

## Actions on Declaration of a Total Fire Ban

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 a ban on lighting fires in the open has been declared by the ESA Commissioner under Section 114 of the *ACT Emergencies Act 2004*.

### Applicability

This SOP is applicable to RFS HQ personnel engaged with activities around declaring a Total Fire Ban (TOBAN) in the ACT.

### Background

Under the Emergencies Act 2004, the ESA Commissioner has the power to declare days of Total Fire Ban in the ACT to limit ignitions, or when local or regional conditions may require increased vigilance.

When a TOBAN is active, the following activities are prohibited in the open air, unless a specific permit is issued by the ESA Commissioner:

- lighting or maintaining a fire
- using fireworks
- conducting high risk activities such as welding, grinding, soldering and gas cutting.

### Responsibilities

ESA Commissioner	Declares a TOBAN
RFS Chief Officer / RFS Manager Operations	Advise ESA Commissioner when triggers for a total Fire Ban are reached in the ACT.
RFS Duty Officer (RFSDO)	Notify Emergency Management Duty Officer (EMDO). Notify all agencies/roles on the Total Fire Ban Notification List. Activate the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ESA and Transport Canberra & City Services (TCCS) for the Permanent Variable Message Signs (PVMS). Update message on Fire Danger Warning signs. Review and update the TOBAN Notification Lists as required.

	Liaise with EMDO on activation of Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC).
ESA Public Information and Engagement	Provide media releases and updates following their operational procedures.
Emergency Management Duty Officer	Notify ECC Liaison Officers. Liaise with RFSDO about activation of the ECC. Obtain authority from ESA Commissioner for activation of ECC.

## Approvals

The RFS Duty Officer, RFS Director, Operations or Chief Officer will advise the ESA Commissioner when one or more of the trigger conditions for declaring a TOBAN are reached and prepare a TOBAN Declaration using the applicable template in Appendix A.

Trigger conditions include:

- a Fire Behaviour Index (FBI) >50 is forecast
- existence of considerable fire activity in the ACT or surrounding districts
- when a TOBAN has been declared in surrounding NSW regions (optional)
- considerable resources are deployed interstate or resources are not available in the ACT
- significant lightning and storm activity or the potential for it
- a pattern of arson or deliberately lit fires
- other weather conditions
- or, as determined by the ESA Commissioner.

## Notification

When a TOBAN is declared, the RFS Duty Officer (RFSDO) is responsible for notifying all identified agencies and roles on the TOBAN Notification List, maintained in the RFS Duty Officer's Handbook. This task may be delegated by the RFSDO to other ESA members. Notification will be by:

- SMS to the ACT FBI/readiness Group and TOBAN Notification Group
- telephone, SMS or direct contact to the ACTTOBAN Notification List.

The RFSDO will provide a statement to the agencies and personnel on the Total Fire Ban Notification List as follows.

For a TOBAN announced for the following day:

“Tomorrow has been declared a day of Total Fire Ban for the ACT. This ban is in force from midnight tonight until midnight tomorrow night.”

Where a TOBAN is declared on a day for the remainder of that day:

“Today has been declared a day of Total Fire Ban for the ACT. This ban is in force from (time) until midnight tonight.”

The RFSDO will activate the MOU between ESA and TCCS for messages and updates to be displayed on the Permanent Variable Message signs for the duration of the TOBAN and update the message on the Fire Danger Warning signs.

A media release regarding the TOBAN is to be prepared and forwarded by ESA Public Information and Engagement as soon as possible after the TOBAN has been declared.

## Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC)

The EMDO:

- emails the ECC Liaison Officer Distribution List (ACTGOV and external)
- liaises with the RFSDO about whether the ECC is to be activated
- If necessary, seeks ESA Commissioner's authority to activate the ECC.

## Reviews

The TOBAN Notification List and SMS lists in use should be updated as required.

## 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	05/12/2019	Reviewed and updated
Greg Potts	3.0	28/06/2021	Administrative Review
Chris Condon	4.0	24/04/2023	Administrative Review

### Approved by

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Rohan Scott	CO ACTRFS		08/02/2024

### Document Owner

Position	Section
Director	Operations

Next review due: 1/02/2027

### Related documents

Document name
<a href="#">Emergencies Act 2004</a>
Memorandum of Understanding between TCCS and ACT ESA
2.2.10 Permits to Burn Standard Operating Procedure
RFS Duty Officer's Handbook

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.



