

Fire Permits

The ACT Rural Fire Service Chief Officer has issued this standard operating procedure under Section 38(1) of the *Emergencies Act 2004* – A Chief Officer may determine standards and protocols.

Purpose

This standard operating procedure (SOP) is to be used when inspecting and issuing a fire permit for areas of the ACT under the responsibility of the ACT Rural Service (ACTRFS) under the *Emergencies Act 2004*.

Applicability

This SOP is applicable to RFS HQ personnel engaged with activities around inspecting and issuing a permit to burn.

Background

A fire permit is required under the *Emergencies Act 2004* to light and maintain any fire during the declared bushfire danger period within the ACT. All permit holders must adhere to the conditions outlined on the permit as issued by the Service.

All current fire permits are suspended if the predicted or actual FBI from the Bureau of Meteorology for any area of the ACT reaches High (FBI 24) or greater, and for the duration of any day the forecast or actual FBI is greater than 23 during the 24-hour period. This shall be written as a condition on all issued fire permits.

All current fire permits are revoked on the declaration of a Total Fire Ban (TOBAN) for the period of the TOBAN. This excludes where high-risk activities are conditionally approved through a fire permit under the *Emergencies Act 2004 Section 126B (3)*.

The RFS Chief Officer (RFS CO), the RFS Duty Officer (RFS DO) or the RFS authorised inspector may at any time, and for any reason, revoke a fire permit.

Responsibilities

RFS Chief Officer (RFS CO)	Appoint authorised inspectors. Issue fire permits.
RFS CO / RFS Duty Officer (RFS DO) / Authorised Inspector	May revoke a fire permit at any time, for any reason.
Authorised Inspector	Inspect and process each fire permit. Arrange for a site inspection if required.

	<p>Determine any special conditions attached to a fire permit.</p> <p>Notify ESA Public Information and Engagement, COMCEN, PCS Duty Officer, ACT F&R and RFS DO of a fire permit.</p> <p>Complete post burning report if required.</p>
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Operating procedure

Time to process

Fire permits should be processed with the minimum of delay, however sufficient time for pre-planning and the application process prior to the planned burn is recommended to allow time for inspection, if required, and to take advantage, or defer the activity, according to weather conditions.

As a minimum the Service requires 5 working days to process a request for a fire permit.

Authorities

- The RFS CO designates as an authorised inspector under the *Emergencies Act 2004* with the delegation to approve permits under section 126A *Emergencies Act 2004*.
- An authorised inspector must not issue a fire permit on property owned, leased or managed by themselves or immediate family members, or property managed by their employer.

Processing an application

An authorised inspector will process each request for a fire permit within five business days.

1. If required, arrange for a site inspection. The following must be considered when deciding whether or not an inspection is required:
 - risk to assets (buildings, fences etc)
 - forecast fire weather and FBI
 - current fire weather and FBI
 - current fire activity
 - location of burn relative to adjoining exposures
 - size of burn
 - resources required to control the burn
 - expected duration of burn
 - the amount and distribution of fuel involved
 - proposed control lines
 - RFS brigade involvement.
2. Determine appropriate specific conditions necessary to ensure all safety parameters apply, prior to issuing the fire permit.
3. If approved, provide the applicant with the completed fire permit, and ensure applicant is fully aware of all conditions of the fire permit.
4. A fire permit issued to a rural landholder must be site specific and limited to 14 days. If this expires without the activity being completed, a new application and fire permit is required.


5. The RFS CO can issue a fire permit to an ACT Government Agency for multiple sites and an extended duration.
6. Provide notification of a fire permit to the ESA Communications Centre, ESA Public Information and Engagement Duty Officer, PCS Duty Officer, ACT F&R and RFS DO and to the adjacent NSW Rural Fire Service District/Zone Offices as appropriate.
7. Enter details of the burn into the Permit Database.
8. File all paperwork associated with the burn, including a copy of the fire permit in the 'Permits Issued' file for the fire season of issue.
9. Collect the relevant data on the burn and prepare a post burn report in accordance with legislation if required.

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Andrew Stark	1.0	15/02/2011	Version 1.0
Rohan Scott	2.0		Reviewed and updated
Ailish Milner	3.0		Updated to AFDRS
Chris Condon	4.0		Legislation Changes

Approved by

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Rohan Scott	CO ACT RFS		08/02/2024

Document Owner

Position	Section
RFS Director	Operations

Next review due: 01/02/2027

Related documents

Document name
Emergencies Act 2004
Environment Protection Act 1997
2.2.8 Actions on Declaration of a Total Fire Ban Standard Operating Procedure

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.