time, for any reason.
Authorised Inspector	Inspect and process each permit to burn. Arrange for a site inspection if required.

	<p>Determine any special conditions attached to permit to burn.</p> <p>Notify ESA Public Information and Engagement, COMCEN, PCS Duty Officer, ACT F&R and RFS DO of a permit to burn.</p> <p>Complete post burning report.</p>
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Operating procedure

Time to process

Permits to burn should be processed with the minimum of delay, however sufficient time for pre-planning and the application process prior to the planned burn is recommended to allow time for inspection, if required, and to take advantage, or defer the activity, according to weather conditions.

As a minimum the Service requires 5 working days to process a request for a permit to burn.

Authorities

- The RFS CO designates as an authorised inspector under the Emergencies Act 2004 with the delegation to approve permits under section 124 Emergencies Act 2004.
- An authorised inspector must not issue a permit to burn on property owned, leased or managed by themselves or immediate family members, or property managed by their employer.

Processing an application

An authorised inspector will process each request for a permit to burn within five business days.

1. If required, arrange for a site inspection. The following must be considered when deciding whether or not an inspection is required:
 - risk to assets (buildings, fences etc)
 - forecast fire weather and FFDI
 - current fire weather and FFDI
 - current fire activity
 - location of burn relative to adjoining exposures
 - size of burn
 - resources required to control the burn
 - expected duration of burn
 - the amount and distribution of fuel involved
 - proposed control lines
 - RFS brigade involvement.
2. Determine appropriate specific conditions necessary to ensure all safety parameters apply, prior to issuing the permit to burn.
3. If approved, provide the applicant with the completed permit to burn, and ensure applicant is fully aware of all conditions of the permit to burn.

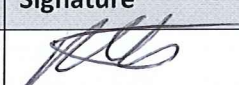
4. A permit to burn issued to a rural landholder must be site specific and limited to 14 days. If this expires without the activity being completed, a new application and permit to burn is required.
5. The RFS CO can issue a permit to burn to an ACT Government Agency for multiple sites and an extended duration.
6. Provider notification of a permit to burn to the ESA Communications Centre, ESA Public Information and Engagement Duty Officer, PCS Duty Officer, ACT F&R and RFS DO and to the adjacent NSW Rural Fire Service District/Zone Offices as appropriate.
7. Enter details of the burn into the Permit Database.
8. File all paperwork associated with the burn, including a copy of the permit to burn in the 'Permits Issued' file for the fire season of issue.
9. Collect the relevant data on the burn and prepare a post burning report in accordance with legislation.

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Andrew Stark	1.0	15/02/2011	Version 1.0
Rohan Scott	2.0		Reviewed and updated

Approved by

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Rohan Scott	A/g CO ACT RFS		05-12-19

Document Owner

Position	Section
Manager	Operations

Next review due: 05/12/2021

Related documents

Document name
Emergencies Act 2004
Environment Protection Act 1997
2.2.8 Actions on Declaration of a Total Fire Ban Standard Operating Procedure

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.