**ACT**  
Government



## **ACT EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY**

*Emergencies Act 2004, section 114*

### **DECLARATION OF TOTAL FIRE BAN**

Under section 114 of the *Emergencies Act 2004*, I – the Emergency Services Commissioner – am satisfied that [severe weather conditions conducive to the spread of fire exist or are likely to exist **OR** because of the number, nature or location of existing fires it is appropriate to declare a total fire ban].

I hereby declare a Total Fire Ban for the duration of:

**Day Date Month Year**

for all of the ACT

Date:

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Commissioner  
ACT Emergency Services Agency

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**Time for the remainder of Day Date Month Year**

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for the part of the ACT shown by crosshatching on the attached map at schedule 1.

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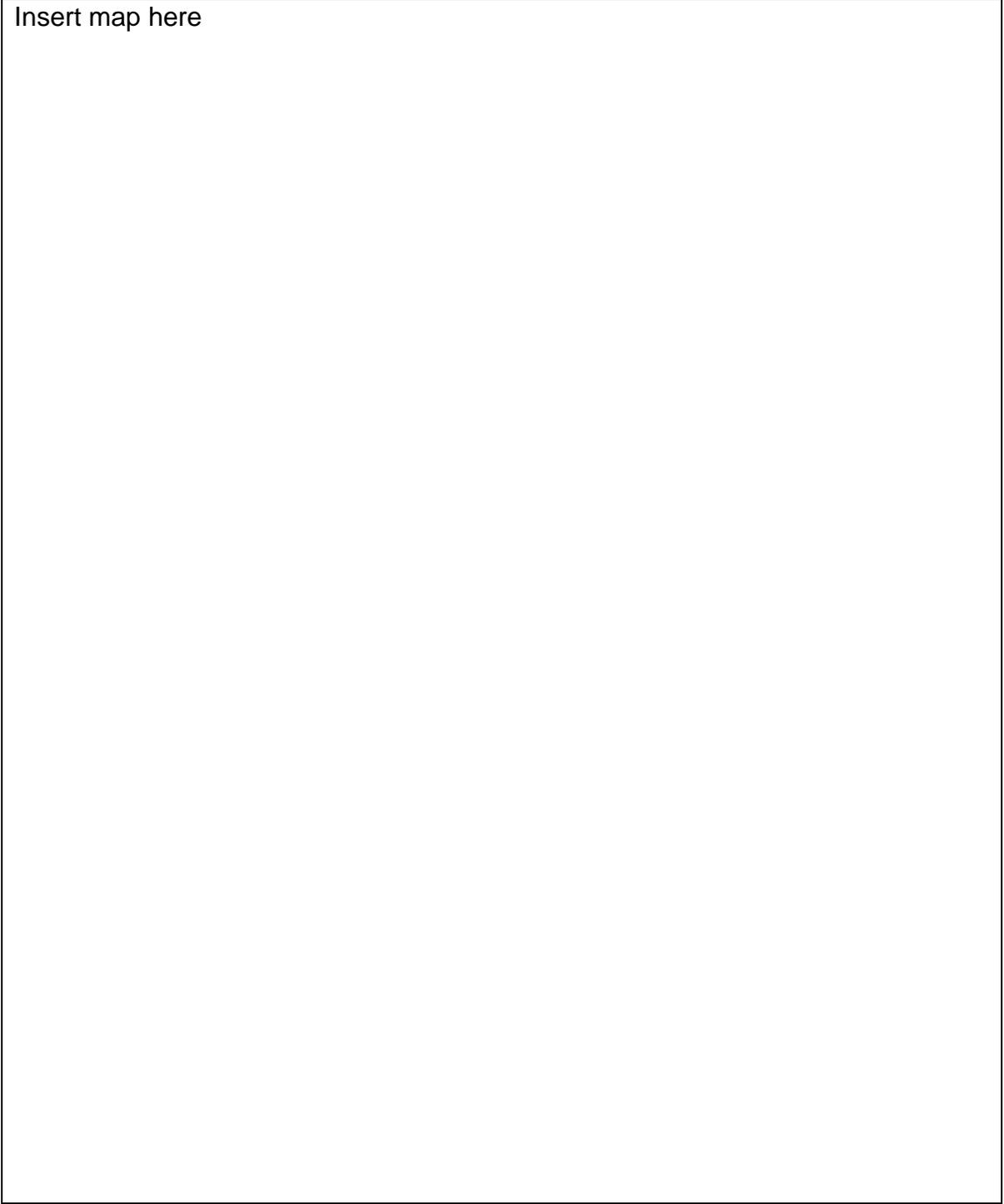
Commissioner  
ACT Emergency Services Agency

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## Schedule 1

Map showing part of the ACT subject to fire ban declaration.

