

BUSHFIRE POLICY

Bushfires are an inherent part of Australia's environment. Bushfires can significantly impact on lives, property and the environment. The basic factors that determine whether a bushfire will occur include the presence of fuel, oxygen, and an ignition source. The intensity and speed the bushfire will spread depends on the current temperature, fuel load (fallen bark, leaf litter, small branches), fuel moisture (dry fuel will burn quickly, damp or wet fuel may not burn at all), wind speed, and slope angle.

Emergency management arrangements for fire safety differ within each state and territory and are determined by the State Emergency Services or combined emergency service agencies.

The National Law requires early childhood education services to ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from any harm or hazard likely to cause injury, including bush fires. Regulations 97 and 168 (2) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations require that every early childhood education and care service in Australia, including Out of School Hours Care services has an emergency and evacuation policy and procedure which includes:

- A risk assessment to identify the potential emergencies that are relevant to the service
- Instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency and evacuation procedures
- An emergency and evacuation floor plan, and
- The rehearsal of emergency and evacuation procedures every 3 months. (
- This policy outlines the strategies and procedures Happy Haven OSHC will adhere to in the event of a bush fire, including information about closures during an emergency evacuation, and forms part of our service's
- Emergency Management Plan (EMP). The EMP records the emergency management arrangements to ensure every reasonable precaution to protect children, staff, and visitors from harm and hazard is maintained at all times.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY | | |
|--|--------|--------------------------|
| 2.2 | Safety | Each child is protected. |

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| 2.2.1 | Supervision | At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard. |
| 2.2.2 | Incident and emergency | Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented. |

| QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| 7.1.2 | Management Systems | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. |

| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS | |
|--|---|
| 12 | Meaning of serious incident |
| 51 | Conditions on service approval (safety, health and wellbeing of children) |
| 89 | First Aid Kits |
| 93 | Administration of medication |
| 97 | Emergency and evacuation procedures |
| 98 | Telephone or other communication equipment |
| 168(2)(e) | Policies and procedures are required in relation to: Emergency and evacuation |

RELATED POLICIES

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|--|--|
| Administration of First Aid Policy Emergency Evacuation Policy Family Communication Policy Health and Safety Policy | Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Supervision Policy Work Health and Safety Policy |
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PURPOSE

Happy Haven OSHC aim to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children and staff from harm and hazards likely to cause injury, including potential injury from bushfires. The potential for extreme fire conditions varies greatly throughout South Australia, both in frequency and severity. Happy Haven OSHC will adhere to the regulations outlined by the Department for Education and Educations Standards Board and be familiar with relevant legislation and other special requirements such as building regulations, traffic restrictions or emergency announcements that may apply to the area our service's are located.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, senior leadership, and visitors of the Happy Haven OSHC.

IMPLEMENTATION

It is vital for each Happy Haven OSHC service to be informed and prepared for bush fire conditions and respond appropriately during periods of high fire danger or local bush fire activity. This policy is to be implemented should a bush fire threaten one of our service's. During peak bush fire season, the Nominated Supervisor will monitor fire ratings through relevant authorities on a daily or hourly basis and communicate with all stakeholders as required. Happy Haven OSHC will ensure each of our service's are aware of their Fire Danger Rating and have appropriate fire safety equipment installed and maintained at all times. Our *Emergency Management Plan* (EMP) ensures all staff are trained to use fire safety equipment and through regular training, understand evacuation procedures in case of an emergency.

DEFINITIONS

The Australian climate is frequently hot, dry, and susceptible to drought. The widely varied fire seasons are reflected in the continent's different weather patterns. For most of Southern Australia, the danger period is summer and autumn.

A 'Bush fire prone area' is an area of land that can support a bushfire or is likely to be subject to bushfire attack. Bush fire prone maps are prepared by local councils and governments. Baseline data for bushfire prone areas is referred to as Bushfire Attack Level (BAL). (see additional information for South Australian contacts)

Fire danger rating (FDR): provides an indication of the possible consequences of a fire. This rating is standardised across all Australian states and territories. The higher the fire danger rating, the more dangerous the conditions. Ratings range from *Low* to *Moderate*, to *Catastrophic*. FDR are maintained and updated by emergency services in South Australia.

