

WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

Fire Prevention Guide

Reporting a Possible Fire Hazard

How does Council manage fire hazards on private property?

From November each year, Council officers inspect roughly 17,000 properties across Wellington Shire to identify conditions that may pose an elevated fire risk.

Where it is determined that conditions on a property pose a genuine fire risk, a Fire Prevention Notice will be served on the landowner(s) directing them to reduce or remove the fire hazard.

Sometimes conditions at a property may change and we rely on the community to let us know about these potential fire hazards.

During the [Fire Danger Period](#), we continue to monitor high risk communities and inspect every possible fire hazard reported to us.

Fire Prevention Notices will not be used to manage single trees, small patches of isolated vegetation, snakes, vermin, unsightly properties or where reported hazards are in the middle of major towns.

How do I report a possible fire hazard?

If you are concerned about a possible fire hazard on a neighbouring property, you can report it to with Council, providing details of

the location and a description of the possible hazard:

- in person by visiting a Customer Service Centre at 18 Desailly St, Sale or 156 Grant St, Yarram, or
- by phone on 1300 366 244, or
- by email to enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au, or
- by mail to PO Box 506, Sale Victoria 3850.

What happens to my report?

If the possible hazard is on **COUNCIL LAND**:

- We take your details and the location of the hazard and refer them to our Natural Environment & Parks section for action.
- If you request a follow up, you will receive a phone call, letter or email about the outcome.

If the possible hazard is on **STATE GOVERNMENT LAND**:

- Council cannot investigate potential fire hazards on government land.
- However, we may be able to tell you who manages the land and provide contact details for you to follow up.

If the possible hazard is on **PRIVATE LAND**:

- We take details and the location of the possible hazard and refer them to our Municipal Fire Prevention Officer for action.
- Reports made in the lead up to our annual inspections will be marked for attention during the bulk inspections.
- Outside the bulk inspection period, we aim to inspect reported hazards within five working days.
- We **will not** provide a progress report or contact you with the outcome.

What happens during an inspection?

A Council Fire Prevention Officer will inspect the site and make an expert decision whether it poses a threat to life or property as defined by the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*.

If a fire prevention officer determines that there is a hazard, a Fire Prevention Notice will be served on the landowner(s) directing them to reduce or remove the fire hazard.

When we serve a Fire Prevention Notice, we generally give landowners three weeks to complete works as outlined. This allows fair time to source contractors and dispose of waste materials before we reinspect the property or take further action.

If a fire prevention officer determines that conditions do not pose a threat to life and property, no further action will be taken.

In fact, over 80% of reported fire hazards are assessed as not being a threat.

Why won't you tell me the outcome of the inspection?

Council is committed to acting swiftly on any reported fire hazard posing a threat to our community. When you report a possible fire

hazard we will explain our hazard inspection process, as outlined on this factsheet.

For privacy reasons, we cannot provide updates or disclose details of the inspection outcome with you.

Any actions taken are a matter between Council and the landowner(s).

What about snakes, vermin or unsightly properties?

Snakes in the country are a fact of life. They are a protected species and cannot be managed under fire prevention legislation. Council can put you in touch with a local snake catcher.

Vermin concerns can be investigated by our Environmental Health Officers.

Unsightly Properties can be investigated by our Local Laws team.

How can a potential fire hazard be cleared up quickly?

The quickest way to have a neighbouring property cleaned up is to approach the landowner directly with your concerns. Start the conversation by explaining how the issue affects you and your family.

Give your neighbour a chance to respond, understanding that they may not agree with you. Try to work out a solution together.

Where do I find more information?

- Visit Council's 'Fire' webpage www.wellington.vic.gov.au/fire
- Contact the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer on 1300 366 244 for specific advice
- Visit the CFA's 'Prepare your Property' webpage www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/how-to-prepare-your-property