RADIANT HEAT KILLS

Protect yourself and survive

Radiant heat is a major killer in bushfires

- **Bushfires produce enormous amounts of radiant heat**
- **This heat travels in straight lines, radiating out from a bushfire ahead of the flames**
- **Radiant heat is the warmth you feel from a campfire, a radiator heater, or the flame from a gas stovetop, but could be up to 50,000 times more intense in a major bushfire**
- **Without protection, intense radiant heat will kill you**
- **Radiant heat can be blocked by a solid object, such as a concrete wall or building, which creates a barrier between you and the bushfire**
- **The best protection from radiant heat is distance.**

Bushfires and radiant heat

- Bushfires often start on hot, dry, windy days
- The hotter, drier and windier the day, the more intense a bushfire will be and the more radiant heat it will generate
- Being outdoors during a bushfire means you risk exposure to radiant heat
- The radiant heat from a bushfire can kill a human without flames ever touching them
- Radiant heat kills very quickly. The human body cannot absorb large amounts of radiant heat or withstand extremely high temperatures
- The body's cooling system cannot cope with large amounts of radiant heat leading to heat stress.

Protection from radiant heat

- Wear protective clothing to safeguard yourself from radiant heat
- Make sure all skin is covered
- Don't wear shorts, t-shirts and thongs during a bushfire as they do not give your body any protection from radiant heat
- Cover up as soon as you are alerted to a fire in your area
- Have a kit of clothing ready for each family member, including:
  - A long-sleeved shirt and pants made from cotton or some other natural fibre
  - Sturdy boots and woollen socks
  - Tough leather garden gloves – not rubber or synthetic
  - A wide-brimmed hat to protect your head
  - A face mask or towel to cover your mouth and nose
  - Eye protection such as smoke goggles to shield your eyes.

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Shield yourself from radiant heat

- Solid objects provide a barrier against radiant heat
- Radiant heat can pass through glass
- A well-prepared house or building can provide a shield against radiant heat during a bushfire.

Distance is the best protection

- The only sure way to survive bushfire and avoid radiant heat is to be out of the area
- The best protection from radiant heat is distance
- If you cannot get away from a bushfire or choose to stay to defend your house you must be prepared.

Heat-related illness

- Heat stress occurs when the body is exposed to too much heat
- Symptoms of heat stress include cramps, fatigue and dizziness
- Managing heat stress is important as it can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke
- Heat stroke can be fatal
- You can become dehydrated or heat-stressed during bushfires and not be aware of it
- To prevent heat stress, drink plenty of water as well as electrolyte drinks such as sports drinks to keep hydrated
- Cool yourself by placing wet towels over your lower arms
- Loosen clothing to circulate air flow, remove head protection and get some rest when safe to do so
- If someone is affected by heat stroke, move them to a shaded area if safe to do so and cool them by removing excess clothing, damping them down and fanning air over them
- Give small sips of fluids and place wet towels to the back of their head and armpits
- For heat stroke, call 000 and seek assistance immediately.

Be prepared for bushfire

- If you live near bush, grassland or coastal areas you must prepare for and protect yourself from bushfire
- You must prepare yourself and your property
- Have a written Bushfire Survival Plan and practise it regularly
- The only sure way to survive a bushfire is to be away from the threat
- Leaving late can be deadly
- Driving during a bushfire is very dangerous as your car offers little protection from radiant heat
- If caught in a car, pull over, leave the car running with headlights on and air conditioning on recirculate, close the vents, get down low and cover yourself in a woollen blanket. If you have water, drink it.

For more information please visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or phone the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on1800 240 667.

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FireReady Victoria

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