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## Section Two

### On Fire Risk Days: Leaving Early

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Check the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) for your location every day. When the FDR reaches your trigger point, you need to activate your plan.

Follow the advice on when to go for each FDR and start preparing to leave based on the steps in your plan.

Depending on the conditions, you will need to move quickly and efficiently if a fire starts near you. Make sure you include the 'Getting ready to go' steps in your plan. Make a point of practicing them so you know how long each step will take. Doing all of these things could take hours.

### **DON'T WAIT AND SEE**

You should never wait and see what happens during a bush fire. Leaving late means you will be on the road when conditions are at their most dangerous or you may not be able to get out at all. The longer you wait to leave, the greater the risk to your life.

### **Getting ready to go**

- › Stay updated on fire information so you will know if a fire has started near you.
- › Move livestock to a safe area and put your pets in a safe place ready for loading in the car.
- › Pack personal items such as a change of clothing for each person and toys for children and pets and put them in the car.
- › If your car is behind an electric garage door, take it out of the garage and position it in the driveway facing out or on the side of the road.
- › Remove any materials that could burn easily from around your house, on decks, verandahs and pergola areas. This includes mats, outdoor furniture and wood piles.



## Moving your pets

In the event of a fire, emergency accommodation at animal shelters and boarding facilities may not be available. Pets that are normally well behaved may also become fearful and nervous during an emergency. Part of your plan should involve prearranging with friends, relatives or others in a low fire danger area to care for your pets on fire risk days.

If you have to go to work on days of fire danger, consider taking your animals to a safer place before leaving home. Keep in mind that in the event of an emergency you may not be allowed home for some time.

## Before you leave

- 1 Add final items to your Emergency Kit such as medications, prescriptions, mobile phone chargers, pet food and water for everyone.
- 2 Pack the car, remembering your most important items such as wallet, cards, keys, banking, medical and insurance documents (these should be easily accessible on a USB stick or in an expanding file).
- 3 Turn off the gas supply.
- 4 Block the downpipes and partially fill the gutters with water, if time permits.
- 5 Make sure everyone is wearing protective clothing – long pants, long-sleeved shirts and sturdy shoes such as leather boots. Clothes should be loose fitting and made from natural fibres like pure wool, heavy cotton drill or denim. Do not wear synthetics.
- 6 Tell people you are leaving.
- 7 Close all doors and windows and lock doors.
- 8 Leave the front or access gate open.

## HORSES

If you do not have a suitable paddock or clear area in which to put your horses, consider taking them to the local showgrounds, sale yards, racetrack or pony club.

If leaving horses on your property, do not lock your horses in a stable or small area, or let them out onto the road. Instead, put your horses or livestock in a large, well-grazed paddock, or series of smaller paddocks with the internal gates left open. Remove rugs, halters and fly veils.

People die during fires trying to save their animals. Decide in advance what you'll do with your pets and livestock. Animals should never be left unattended in vehicles.

