



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

## MUNICIPAL FIRE PREVENTION PLAN AUDIT CRITERIA

### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a transparent and accountable approach to the auditing of Municipal Fire Prevention Plans (MFPPs) or Municipal Fire Management Plans (MFMPs) by clearly outlining the evidence required for municipalities to satisfy the requirements of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* (CFA Act).

### Background

Part 6A Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV) provides direction that the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) implement integrated municipal level fire management planning. Municipal Fire Prevention Plans (MFPPs) are now subsets of Municipal Fire Management Plans (MFMPs).

In 2010, section 86B was introduced into the *Electricity Safety Act 1998* requiring that municipal fire prevention plans specify procedures for the identification of trees that are hazardous to electric lines and notification of these trees to responsible persons under this Act who have responsibility for the electric lines.

MFMPs must now satisfy the prescriptions in the CFA Act, the Electricity Safety Act and the EMMV.

Currently MFMPs are audited only against the CFA Act 1958 s. 55B. A more holistic audit under Integrated Fire Management Planning is still under development.

The current audit process assesses whether the plan complies with section 55A (1) & (2) of the CFA Act, which states that:

- (1) A municipal council must prepare and maintain a municipal fire prevention plan for its municipal district in accordance with the advice and recommendations of the municipal fire prevention committee.
- (2) A municipal fire prevention plan must contain provisions in accordance with the regulations—
  - (a) identifying areas, buildings and land use in the municipal district which are at particular risk in case of fire; and
  - (b) specifying how each risk is to be treated; and
  - (c) specifying who is to be responsible for treating those risks; and
  - (ca) identifying all designated neighbourhood safer places in the municipal district or if no places have been designated, recording that fact; and
  - (cb) designate any places in the municipal district that are community fire refuges; and
  - (d) relating to any other matter prescribed for inclusion in the plan.



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

## Compliance with the MFPP audit

### COMPLIANCE WITH THE ACT

Section 55B of the CFA Act mandates that the Authority must audit an MFPP at least once every three years to assess whether that plan complies with the requirements of the Act (sections 55A(1)&(2)) and the CFA Regulations (no prescriptions have been developed for the regulations).

Regardless of whether the municipality has a MFPP or MFMP (where the MFPP is contained therein) it must satisfy the fire prevention requirements of s. 55A(1)&(2) of the CFA Act.

A MFPP or MFMP will comply with the requirements of s. 55A of the Act if it satisfies the Audit Criteria.

### INTERPRETATION OF AUDIT CRITERIA

In order to assist municipalities, Performance Indicators have been established for each Audit Criterion to aid interpretation.

### MEETING THE AUDIT CRITERIA

Compliance with the Audit Criteria can only be achieved by providing evidence, which satisfies ALL the Performance Indicator(s). The evidence required to satisfy each Performance Indicator is outlined in this document.

Where additions to Evidence Required such as “may include” or “possible/suitable examples” occur, the Evidence Required is not limited to the listed options. Alternatives not listed may be utilised in such cases.

## Audit Criteria

In accordance with the CFA Act, *section 55A*, the following audit criteria have been established:

- (i) A Municipal Fire Prevention Plan exists (s.55A(1))
- (ii) The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan is maintained (s.55A(1))
- (iii) The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan accords generally with recommendations and advice of the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee (s.55A(1))<sup>1</sup>
- (iv) The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan identifies areas, buildings and land use at particular risk in case of fire (s.55A(2)(a))
- (v) The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan specifies how each risk is to be treated (s.55A(2)(b))
- (vi) The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan specifies who is responsible for treating those risks (s.55A(2)(c))
- (vii) Recording any designated Neighbourhood Safer Places that have been identified, or if no places designated, recording that fact (s.55A(2)(ca))
- (viii) Recording any designated community fire refuges within the municipal district (s. 55A (2)(cb))

<sup>1</sup> where a MFPC has been appointed and functions under ss. 54 & 55 of the CFA Act



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

## Audit Criteria, Performance Indicators, and Evidence Required

This section outlines each Audit Criterion, its associated Performance Indicator(s), and the evidence required to satisfy the Performance Indicator(s).

### **AUDIT CRITERION 1: A Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan Exists.**

#### **Performance Indicator 1: Copy of the Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan exists.**

CFA requires that there is a copy of a Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan in existence, in either electronic or hard copy form, that can be inspected by the auditor.

#### **Evidence required:**

- (i) Hard copy; or
- (ii) Electronic copy.

#### **Performance Indicator 2: A Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan has been prepared and adopted by the Municipality.**

The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan must have been prepared (made ready for use) by the council. There must be a document that the municipal council has adopted or endorsed as its Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan, for it to be ready for use.

#### **Evidence required may include:**

- (i) Minutes of Council meeting showing adoption of MFPP/MFMP by Council; or
- (ii) Sign off within MFPP/MFMP document by Council CEO; or
- (iii) Other evidence deemed satisfactory by the auditor.



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

**AUDIT CRITERION 2: The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan is maintained**

The purpose of this audit criterion is to check that there are processes in place, which ensure that information in the document is up to date and accurate for timely and appropriate allocation of responsibility for managing the risks in the natural and built environments.

**Performance Indicator 1: Plan is current**

The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan must be within its stated life cycle.

**Evidence required:**

There should be a clear statement of the duration/ life cycle of the Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan in the plan. The plan must be current at the time of the audit.

