



000 for fire or life threatening emergencies  
132 500 for SES emergency assistance  
13 DFES (13 3337) for emergency information

During a Total Fire Ban you are not allowed to light, maintain or use a fire in the open air, or to carry out any activity in the open air that causes, or is likely to cause, a fire.

Some common questions are below.

- Q: Can I use a gas or electric barbecue during a total fire ban?
- Q: Can I have a campfire, bonfire or light a fire for warmth or comfort?
- Q: Can I light a fire to burn off vegetation on my property during a total fire ban?
- Q: Can I have a fire in a forest reserve during a total fire ban?
- Q: Can I have a fire in a National Park Reserve during a total fire ban?
- Q: Can I use a barbecue, pizza oven or spit style rotisserie which burns solid fuel?
- Q: Can I use a kettle BBQ during a total fire ban?
- Q: Can I use a chainsaw, brush cutter/whipper snipper, mower or slasher?
- Q: Can I use an angle grinder, welder, charring, soldering or gas cutting or any other cutting tool outside?
- Q: Can I use a grinder, welder or power tools inside my shed?
- Q: Can I use fireworks during a total fire ban
- Q: Can I smoke cigarettes, cigars, or tobacco during a total fire ban?
- Q: Can I undertake harvesting activities during a total fire ban?
- Q: Can I use a gas-powered wildlife scaring gun?
- Q: Can I drive a vehicle (4WD, motorbike or quad bike) where the vehicle will be in contact with vegetation?
- Q: Can I have a BBQ in my local park?
- Q: Can I use a generator during a total fire ban?
- Q: Can I use equipment and machinery (e.g. bobcats, excavators, bulldozers etc.)?
- Q: Can I use an incinerator during a Total Fire Ban?
- Q: Can I use farm machinery, tractors, slashers, earth-moving, excavating or roadmaking machines?
- Q: Can I use a hot air balloon during a Total Fire Ban?
- Q: Can I operate or move an aeroplane in a paddock?
- Q: Can I use blasting equipment or explosives?
- Q: Can I use fire during a Total Fire Ban if I have an exemption?
- Q: Are there any exemptions during a Total Fire Ban?
- Q: Are there any exemptions from the requirement to have a Total Fire Ban exemption?
- Q: How do I apply for a Total Fire Ban exemption?
- Q: Can I light a fire without an exemption?

Q: What penalties are there for ignoring a total fire ban?

Q: Do we have Total Fire Ban day permits?

Q: Can I use a battery-operated mower/tools?

Q: Can you use a bee-keeping smoker?

Q: What do you do if you see someone acting in a manner that contravenes the Total Fire Ban?

Q: Do I need to switch off my electric fences?

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**Q: Can I use a gas or electric barbecue during a total fire ban?**

A:

Gas

Yes. You can use a gas barbecue for cooking if it has an enclosed flame and is being used either at your home or in an area set aside for cooking by the authority in charge of the land. All flammable material needs to be cleared five metres away from around the barbecue. Short green grass less than five centimetres in height, paving stones, bricks and reticulated gardens are not considered to be flammable. DFES recommends that you check all gas fittings and connections and ensure a garden hose is in reach at all times. You should never leave an active barbecue unattended.

Barbecues with exposed flames cannot be used.

Electric

Yes. You can use an electric barbecue where there is no flame.

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**Q: Can I have a campfire, bonfire or light a fire for warmth or comfort?**

A: No During a TFB it is illegal to:

Light, maintain or use a fire in the open air.

Carry out any activity that causes or is likely to cause a fire in the open air.

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**Q: Can I light a fire to burn off vegetation on my property during a total fire ban?**

A: No.

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**Q: Can I have a fire in a forest reserve during a total fire ban?**

A: No.

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**Q: Can I have a fire in a National Park Reserve during a total fire ban?**

A: No.

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**Q: Can I use a barbecue, pizza oven or spit style rotisserie which burns solid fuel?**

A: No. You cannot use any barbecue or cooker that requires solid fuel such as wood or charcoal in the open air. This includes wood fired ovens or stoves, and kettle barbecues. Undercover areas such as patios, pergolas and huts that are open or partially open to the weather are deemed to be in the open air.

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**Q: Can I use a kettle BBQ during a total fire ban?**

A: No. You cannot use any barbecue or cooker that requires solid fuel such as charcoal in the open air. This includes charcoal kettle barbecues.

