

CFS FACT SHEET

No: 3.1

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CAMPFIRES & BARBECUES

It's important to remember that fire restrictions may affect what you can and can't do with regards to campfires and barbecues.

Campfires and barbecues can be used throughout the year but during the Fire Danger Season certain restrictions apply. Further restrictions apply on Total Fire Ban days so you will need to be aware if there is a Total Fire Ban in place in the area where you plan to light your fire.

Terms used in this Fact Sheet:

Fire Danger Season:

The Fire Danger Season is a time of the year when bushfires are more likely to happen, and can be more dangerous if they do. There are some things you're not allowed to do during Fire Danger Season, and other things that you can do at this time of year to stay safe and prevent fires.

 For more information, see [Fact Sheet # 2.2: SA Fire Ban Districts and Fire Danger Season](#)

The most current dates for the Fire Danger Season can be found on the CFS website:

www.cfs.sa.gov.au

Total Fire Ban Day:

Just like it sounds, a Total Fire Ban Day is a day when you're not allowed to light fires, even for some types of barbecues.

Total Fire Bans may be declared in some Fire Ban Districts or even across the whole state on days when extreme weather conditions could cause fires to become uncontrollable.

Total Fire Bans remain in force for 24 hours from midnight on the day for which they are issued.

 For more information, see [Fact Sheet # 6.6: Restrictions \(what can I do / what can't I do?\)](#)

To find out if today is a Total Fire ban:

- Check the CFS website: www.cfs.sa.gov.au
- Call the Bushfire Information Hotline: 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)

Fire Ban District

This is an area where fire dangers are similar enough that one set of rules applies to the whole area – like the dates for the Fire Danger Season, whether it's a Total Fire Ban Day, or the day's Fire Danger Rating.

 For more information, see [Fact Sheet # 2.2: SA Fire Ban Districts and Fire Danger Season](#)

Find your Fire Ban District through the CFS website, with the [Alert SA mobile phone app](#) or via the Bushfire Information Hotline

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General campfire safety tips:

1. Check if you're allowed

Check the Fire Danger Rating, Total Fire Bans and local fire rules before lighting a campfire. This fact sheet has more information about restrictions.

2. Keep it clear

Make sure there aren't any overhanging branches above your fire and clear branches and leaves off the ground to make a clear space of four metres around the fire.
Make your fire away from your tents and anything else that could catch fire.

3. Keep it contained: use or make a fireplace

Use a fireplace:

You might be somewhere with barbeques or special fire pits. This is the safest place to light a fire

Make your own:

Trench: If there aren't ready-made fire pits, make your own by digging a trench. If you light a fire during the Fire Danger Season, this trench is compulsory, and has to be 30cm deep and smaller than one meter in area.

Rocks: You can make a ring of big rocks to keep your fire contained, but be careful which rocks you choose! River rocks or creek stones can shatter and cause injury.

4. Don't use flammable liquids – like petrol or kerosene – to light your fire.

Anything flammable near fire is very dangerous. You could end up hurting someone or burning something that shouldn't be burnt.

5. Watch it

Never leave a camp fire alone. Keep water or an extinguisher handy.

6. Make sure your camp fire is completely put out with water before you leave or go to sleep.

Water is the best way to cool a campfire. Putting dirt or sand on the fire is not good, as the sand or dirt can heat up, and burn you or restart the fire.

Remember: Campfires and barbecues cause extensive damage if not properly extinguished. Embers can smoulder for several days igniting nearby scrub. Please ensure fires are extinguished before leaving your camp.



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Regulations and restrictions:

During the Fire Danger Season:

The use of barbecues and campfires may only be used under certain conditions during the Fire Danger Season:

Campfires

A campfire may be lit provided:

- It is in a properly constructed fireplace; **or**
- It is in a portable cooking appliance; **or**
- The fire is in a 30cm deep trench and no more than one metre square in area and
- You have a four metre cleared space around and above the fire
- A responsible person is in attendance at all times
- An adequate agent to extinguish the fire is at hand

The fire must be completely out before leaving the area.