Insert map here



Description of area covered by total fire ban declaration:

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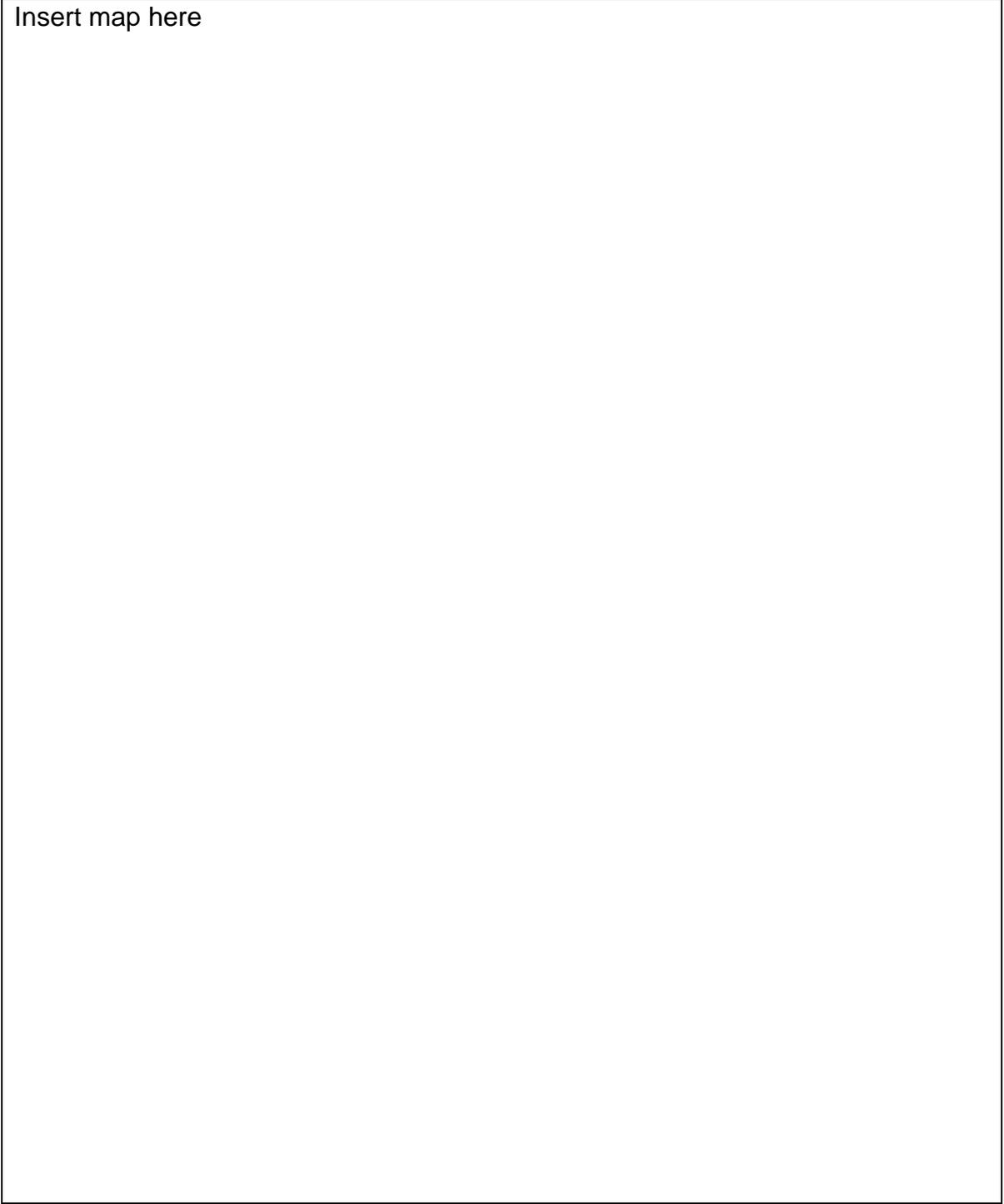
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