



Department of
Planning



PLANNING IN BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

BUSHFIRE POLICY FRAMEWORK



SPP 3.7
Planning in
Bushfire
Prone Areas

Guidelines for
Planning in
Bushfire
Prone Areas

FACTSHEET

Version 3, April 2016

DEVELOPING MIXED-USE, COMMERCIAL,
INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS OR PUBLIC FACILITIES
(CLASS 4 TO 9 BUILDINGS)

PLANNING IN BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

BUSHFIRE POLICY FRAMEWORK

If you are proposing to build a mixed-use, commercial, industrial building or public facility on a site that is designated as bushfire prone on the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas*, you will be required to undertake a BAL assessment before you can commence development.

DO I NEED A BAL ASSESSMENT

You will need a BAL assessment if:

1. your property is located in a designated bushfire prone area; and
2. your property is located in an area covered by a local planning scheme and requires planning approval.

STEP 1: CHECK TO SEE IS YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN A DESIGNATED BUSHFIRE PRONE AREA.

The bushfire planning reforms only apply to properties in designated bushfire prone areas.

You should check if your property is located within a designated bush fire prone area by finding your property on the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas*. If any section of your property is shaded pink on the map then it is designated as being bush fire prone.

STEP 2: CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN AN AREA COVERED BY A LOCAL PLANNING SCHEME

Development approvals are only required on land that is covered by a local planning scheme. You should check with your local government to find out if your property is covered by a local planning scheme.

If your property is in a bushfire prone area and covered by a local planning scheme, the requirement to undertake a BAL assessment will apply to your development.

WHAT IS A BAL ASSESSMENT AND WHAT DOES THE BAL RATING MEAN

A Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessment is an assessment set out in *Australian Standard 3959 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-Prone Areas (AS 3959)* which determines the BAL rating for a proposed building.

A BAL is one way of determining a proposed building's potential for bushfire exposure. It is generally used to establish the construction requirements for residential buildings (Class 1, 2 or 3 buildings and associated

Class 10A buildings in bushfire prone areas) to improve their protection from bushfire attack. The construction elements contained in AS 3959 are not intended to be used outside the residential context, however if you are proposing a different class of building, you may wish to voluntarily use any or all of these elements in the construction and design of your proposed building.

BAL ratings include:

- **BAL-LOW**
If the BAL assessment indicates that the development will occur on a site rated BAL-LOW then there are no further bushfire planning or building requirements.
- **BAL-12.5 to BAL-29**
If the rating is between BAL-12.5 and BAL-29, your development application will need to address the bushfire protection criteria and you will need to build your development to the corresponding standard set out in the Building Code of Australia.
- **BAL-40 or BAL-FZ**
If the rating is BAL-40 or BAL-FZ then your development application will need to address the bushfire protection criteria with the aim of achieving BAL-29 or less for the site. You will then need to build to the corresponding construction standard set out in the Building Code of Australia.

If a BAL Contour Map exists for your subject land, you may be able to use this in place of undertaking the BAL assessment. If one exists, you may be able to obtain a copy of the BAL Contour Map from the developer of the subdivision or a previous land owner.

In all other circumstances, a BAL assessment will need to accompany your development application.

WHO CAN DO A BAL ASSESSMENT

It is strongly recommend that you use an accredited Level 1 BAL Assessor or an accredited Bushfire Planning Practitioner to undertake the BAL assessment. The **Fire Protection Association Australia** (FPA Australia) will be able to provide guidance on suitably qualified consultants offering Level 1 Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) Assessor services in Western Australia. If you are required to engage the services of a Level 2 or 3 Bushfire Planning Practitioner to satisfy the requirements of SPP 3.7, the FPA Australia will be able to provide guidance on suitably qualified consultants offering more advanced bushfire risk management services in Western Australia.

There may be limited circumstances where the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas* identifies a property as being within a bushfire prone area, but the proposed building is not within 100 metres of bushfire prone vegetation. This may be where the land has been cleared to create new

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lots since the *Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas* was released or the size of the subject land is large enough to locate the proposed building so that it not within 100 metres of bushfire prone vegetation. In these instances you might be able to complete a BAL assessment (basic). Please see Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas Fact Sheet - BAL assessment (basic) for further details.

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to undertaking a BAL assessment, your development application should incorporate the bushfire protection criteria requirements. This may be in the form of a Bushfire Management Plan. Development applications in areas of BAL-12.5 to BAL-29 may be approved. Development applications in areas of BAL-40 or BAL-Flame Zone (FZ) will not be supported in most instances.

High-risk land uses (such as service stations, bulk storage of hazardous materials, certain heavy industries and sawmills for example) and vulnerable land uses (such as schools, hospitals or tourist sites where persons may be less able to respond in a bushfire emergency) have additional requirements. If your proposed development involves a vulnerable or high-risk land use, the Bushfire Management Plan that accompanies your development application should be jointly endorsed by the relevant local government and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. Development applications should include an emergency evacuation plan for proposed occupants and/or a risk management plan for any flammable on-site hazards. It is also recommended that you consider using the services of a suitably qualified Fire Engineer when you are designing your proposed building.

SPECIAL CONTROL AREAS

You should consult your local government if your proposed development is located in any of the following local government areas - City of Armadale, City of Busselton, City of Cockburn, Shire of Mundaring and Shire of Kalamunda. These local governments have Special Control Areas relating to bushfire that may have additional requirements.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You can find further information about the bushfire planning reforms, and if they affect you by visiting the Department of Planning's website www.planning.wa.gov.au/bushfire and using the 'What do I need to do' tool.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find a copy of the BAL assessment (basic) report [here](#).

You can find further information about when a BAL assessment is required by visiting the Department of Planning's website www.planning.wa.gov.au/bushfire.

You can also find information on building in bushfire prone areas by visiting the Building Commission's website www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission or by contacting your local government.

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