

Bendigo Cemeteries Trust

Policy



REMEMBRANCE PARKS
CENTRAL VICTORIA

CODE RED BUSHFIRE SAFETY POLICY

Scope	1
Definitions	1
Policy Objective	2
Policy Statement.....	2
Fire Danger	2
Code Red.	2
Notifications	4
Service Delivery Restrictions	4
HR Management.....	7
Checklists.....	7
Delegations/Authorisation/Responsibilities.....	8
Related Policies/Documents	8
Policy Manager	8
Policy Stakeholders.....	8

Scope

This policy applies to all RPCV employees and volunteers. It also applies to contractors, customers, service providers and authorised visitors.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Members(s) are all RPCV employees and volunteers.

BoM means the Bureau of Meteorology.

Bushfire Prone Areas (BPA) are “An area that is recognised as prone to bushfire attack and has been formally designated under Regulation 804 of the Building Regulations 2006.”

CFA means the Country Fire Authority.

Policy author: Graham Fountain (CEO)
Review Period: Every 2 years
Title: Code Red Bushfire Safety Policy

Version: v1.00
Adopted: 12/01/2016
Last Modified: 12/01/2016

FDR mean the Fire Danger Rating

TFB means a declared Total Fire Ban for the Northern Country Total Fire Ban District.

Policy Objective

To provide policy guidance and education to RPCV members and their key stakeholders on the arrangements that will be put into place on Code Red bushfire days to mitigate risk and apply a primacy of life approach to RPCV business on these days of extreme risk.

Policy Statement

RPCV is committed to the continuance of service delivery to the community provided it is safe and expedient to do so. However, RPCV recognise the bushfire threat that exists across its area of operations and will implement altered service provision arrangements commensurate with risk.

Fire Danger

Victoria adopted the national Fire Danger Ratings (FDR) to help communities understand information about fire danger. These ratings recognise the significant increase in severe bushfire conditions over the past decade and the greater level of danger to the community and potential loss of life.

The FDR which is a combination of words and numbers, gives an expert assessment of the potential fire behaviour, the difficulty of suppressing a fire and the possible impact on the community. The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) in consultation with fire agencies determines the ratings for any given period or day.

The Fire Danger Rating incorporates a range of other factors relating to that area and day, including:

- The length of time the fire danger index has been elevated
- Extent of fire already in the landscape
- Fuel load and dryness
- Weather and the likelihood of adverse weather events such as lightning

Code Red

The national Fire Danger Rating (FDR) system is used as a trigger to drive operational readiness levels and for the community to help people decide on actions and measures they should take to ensure their safety. Each level indicates the intensity and speed at which fires will travel and the degree of difficulty in fire suppression if a fire were to start. The higher the rating, the more dangerous the conditions. Code Red is the highest Fire Danger Rating in Victoria.

A Code Red Fire Danger Rating means:

Policy author: Graham Fountain (CEO)
Review Period: Every 2 years
Title: Code Red Bushfire Safety Policy

Version: v1.00
Adopted: 12/01/2016
Last Modified: 12/01/2016

- The worst conditions for a bush or grass fire;
 - The most intense and fastest travelling fires;
 - Fire services will experience the greatest level of difficulty suppressing;
- Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions;
- The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas; and the
- Potential for the most extensive community impacts and consequences.

In other Australian States and Territories the term ‘Catastrophic’ is used (in Victoria it is ‘Code Red’). The implication is that a fire that burns uncontrolled on a Code Red day may have catastrophic consequences on:

- People;
- Homes;
- Critical infrastructure; and
- Government

The Emergency Management Commissioner makes the declaration of a Code Red Day in any or multiple Total Fire Ban (TFB) Districts. The declaration of Total Fire Bans remains the responsibility of the CFA Chief Officer under the CFA Act, in consultation with other fire agency chiefs and the Emergency Management Commissioner.



Figure 1 – Fire Danger Rating Wheel

A Code Red Day forecast carries a range of potential impacts and consequence that RPCV and other Government Departments and emergency management agencies need to consider and plan for.

All aspects of RPCV and its key stakeholders and clients will work together to:

- Minimise the risk of fire ignition
- Prepare for the severity of expected conditions, focusing actions on primacy of life and ensuring information reaches all members of the community likely to be affected by altered arrangements implemented by RPCV
- Understand the impacts of service delivery disruptions
- Minimise the economic consequences to businesses and industry

Policy author: Graham Fountain (CEO)
 Review Period: Every 2 years
 Title: Code Red Bushfire Safety Policy

Version: v1.00
 Adopted: 12/01/2016
 Last Modified: 12/01/2016

- As soon as is practicable return to a state of normal business, including any direct recovery and rehabilitation of RPCV assets that may have been impacted by fire and/or other emergency.