Campfires are banned in all national parks and forestry reserves during the Fire Danger Season.

Barbecues

Barbecues of all types may be used provided:

- there is a four metre cleared area around, and above the barbecue, and
- a responsible person is in attendance with water or other extinguishing agent on hand.

Gas barbecues may be used in some national parks reserves, so check signs at the park entrance or at your local national parks office.

Barbecues of any type are banned in forestry reserves during the Fire Danger Season.

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On Total Fire Ban Days:

Severe restrictions are placed on all campfires and barbecues on days of Total Fire Ban:

Campfires

All campfires are banned on Total Fire Ban Days.

Barbecues

All wood and solid fuel barbecues (kettle type, eg “Webber” barbecues) are banned Total Fire Ban Days.

Gas or electric barbecues may be used on Total Fire Ban Days:

- Within 15 metres of domestic premises *, or
- On a coastal foreshore

Providing you have:

- A four metre cleared area around and above the barbecue
- A responsible person is in attendance at all times with water or an extinguisher at hand

*“domestic premises” means a building or other structure that is fixed to the ground and connected to a reticulated or stored water supply and that is occupied as a place of residence but does not include a caravan.

The barbecue must be completely out before leaving the area.

Some councils allow gas or electric barbecues to be used in caravan parks or picnic areas in designated areas on Total Fire Ban days. If you’re unsure contact your local council office for advice.

Use of Generators at Campsites

Generators have restrictions placed on their use when camping to reduce the risk of starting a bushfire. Many people place generators well away from their campsite to reduce the noise. This practice can be dangerous as sparks emitted from the generator could go unnoticed and start a fire. It is therefore important to remain vigilant when using a generator and follow restrictions during the Fire Danger Season.

A generator can only be legally operated during the Fire Danger Season if:

- the space around the generator is cleared to a distance of four metres, or a person who is able to control the generator is present at all times it is in use, and
- a shovel or rake and a portable water spray are at hand, and
- a spark arrester is fitted and is in good working order.

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Campfires and barbecues in national parks, reserves and wilderness protection areas

During the Fire Danger Season strict regulations apply regarding the use of campfires and barbecues in national parks, reserves and wilderness protection areas.

The Department of Water, Natural Resources sets fire restrictions for each Fire Danger Season and encourage all people intending to visit parks to familiarise themselves with these restrictions. They include a park-by-park list of what you can and can't do.

No wood fires are permitted in parks during this time. Some parks have year-round bans on wood fires.

For more information:

- Check signs at the entrances of parks and reserves
- Download the [Fire Restrictions booklet \(133kb pdf\)](#) from www.environment.sa.gov.au
- Contact the CFS Bushfire Information Hotline: 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)
- or contact the Department's relevant office below during office hours:
 - Information Line: (08) 8204 1910
 - Black Hill: (08) 8336 0901
 - Clare: (08) 8841 3400
 - Port Augusta: (08) 8648 5300
 - Wilpena: (08) 8648 0048
 - Port Lincoln: (08) 8688 3111
 - Alinytjara Wilurara: (08) 8357 3880
 - Kingscote: (08) 8553 4444
 - Flinders Chase: (08) 8553 4450
 - Mount Gambier: (08) 8735 1177
 - Berri: (08) 8595 2111
 - Murray Bridge: (08) 8532 9100

Houseboat Users

Houseboat users need to be aware of the Department of Water, Natural Resources guidelines for lighting fires along riverbanks. The guidelines will vary between each district so it is important that houseboat users are aware of the location of national park reserves along their travel route. This information may need to be established prior to departure.

The restrictions that apply to campfires and barbecues during the Fire Danger Season and on Total Fire Ban days needs to be observed for all other non-national park areas.

Care should be taken when using appliances on houseboats to prevent fires from starting on board. All persons should note the location of fire extinguishers and observe all safety guidelines for the houseboat.