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**Q: Can I use a chainsaw, brush cutter/whipper snipper, mower or slasher?**

A: Maybe This depends on how the type of equipment you are operating is powered:

Internal Combustion Engine

No. The operation of any equipment powered by an internal combustion engine on bush, crop, pasture or stubble is banned. However, the operation of the equipment may continue if it is part of an agricultural activity and the local government hasn't implemented a ban on agricultural activities during the Total Fire Ban.

Electric / Battery powered.

Yes. You can use equipment or machinery provided it is not powered by an internal combustion engine. However, mowing dry grass, or undertaking other activities that may cause sparks can present a potential fire hazard and should be delayed.

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**Q: Can I use an angle grinder, welder, charring, soldering or gas cutting or any other cutting tool outside?**

A: No. It is very important that people do not use a welder or power operated abrasive cutting discs of any kind in the open air due to the risks of sparks starting a fire. This includes grinding, soldering, gas cutting and all other forms of "hot works".

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**Q: Can I use a grinder, welder or power tools inside my shed?**

A: Maybe. This depends on the type of shed you are working from. You cannot use any of these if your shed has one or more open sides that are exposed to the weather. There is a risk that winds can blow sparks, which may then ignite flammable material.

You can use these tools inside your shed if it is fully enclosed on all sides and has a door and roof to prevent sparks from escaping. Sparks must not be able to escape through doors and windows.

Please be aware of general safety risks when working in enclosed spaces, including the risk of fumes.

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**Q: Can I use fireworks during a total fire ban?**

A: No. Any activity that causes or is likely to cause a fire in the open air is banned.

Licensed pyro-technicians should seek further advice from DFES. For information about fireworks event permits in general, please contact the Department of Mines and Petroleum.

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**Q: Can I smoke cigarettes, cigars, or tobacco during a total fire ban?**

A: Yes. However, discarding a burning cigarette, cigar, tobacco or match is considered to be an activity that is likely to cause a fire. Under the Bush Fires Act 1954, inappropriate disposal of a burning cigarette, cigar, tobacco or match during the Restricted and Prohibited Burning Times attracts a penalty of \$5,000.

During a Total Fire Ban, any person who disposes of burning tobacco, or a burning cigarette, cigar or match in circumstances that is likely to set fire to the bush, including by throwing it from a vehicle, could face a fine of \$25,000 and/or 12 months in jail.

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**Q: Can I undertake harvesting activities during a total fire ban?**

A: Yes. Agricultural activities can continue during a Total Fire Ban, as long as the local government has not implemented a ban on agricultural activities.

However, you must ensure:

Your vehicle is mechanically sound and the exhaust system is in good condition, free of gas leaks and has a spark arrester that is well maintained. AND  
All reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent a bushfire starting.  
In addition, your local government may require a firefighting vehicle to be onsite during harvesting operations.

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**Q: Can I use a gas-powered wildlife scaring gun?**

A: Yes, but only if it is powered by an inert gas.

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**Q: Can I drive a vehicle (4WD, motorbike or quad bike) where the vehicle will be in contact with vegetation?**

A: No. During a Total Fire Ban you cannot use a vehicle in bush or a paddock, unless it is for agricultural purposes and the local government has not implemented a ban on agricultural activities. You can only use a vehicle on a road, track or in an area that has been sufficiently cleared of flammable material.

However, you must ensure:

Your vehicle is mechanically sound and the exhaust system is in good condition, free of gas leaks and has a spark arrester that is well maintained. AND  
All reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent a bushfire starting.

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**Q: Can I have a BBQ in my local park?**

A: Yes. However, only under strict conditions. There must be a dedicated area set aside by the authority responsible for the park. You can only use an electric or gas appliance that has an enclosed flame. All flammable material must be cleared five metres around the appliance. Short green grass less than five centimetres in height, paving stones, bricks and reticulated gardens are not considered to be flammable. You cannot burn solid fuels such as wood or charcoal in the open air.

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**Q: Can I use a generator during a total fire ban?**

A: Yes. Their use is permitted in suburban or built up areas where the area is sufficiently cleared of flammable material to prevent a fire escaping. However a petrol-powered generator cannot be used on land on which there is bush, crop, pasture or stubble, unless it is part of an agricultural activity and the local government has not implemented a ban on agricultural activities during the Total Fire Ban. If the use of the generator is part of an agricultural activity, the following conditions must also be met:

You must ensure the equipment or machinery is mechanically sound. AND

You must take all reasonable precautions to prevent a bushfire starting.

However, if possible, postpone this activity altogether to minimise the risk of fire.

