

GLOSSARY OF INTERESTING WORDS/TERMS



Support material 11

Aerial appliance	A long ladder or hydraulic platform attached to a fire truck that can be used to get up high and spray water on a fire.
Aerial fire bombing	Using a plane or helicopter to drop water or flame-retardant foam on hard to reach bushfires.
Arson	Starting a fire with the intention of causing damage to people or property.
Ash	A grey or black powder-like residue that remains after burning.
Backburning	A way of reducing the amount of fuel in front of a bushfire by lighting small controlled fires ahead of the fire front.
Blacking out (mopping up)	After a fire has been controlled , blacking out involves putting out any remaining flames, smouldering logs and stumps, and clearing burning branches from overhanging trees.
Breakaway	When a fire jumps containment lines into unburnt areas.
Breathing apparatus	A face-mask connected to an air cylinder carried on the firefighter's back. The cylinder contains a supply of air which allows the firefighters to breathe safely inside houses or factories full of smoke.
Brigade	A group of firefighters organised to work together.
Bushfire	A fire that burns uncontrollably in forests, bushes, grassland and/or shrubs often having significant effects on people, animals, property and the environment.
Bushfire Survival Plan	A plan for what to do in the event of a bushfire.
Carbon dioxide	A colourless, odourless gas used in some fire extinguishers. Represented as CO ₂ .
Climate	The general weather conditions of an area including temperature, humidity , rainfall, sunshine and winds.
Cold front	The meeting point of two air masses when the cooler is advancing against the warmer. High winds and cold fronts tend to produce low humidity conditions which are conducive to bushfire ignition.
Combustion	When something starts to burn; when fuel and oxygen combine with heat to cause a fire.
Contained	When a fire's spread has stopped, but it may still be burning freely within the containment lines .
Containment lines	The secured edge of a burning fire. Created by removing fuel from an area with the intention of stopping a fire. This can be done by controlled burns , bulldozing or clearing vegetation.
Controlled	When a fire's whole perimeter has been secured and the fire is not expected to break away .
Controlled burn (also planned burn or prescribed burn)	When fire is deliberately used to reduce the amount of fuel (undergrowth , dry leaves and fallen branches) in an area. Controlled burning is a fire management tool used to protect communities and the environment.
Convection column	The plume of matter generated by a fire. This includes smoke, ash and other material.
Crown fire	A fire that burns in the tree tops ahead of and above an intense fire in the undergrowth . Travels fast and consumes all the fuel in its path.
Drought	Unusually low rainfall for a long period of time.
Ember	A small live coal or the smouldering remains of a fire.
Erosion	Where the earth's surface is worn away by rain, wind, or waves.
Fauna	The animals of a region.
Fire break	A strip of cleared land used to stop or slow a bushfire down.
Fire Danger Period (FDP)	Fire restrictions applied across most areas of Victoria by CFA, when fire danger is high. Typically this is over the summer period of November through to April.

Fire Danger Ratings (FDR)	Fire Danger Ratings predict fire behaviour should a fire start, and how hard it will be to put out.
Fire front	The leading edge of a fire when it is moving. Fire fronts are often influenced by the wind.
Fire triangle	Fire needs three things to burn: fuel, oxygen and heat . These three things form the 'fire triangle'. If one item is removed, the triangle is broken, and the fire cannot sustain itself.
Fire Response Plan	The agreed course of action a group of people will take if there is a fire.
Fire-stick farmers	The term used to describe early Indigenous Australians that would initiate controlled burning of the bush to encourage fresh new growth of vegetation.
Flammable	Easily set on fire.
Flora	The plants of a region.
Fuel	One of the three things fire needs to burn. 'Fuel' is anything that can burn such as wood, leaves and flammable liquids.
Fuel load	The level of fuel available to a fire. Bush land with lots of undergrowth, dry leaves and fallen branches would make up a high fuel load.
Germinate	When a seed sprouts and starts growing.
Habitat	An animal's natural home.
Hectare	A measurement of land area, equal to 10,000 m2.
Humidity	The level of water vapour in the atmosphere.
Incandescence	The light emitted by a hot object, for example a glowing ember.
Incendiary device	A device used to start a fire.
Ignite	To set on fire; a match might be used to 'ignite' a campfire.
Mechanical clearing	When bulldozers and other machines are used to clear trees, undergrowth and fallen branches.
National Park	An area of land that has been protected by the government so everyone can access and enjoy it.
Pumper	A truck specially designed to hold water and pump it to put out fires.
Regeneration	Much of Australia's vegetation is able to re-grow after fire; some vegetation in fact needs fire to reproduce and remain healthy.
Retardant	Something that can be used to slow or stop a fire, for example, foam.
Sclerophyllous	Plants that have tough, short leaves to reduce water loss; many Australian native plants are sclerophyllous.
Spontaneous combustion	When an object catches fire without any apparent heat from an external source.
Spot fire	Isolated fires started ahead of the main fire by sparks or embers.
Spotting	When embers or sparks pop out from the main fire and start spot fires.
State Forest	Public land that is mainly covered by trees. Trees can be logged from some State Forests, but not from National Parks .
Tanker	A mobile firefighting vehicle equipped with a water tank, pump, and the necessary equipment for spraying water and/or foam on wildfires.
Total Fire Ban (TFB)	A Total Fire Ban (TFB) is declared by CFA on days when fires are likely to spread rapidly and could be difficult to control. Total Fire Bans prohibit the lighting of any fires in the open air. The ban includes all campfires, all solid fuel barbecues and portable barbecues in excess of 20 metres away from a permanent dwelling. It also includes incinerators, welding, grinding, soldering or gas cutting.
Topography	The features of the land's surface, for example hills, valleys, rivers, lakes.
Undergrowth	Low growing plants, shrubs and bushes underneath trees.
Water catchment	The area of land that feeds water into a river or dam.