



STAY AND DEFEND

MICHAEL SKIPPER Fire Officer

There is no doubt the safest decision is to **LEAVE EARLY** in the event of a fire coming.

If you are considering staying and defending your home, please make absolutely sure you are mentally and physically able to fight a fire and that you are able to fulfil ALL the **STAY AND DEFEND CHECKLIST** below.

FIRST: PREPARE A BUSHFIRE PLAN

Some of the questions you need to ask yourself and family members are:

- **WHO ARE WE PUTTING AT RISK?**
Will any children, dependants, elderly or sick members in your household leave early?
- **WILL WE COPE IN A BUSH FIRE SITUATION?**
Are all members of your household mentally, physically and emotionally prepared to protect your home for hours, even days at a time? It will be hot, smoky and chaotic - you may not receive assistance from firefighters.
- **ARE WE ARE ABLE TO PREPARE OUR PROPERTY?**
A well prepared property is vital to increasing its chances of survival during a bush fire.
- **WILL WE BE EQUIPPED?**
Are you committed to acquiring the necessary firefighting equipment - including an Emergency Kit with protective clothing?
- **DOES EVERYONE AGREE AND UNDERSTAND THE PLAN**

To repeat, the safest decision is to leave early in the event of a fire coming. However if a decision is made to stay, there are a number of things you will need to ensure you have in place.

ACTIONS CHECKLIST

Defending your home can be physically and mentally demanding. It is important that everyone knows exactly what to do if a fire happens.

Before

Well before the fire has arrived

Outside

- Turn off gas mains and/or bottle
- Move flammable items away from the house
- Block drainpipes with socks full of sand and fill gutters with water
DO NOT get on the roof to hose it down
- Patrol the house well before the fire arrives to put out embers and spot fires
- As the fire approaches, wet the side of the house and garden that faces the fire
- Move your firefighting equipment to a place where it won't burn.

Inside

- Close doors, windows and vents
- Fill baths, sinks, buckets and bins with water
- Confine pets to one room
- Place ladder next to roof access hole so you can check for spot fires
- Soak towels and rugs and lay them across external doorways
- Move furniture away from windows

During

As the fire is upon you

- If flames are on top of you or the heat become unbearable move inside until the fire front has passed (usually 5-10 minutes)
- Patrol the inside of the house, including roof space, looking for sparks and embers
- Shelter in a room on the opposite side of the house from the approaching fire and ensure you have clear access to an exit

After

Immediately after the fire has passed

- Check the house both inside and out for fires, including roof cavity, under the house, deck, stairs, windowsills etc.
- If possible, and safe to do so, check all your neighbours are ok
- Contact relatives or friends to tell them you are safe
- Patrol your home for several hours, looking for small fires and burning embers

It is not safe to stay with your property under some circumstances, like:

- If the fire danger rating is Catastrophic
 - There is an Extreme fire danger rating and your home is not specially designed or constructed for bush fires
 - Your property is not well maintained
 - You or the people in your home are not mentally and physically fit and ready
- Under these circumstances, you should leave early

If you decide to stay in the event of a fire then the following is a must.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Defending your home from a bush fire can be challenging and you will need the right equipment.

Check off all the equipment you have and what you will need before a bush fire emergency.

Firefighting Equipment

- A hose/s (should reach around entire property)
- Water supply of at least 10,000L (example water tank, dam, pool)
- Petrol/diesel water pump and fuel (stored in a safe, accessible place)
- Ladders (to access inside the roof)
- Buckets and mops
- Shovels and metal rakes

Protective Clothing

- Wide-brimmed hat
- Eye protection (goggles)
- Moistened facemask or cloth
- Gloves
- Loose, long sleeved cotton shirt
- Long cotton pants/jeans
- Sturdy leather shoes or boots

If you have not ticked off ALL of the items above you are not prepared to safely defend your property.