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**Q: Can I use equipment and machinery (e.g. bobcats, excavators, bulldozers etc.)?**

A: Yes. Their use is permitted in suburban or built up areas where the area is sufficiently cleared of flammable material to prevent a fire escaping. In bush or in areas of crop, pasture or stubble, equipment and machinery can only be used for agricultural purposes and only if a ban on agricultural activities has not been implemented by your local government.

The following conditions must also be met:

You must ensure the equipment or machinery is mechanically sound. AND

You must take all reasonable precautions to prevent a bushfire starting.  
However, if possible, postpone this activity altogether to minimise the risk of fire.

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**Q: Can I use an incinerator during a Total Fire Ban?**

A: No.

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**Q: Can I use farm machinery, tractors, slashers, earth-moving, excavating or roadmaking machines?**

A: Yes. Their use is permitted in suburban or built up areas where the area is sufficiently cleared of flammable material to prevent a fire escaping. In bush or in areas of crop, pasture or stubble, equipment and machinery can only be used for agricultural purposes and only if a ban on agricultural activities has not been implemented by your local government.

The following conditions must also be met:

You must ensure the equipment or machinery is mechanically sound. AND

You must take all reasonable precautions to prevent a bushfire starting.

However, if possible, postpone this activity altogether to minimise the risk of fire.

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**Q: Can I use a hot air balloon during a Total Fire Ban?**

A: No. You must not light, maintain or use a fire in the open air during a Total Fire Ban.

The following conditions must also be met:

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**Q: Can I operate or move an aeroplane in a paddock?**

A: Maybe. In bush or in areas of crop, pasture or stubble, aeroplanes can only be used for agricultural purposes and only if a ban on such activities has not been implemented by the local government.

You should ensure:

Your aeroplane is mechanically sound and the exhaust system is in good condition.

Fire suppression resources are available for landing, and a suitable firebreak around the area.

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**Q: Can I use blasting equipment or explosives?**

A: Maybe. Using above-ground explosives is considered to be an activity that is likely to cause a fire and is banned. However if the activity is being conducted under the ground such as in a drill hole and does not use a lighted fuse then you can use blasting equipment or explosives.

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**Q: Can I use fire during a Total Fire Ban if I have an exemption?**

A: Yes. However, you must follow conditions in the exemption.

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**Q: Are there any exemptions during a Total Fire Ban?**

A: Yes. Those who have been issued an exemption by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services can undertake activities involving fire on a Total Fire Ban day. However, you must follow the conditions in the exemption.

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**Q: Are there any exemptions from the requirement to have a Total Fire Ban exemption?**

A: Yes.

Exemptions include:

Any activity carried out for the purpose of preventing an immediate and serious risk to the health or safety of a person or livestock is permitted providing all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent a bush fire danger. In addition, agricultural activities can continue during a Total Fire Ban, as long as the local government has not implemented a ban on agricultural activities. However, you must ensure all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent a bushfire starting. In addition, the local government may require a firefighting vehicle to be onsite during harvesting operations.

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**Q: How do I apply for a Total Fire Ban exemption?**

A: Anyone seeking to apply for an exemption should visit

<https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/totalfirebans/Pages/TotalFireBanExemptions.aspx>

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**Q: Can I light a fire without an exemption?**

A: No. You must not light, maintain or use a fire in the open air.

However, any activity that is carried out for the purpose of preventing an immediate and serious risk to the health or safety of a person or livestock is permitted providing all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent a bushfire danger.

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**Q: What penalties are there for ignoring a total fire ban?**

A: You could be fined up to \$25,000 and/or jailed for 12 months, if you breach a Total Fire Ban.

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**Q: Do we have Total Fire Ban day permits?**

A: Yes. Individuals or businesses can apply for a Total Fire Ban exemption.

Applications should be submitted a minimum of one month prior to commencement of the activity or project where possible.

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**Q: Can I use a battery-operated mower/tools?**

A: Yes however mowing dry grass, or undertaking other activities that may cause sparks can present a potential fire hazard and should be delayed.

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**Q: Can you use a bee-keeping smoker?**

A: No.

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**Q: What do you do if you see someone acting in a manner that contravenes the Total Fire Ban?**

A: Report the behaviour to Police, the relevant local government or to DFES.

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**Q: Do I need to switch off my electric fences?**

A: On days of extreme fire danger and during Total Fire Bans, it is common practice to switch off electric fences. Electric fences can cause fires when sparks jump from one wire to another in the presence of dry vegetation.

To prevent this from occurring, check electric fences to ensure they are free of wire, grass, weeds and other vegetation. Electric fences should meet the appropriate Australian Standard and be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's advice.