AFDRS Lesson: How to stay informed about Fire Danger Ratings

Read each step below to learn what you can do to **stay informed**, **act on advice** provided and **stay safe.**

Step 1: Understand the Community Messaging Framework, it can save your life

Each fire danger rating level has a **nationally consistent**, distinct, and simple **action-oriented message** (as shown below). This advice appears on signs and webpages but can also be supported by **additional information** to help people understand why the advice is important to act upon. Taken together, these statements make up the **AFDRS Community Messaging Framework**. You can **download it here.**

MODERATE	HIGH	EXTREME	CATASTROPHIC
Plan and prepare.	**Be ready to act.**	**Take action now** to protect your life and property.	For your survival, **leave bushfire risk areas**
Most fires can be controlled.	Fires can be dangerous.	Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous.	If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost.
Stay up to date and be ready to act if there is a fire	There's a heightened risk. Be alert for fires in your area.	These are dangerous fire conditions.	These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire.
	Decide what you will do if a fire starts.	Check your bushfire plan and ensure that your property is fire ready.	Your life may depend on the decisions you make, even before there is a fire.
	If a fire starts, your life and property may be at risk. The safest option is to avoid bushfire risk areas.	If a fire starts, take immediate action. If you and your property are not prepared to the highest level, go to a safer location well before the fire impacts.	Stay safe by going to a safer location early in the morning or the night before.
		Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas.	Homes cannot withstand fires in these conditions. You may not be able to leave, and help may not be available.

Step 2: Understand where to get information

Passive Prompting

Most of us are familiar with fire danger ratings shown on **roadside signs**. But these signs can't be everywhere. Current and next day fire danger ratings are also **broadcast** on tv and are printed in many **newspapers**. For many people, **social media** might also prompt about fire danger, especially if they are following local emergency services feeds. The **Bureau of Meteorology** issue fire danger warnings as part of weather forecasts, in high-risk periods.

Active Monitoring

All **state and territory fire agencies** maintain up to date information about fire danger in **map and table form**. This includes the current fire danger as well as forecast fire danger out to four days. Some agencies have phone apps that achieve a similar purpose. **Monitoring emergency services webpages is the best way** to stay informed. Downloading your relevant emergency services phone app or subscribigng to their social media newsfeeds is also recommended. Tables of fire danger for each jurisdiction are also available from the **Bureau of Meteorology** website, however, emergency services website include additional advice and information such as **total fire bans,** emergency incidents and warnings.

Below are links to each state and territory's **fire danger rating page:**

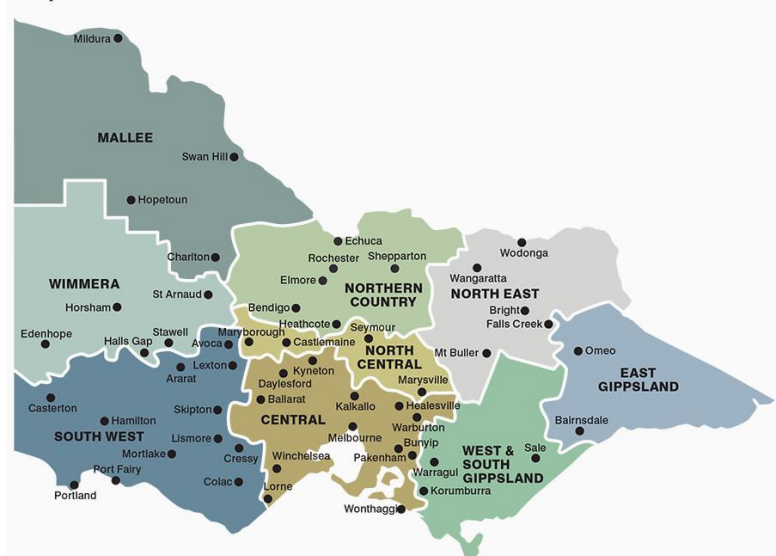| Jurisdiction	Link
Queensland	**QFES Link**
New South Wales	**RFS Link**
Australian Capital Territory	**RFS Link** (included on the NSW RFS page)
Victoria	**CFA Link**
Tasmania	**TFS Link**
South Australia	**CFS Link**
Western Australia	**Emergency WA link**
Northern Territory	**NT Incidents link**

Step 3: Know your Fire Weather District

Fire danger is reported against areas called **Fire Weather Districts** (FWD). It is important for members of the community to understand which FWD they are in. Usually this is easy to determine because fire agency webpages report fire danger on **Fire Weather District maps.** Some jurisdictions also offer fire danger ratings for smaller areas, such as local government areas. See the links in the previous step for further information.

Below is a link to a list of all **FWDs in Australia,** by jurisdiction: [**All Fire Weather Districts PDF**](#).

Map of Fire Districts

Municipalities in each district

(You can find which council you are in on the Local Information page)

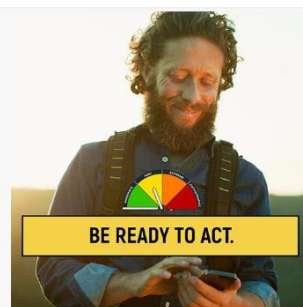## Step 4: Know when it is time to act

Consult the **Community Messaging Framework** from Step 1, and any **additional advice** provided by emergency services. Check your **emergency services website** for further information such as fires that have started, roads that are closed etc. Consult your **Bushfire Plan**. Plan a **course of action.** And when appropriate, **take action!**

Note: When to take action may vary depending on where you live and who you are. People who live in difficult to access areas, or who are elderly or impaired may have to act earlier to allow suffice time to be out of danger. Tourist may require additional advice from locals. **Developing a Bushfire Plan prior to dangerous bushfires arising**, is the best way to think about and tailor your actions, and to be prepared!

Right: social media tiles from DFES Western Australia are an example of how to get the message across about when to take action and what action to take.
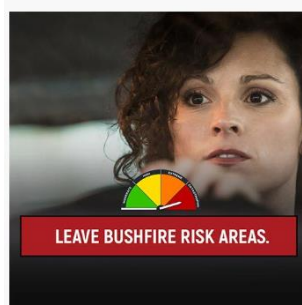

PLAN AND PREPARE.

Social Tile (Moderate – Plan and prepare)

BE READY TO ACT.

Social Tile (High – Be ready to act)

TAKE ACTION NOW.

Social Tile (Extreme – Take action now)

LEAVE BUSHFIRE RISK AREAS.

Social Tile (Catastrophic – Leave bushfire risk areas)

MINIMAL RISK – STAY ALERT.

Social Tile (No Rating – Minimal risk: stay alert)