Emergency Management Plan (EMP): identifies the nature and range of possible emergencies and hazards to which children and staff may be exposed and the response and procedure in the event of an

emergency. Effective planning and preparation of the EMP within the workplace ensures optimal response to emergencies should they occur. A risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that impact the service form the basis of the EMP.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER, WORK HEALTH SAFETY OFFICER OR NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- Ensure the *Emergency Management Plan* (EMP) is updated regularly inclusive of Emergency and Evacuation policies and procedures (see Appendix 1 for further information about inclusions)
- Consult with relevant authorities for guidance and advice on the management of bushfire risk and emergencies (including schools if the OSHC is located on school grounds)
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify a potential bush fire risk to each Happy Haven OSHC service
- Ensure the risk assessment considers-
 - Prevention measures the service will take prior and during the bush fire period
 - Procedures to be taken when there is a bush fire in the local district including onsite and offsite evacuation procedures
 - Response measures the service will take if confronted with a bush fire hazard or emergency
 - Identified evacuation assembly areas and evacuation routes(it is recommended that the plan contains two external (off-site) evacuation assembly areas if practical to do so)
 - What assistance will be required to evacuate children at the service (including non-ambulant children and infants, consideration for multi-story buildings)
 - What mechanisms are in place to ensure the transfer of real-time information, such as weather forecasts, bush fire activity, site closures and emergency operations
 - How families will know where to locate their child if evacuated
 - Procedures to ensure children are only released to persons authorised to collect them
 - Procedures to ensure correspondence is made to feeder schools
 - Mechanisms to ensure visitors and contractors are aware of the service's emergency response procedures
- Contact the local council of each of our Happy Haven OSHC service's to determine if they are in a bush fire prone area
- Ensure a current emergency and evacuation floor plan of the service is clearly displayed near each exit of the service

- Ensure emergency drills, including a bush fire drill are practiced with educators and children every 3 months [educators are prompted to complete these every 5 weeks through FullyBooked, and once per care type to ensure all children are being covered]
- Ensure a record is kept of each emergency evacuation drill practiced
- Ensure the service and educators are prepared for bush fire conditions and prepared to respond quickly and appropriately during high fire danger periods
- Ensure all fire safety equipment is installed and maintained regularly- (fire extinguishers, fire panels, smoke detectors, long hoses with nozzles, buckets etc.)
- Ensure all outdoor taps are in working order
- Communicate with staff, educators, and families about bush fire preparation information and provisions
- Discuss *Bush Fire Response Procedure* at team meetings and make any amendments as required
- Ensure local emergency services have current contact details, including mobile number for emergency contact after hours
- Ensure a clear and effective communication procedures during an emergency are rehearsed to test its effectiveness in an emergency
- Organise and communicate with off-site evacuation sites about emergency arrangements.
- Ensure the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) is checked daily through **Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology** <http://www.bom.gov.au/?ref=hdr> or specific South Australia sites (*see appendix*).
- Ensure flammable items are removed from the service
- Ensure all emergency exits are clear and accessible at all times
- Conduct an 'emergency first aid kit / backpack audit' to ensure emergency contact information and supplies are current (*see Appendix 2 for suggested inclusions*).
- Ensure all records of attendance of children, staff and volunteers is accurate for each session of care
- Ensure current emergency phone numbers are near the phone, including emergency services and the Regulatory Authority *and* in the contacts of designated mobile phones
- Monitor the bush fire situation when the rating is above **High** through internet or radio.
- Not accept children for care on days when there is an extreme or catastrophic danger rating
- Cancel any outdoor activities on days where air quality due to bushfire smoke may cause harm to children [see *Bush Fire Smoke Procedure*]
- Be prepared for **Catastrophic fire days** and consequent closures of the service if located on the BAL a R1 or R2 in **South Australia**.