**Performance Indicator 2: Plan is up to date and accurate**

The Auditor must have reasonable assurance that steps are being taken to protect the accuracy of the content of the plan. Monitoring and review processes must be demonstrated, to ensure that account is taken of significant changes, events, or developments during the life of the plan. There are a number of ways that this performance indicator can be satisfied.

**Evidence required (examples):**

- (i) Updates, adjustments, amendments to plan noted in minutes of MFPC/MFMPC and/or Council Meetings;
- (ii) Statement from MFPC/MFMPC that affirms that the information in the MFPP/MFMP is accurate;
- (iii) MFPC/MFMPC Meeting minutes indicating that a review of the plan has been conducted, but no changes were necessary at that time;
- (iv) Authorisation or sign off by municipal CEO or delegate for an amendment to the Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan;
- (v) Record of formal review of the plan by municipal CEO, MFPC/MFMPC or Council.
- (vi) Aspects of the plan requiring annual review demonstrated to have been discussed and adjusted where appropriate.



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

**AUDIT CRITERION 3:**

**The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan accords generally with recommendations and advice of the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee**

The MFPP/MFMP must be in agreement with the advice and recommendations of any MFPC appointed and functioning under sections 54 and 55 of the CFA Act; and must not contradict any formal advice or recommendations of the MFPC as documented in the MFPC minutes. General conformity only is required, as advice and recommendations will probably not spell out the detail required to conform in close detail.

**Where the MFPC has been replaced by a MFMP, it is recommended that the MFMP accords with its recommendations and advice, but this is not binding under the CFA Act, as the MFPC as defined by the CFA Act no longer exists. The consequence is that this audit criterion cannot be used to determine compliance where an MFMP is in place. The auditor may, however, make comment where a disparity occurs**

**Performance Indicator 1:**

**The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan is in agreement with the advice and recommendations of the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee.**

There must be no disagreement/disparity between the MFPC and the Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan. The advice and recommendations of the MFPC as recorded in its minutes must be consistent with the Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan

**Evidence required:**

- i. The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan must not be in contradiction with formal advice or recommendations as documented in MFPC minutes; and either
- ii. Endorsement of Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan by MFPC (e.g. in letters to Council, memoranda, minutes etc); or
- iii. Records in the MFPC minutes, of advice and recommendations, must support the Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

**AUDIT CRITERION 4: The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan identifies areas, buildings, and land use at particular risk in case of fire**

**Performance Indicator 1: Identification of Risk Environments.**

The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan must contain an identification of sites, in the municipality with similar uses or risk factors, which could be at particular risk in case of fire.

**Evidence required (possible examples):**

- (i) Identification of Risk Environments in the plan; this could be achieved by the production of a
  1. Risk register; or
  2. Risk Environments; or
  3. Hazard/risk environments matrix; or
- (ii) Other appropriate method, which demonstrates systematic examination of sites or activities, which could be impacted on by structure fire, bushfire, or other fire related hazards. This may involve a range of methods approved under IFMP and adopted in Municipal Fire Management Plans

**AUDIT CRITERION 5: The Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan specifies how each risk is to be treated**

**Performance Indicator 1: Treatments specified for each risk.**

There must be treatments specified in the Municipal Fire Prevention/Management Plan for each identified instance where an area, building or land use is at particular risk of fire.

NB: the treatment documents must not be too broad – you must be able to identify the particular treatment(s) for any risk identified. Note that there may be more than one treatment for a particular risk.

**Evidence required (examples):**

Suitable examples are-

1. Regulation; eg Bushfire Management Overlays, BCA smoke alarm requirements in particular classes of buildings;
2. Education programs; eg CFA Community Fireguard, Home Fire Safety Program;
3. Management; eg Planned Burning, fuel reduction works;



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

**AUDIT CRITERION 6:** MFPP/MFMP specifies who is responsible for treating those risks

**Performance Indicator 1:** Management responsibility is specified for treating identified risks.

**Evidence required:**

- (i) Management responsibility for all treatments identified in plan is assigned to specified persons or groups; or
- (ii) Risk register or similar clearly assigning treatment responsibilities to risks

**AUDIT CRITERION 7:** The MFPP/MFMP identifies designated neighbourhood safer places

**Performance Indicator 1:** Designated neighbourhood safer places are identified or the absence of such designation recorded.

The municipal fire prevention/management plan must identify all designated neighbourhood safer places in the municipal district or if no places have been designated, record that fact.

**Evidence required:**

- i. All currently certified neighbourhood safer places within the municipality have been identified in the MFPP/MFMP by:
  - a listing in the MFPP/MFMP; or
  - reference to a Township Protection Plan, which forms an appendix/attachment to the MFPP/MFMP or
  - reference to a Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan, which forms an appendix/ attachment to the MFPP/MFMP; or
- ii. A statement in the MFPP/MFMP stating that no neighbourhood safer places are designated with in the municipal district.

**AUDIT CRITERION 8:** The MFPP/MFMP records the designation of any places in the municipal district that are community fire refuges

**Performance Indicator 1:** The MFPP/MFMP must record any places in the municipal district that are designated community fire refuges.

**Evidence required:**

All designated community fire refuges with in the municipal district are recorded in the MFPP/MFMP.



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

## Flowchart of the Audit Process

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