



## Commentary Script for Living on the Edge Video

**Newsreader:** The CFA is urging people to think safe in the lead up to the busy fire season

Music playing in the background, some conversations between Firefighters going on

**Harry Rothsay – CFA Chief Officer 1991-1994:** People generally haven't learnt from the lesson of those major fires

**Russel Rees – CFA Chief Officer:** Every year bushfires threaten lives and property in Victoria. You've been sent this DVD because your home and your property is at risk. So take a close look at the DVD and take note of the messages in it and above all take action so that we together can make Victoria safer.

**Narrator:** On Ash Wednesday in 1983, bushfires swept through large areas of Victoria and South Australia, killing 47 people and destroying 2090 homes in Victoria alone.

**Man at scene:** We are witnessing one of the worse disasters of Victoria's history.

Fading off to background...

**Narrator:** Since then, there's been a rapid growth in the number of people living in or next to bushland around the edges of our cities. So the risk of fire impacting on large numbers of homes is even greater today than it was in 1983. In recent years, very large fires have burnt for months in remote areas of Victoria. In those incidents, residents knew they were at risk days or even weeks before the fires reach them. But fires can start and spread quickly, impacting on homes and people with little warning. In Canberra in 2003 for example, a large fire destroyed 488 homes and caused the death of 4 people in a matter of hours.

**Russel Rees – CFA Chief Officer:** While CFA will always respond to every fire, it may not be possible to have a fire truck at every home. So you may have to face the fire on your own.

**Narrator:** The good news is that when people protect houses, houses protect people. Scientific research has shown that even in severe bushfires, lives and homes can be saved.

**Russel Rees – CFA Chief Officer:** If you're prepared and you know what to do, you can survive a bushfire.

**CFA Lady Representative:** You need to prepare your home for fire regardless of whether you plan to stay or to leave early. You live in an area where fire is likely to impact on homes quickly. You may get little or no warning, so you must prepare your home so that it can provide protection.

**Narrator:** Create a space around your home by cleaning up. Mowing grass, raking leaves, pruning bushes and trees, and removing weeds will do a lot to reduce the risk. Make sure you have enough water and that you can use it effectively before, during and after the fire. You cannot rely on electricity or mains waters, so you may need to organise a petrol or diesel pump and a water tank for Firefighting.

Most houses are destroyed by burning ambers that arrive before the fire and for many hours after the fire front has passed. Ambers are small fragments of burning material such as leaves and bark which are blown into and around the house starting small fires. If these ambers are left unchecked, they can turn into big fires. If you're there during the fire, you can put out the ambers and stop them burning down your home.

Equipment such as mops, buckets, hoses, towels, woollen blankets are essential items to have ready in summer. Also check if you have adequate insurance. If you take precautions to minimise bushfire damage to your home, you may even be eligible for a discount. Ask your insurer.

Firefighters conversing in background and fading off...

**Narrator:** Most people who die in bushfires are caught out in the open either on foot or in vehicles and are exposed to the heat of the fire. Radiant heat can kill, but you can protect yourself by placing a barrier between you and the fire. Radiant heat can't pass through solid barriers such as the walls of a house. So when the fire front is passing, you should seek shelter inside your house. It will protect you from the radiant heat. During a bushfire, all members of the family should be wearing appropriate clothing made of natural fibres.

This means long sleeves and long pants, hat and gloves and sturdy shoes.

**CFA Lady Representative:** It is important to eat regularly and make sure you drink enough water because dehydration can also be a killer. You've been sent this DVD because you live in a high bushfire risk area. You need to be psychologically and emotionally prepared to deal with the fire.

**Car on fire:** An adult and a child tried to flee the fire in their car, they perished in the attempt.

**Narrator:** The most dangerous thing that you can do is panic in the last minute and make unsafe decisions such as getting in your car and trying to leave as the fire approaches. A car will not provide enough protection from the heat. With heavy smoke around, you may not know where the fire is. You may get disoriented and can easily get caught by the fire. Accidents during fires are very common and the results can be fatal.

**Russel Rees – CFA Chief Officer:** I would have to suggest also that had some of them chosen to stay within their home, their lives would have been better saved.

**Narrator:** Bushfires are frightening, the heat, noise and smoke may shock you. However if you have a well-thought out bushfire survival plan, you'll be able to deal with the threat and make the right decisions for you and your family. A good bushfire survival plan accounts for all members of your household including children, elderly relatives and pets. The plan should consider multiple scenarios and be agreed to by everyone.

**CFA Lady Representative:** The most important decision you have to make is whether you intend to stay and actively defend your home or leave early, long before the fire reaches you.

**Narrator:** While you are encouraged to make the decision to stay or leave early as part of your plan, you will need to remember that a fire may threaten you with little warning.

**CFA Lady Representative:** Leaving early can be a good option for many people. But you need to make sure you can leave safely, if not you must also be prepared to stay.

**Russel Rees – CFA Chief Officer:** We're here to help you learn about bushfires, to build your confidence so that you can make the right decisions. We strongly encourage you to work with us so that you can be well prepared.

**Narrator:** CFA provides a range of information through Fire Ready Victoria public meetings, education programs and a range of other resources. To find out how we can help you, ring the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 or visit our website [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

**Russel Rees – CFA Chief Officer:** Remember your home is at risk, so please take the advice in this DVD very seriously. Your life and the lives of those around you may depend on it.

Music playing in the background...