- Notify the Regulatory Authority in the event of any closures or damage to premises within 24 hours or as soon as possible via the NQA ITS or email if there is no access to phones
- At a reasonable time after the incident has occurred, consider asking emergency services to review the service's incident response

NOMINATED SUPERVISORS, RESPONSIBLE PERSONS AND EDUCATORS WILL:

- Assist in the development and review of the service's Emergency Management Plan (EMP)
- Examine the service grounds during their daily indoor and outdoor safety checks to ensure flammable and/or combustible materials (e.g., dead leaves and bark, chemicals) have been removed
- Ensure they are familiar with the daily Fire Danger Rating (FDR)
- Ensure the emergency first aid kit / backpack is organised and stored in an area that is easily accessible
- Become familiar and confident with the service's emergency evacuation policies and procedures
- Participate in emergency drills, including *Bush Fire Response* procedures at least every 3 months
- Become familiar with the service's emergency exits
- Be aware of the designated assembly area
- Eliminate all papers around the service, including artwork, posters, displays and emptying garbage bins if advised that bush fires are in the local district
- Keep up to date with professional development and training about bush fires and emergency evacuation
- Be familiar with their role and responsibilities in the event of a bush fire.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- A bushfire 'risk rating' is applied to Early Childhood Services and pre-schools in a bushfire prone area which is based on their Bushfire Attack Level (BAL).
- [List of high bushfire risk schools, preschools and kindergartens](#)
- The BAL measures the service's potential for exposure to ember attack, radiant heat and direct flame in the event of a bush fire. The four categories are:
 - R1 Extreme/Very high-risk
 - R2 High risk
 - R3 Medium/Low risk
 - NR Non-rated
- Services with a risk rating R1 and R2 are required to have a specific bushfire response plan as well as their general emergency management plan.
- During the months of August and September, early childhood services in R1 and R2 sites are required to prepare for the annual fire danger season.
- Catastrophic fire danger days- services located in R1 or R2 risk areas will be directed to close automatically on these days.
- Country Fire Service – hotline 1800 362 361 <https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/home/>
- [Bushfire and your Child's School or Preschool](#)
- Fire Danger Rating: https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/bans_and_ratings.jsp

RESOURCES

Bushfire Emergency Planning Guideline [A guide to planning for bushfire emergency](#)

[Early Childhood Australia Resources for Bushfire affected communities](#)

[Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#) – Emergency and natural disaster assistance

[Emerging Minds](#)- Bushfire preparedness for your family

[Be You](#)- resources- Bushfires and mental health

SA Country Fire Service website at www.cfs.sa.gov.au

Bureau of Meteorology website at www.bom.gov.au

Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361

State Emergency Services (SA): www.ses.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp

Government of South Australia bushfire and emergency information:
www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-skills-and-learning/general-information/bushfire-and-emergency-information

Fire Protection Association Australia: www.fpa.com.au

South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM):
www.safecom.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp

SA Police News: www.police.sa.gov.au/sa-police-news-assets/front-page-news/sa-police-news

ABC News: www.abc.net.au/news/emergency/state/sa

Alert SA: www.alert.sa.gov.au

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government: Geoscience Australia. Community safety: Bushfire:
<http://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/hazards/bushfire>

Community Early Learning Australia. *Bushfire advice for children's services*:
<https://www.cela.org.au/2018/01/07/bushfire-advice-for-childrens-services/>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

REVIEW

| POLICY REVIEWED | JUNE 2022 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | JUNE 2023 |
|-----------------|--|------------------|-----------|
| MODIFICATIONS | New policy using information from archived Extreme Weather policy, as well as childcare desktop policy. Transferred information into new Happy Haven formatting. | | |
| POLICY REVIEWED | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS | NEXT REVIEW DATE | |
| Month YYYY | • | Month YYYY | |
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