Notifications

Internal

When code red days are predicted this policy will be made available to all staff on the prior evening of a forecast Code Red Day by the Operations Manager, by email or face-to-face briefing. Individual managers will determine restrictions and advise their staff and volunteers.

External

RPCV will individually contact all external community or clients who are reliant on RPCV services and provide them with a briefing and any restrictions that may be imposed by RPCV that may directly impact them commensurate with risk.

Service Delivery Restrictions

Travel through bushfire prone areas (including 'pick-up' service)

Bushfire Prone Areas (BPA) are generally outside of metropolitan centres or the built-up areas of towns. These areas may contain higher fuel loads and increased fire risk. Except for the central urban areas of RPCV's area of operation the majority of its area of interest is classified by the State Government as bushfire prone.

All travel on Code Red Days will be kept to an absolute minimum. Travel for the delivery of essential services will be subject to Service Delivery Manager approval. All non-essential travel and meetings will be suspended.

Travelling through rural areas will only be permitted in certain circumstances and it meets the following requirements:

- Must obtain permission from supervisor prior to travel
- Duty must be of genuine urgency and is unable to be rescheduled to another day due to potential safety or health consequences
- Employees are not to travel alone where possible
- Predetermined communication regime to be confirmed including regular contact at designated intervals
- Employees are adequately prepared and trained in regard to actions to be taken if caught in a bushfire event
- It is the supervisors and managers responsibility to check the CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au to determine the fire conditions for the following days. All drivers are to monitor local ABC radio, keep their mobile phones handy and monitor the UHF radio if available.
- If there is a perceived, new or immediate risk drivers should not enter the affected area or if they are already in the area they should evacuate if safe to do so or act as directed by emergency services

- If a driver identifies a fire in his/her area then they must contact emergency services using 000 then evacuate the area and contact their supervisor or manager
- RPCV will provide a copy of the policy to all new and current employees and conduct training prior to the start of the bushfire season
- All employees are expected to be familiar with this policy. Any queries are to be directed to the supervisor or manager
- Sub- contractors and employees are bound by this procedure. Failure to observe the procedure will constitute grounds for review or termination of contract or employment.

The Service Delivery Manager is responsible for implementing this provision, including notification to staff and contractors.

Equipment not to be used

Given the expected weather severity during declared Code Red days, the type of works that can be safely carried out by either RPCV or Contract outdoor operations staff will be limited. Operations staff and contractors will take a precautionary approach and activities that carry "any" risk of starting an incident will be placed on hold until the Code Red day passes, unless these works are required as part of an emergency response. All road construction works will cease for the period of Code Red.

Using chainsaws, whipper snippers or mowers, heating bitumen, grinding, welding, soldering or gas cutting are prohibited activities on declared Total Fire Ban (TFB) and Code Red days. Similarly on TFB or Code Red day, self-propelled farm machinery, tractors, slashers, earth- moving, excavating or road making machines are not to be used within 9 metres of a fire hazard (e.g. grass, crops, stubble, vegetation etc..).

Equipment such as graders, front-end loaders and bulldozers may also create a fire danger and these items should not be used on Code Red days unless for emergency situations.

Outdoor operations staff and contractors will be restricted to central building maintenance activities (non-mechanical activities) and be available for emergency response as required.

Hazard response is to continue to maintain safety with the level of the "hazard" to be actioned will be set by the supervisor.

If staff or contractors are sent out on emergency preparation work they will be required to maintain vigilance and have regular programmed contact with the RPCV office. Local ABC Radio is to be utilised within all vehicles and a contact roster is to be set by the supervisor prior to units leaving RPCV depots.

Plant (including water tankers) will be checked ensuring they are filled, service ready and put on standby as determined by the Operations Manager.

The Service Delivery Manager is responsible for implementing this provision, including notification to staff and contractors.

Smoking

Smoking outside of designated smoking zones within RPCV sites is not permitted on Code Red Days. All staff are responsible for complying with and managing this provision.

Memorialisation Appointments

All memorialisation appointments on Code Red Days will be suspended and those already booked will be rescheduled to ensure RPCV staff and clients are not attending RPCV sites on these high-risk days. The Customer Service Manager is responsible for implementing this provision, including notification to clients.

Volunteer Research Activities

All volunteer activities will be suspended on Code Red days to ensure RPCV volunteers are not attending RPCV sites on these high-risk days. The Customer Service Manager is responsible for implementing this provision, including notification to volunteers.

Meetings

Any scheduled RPCV meeting will be suspended on Code Red days to ensure RPCV members are not attending RPCV sites on these high-risk days. The Customer Service Manager is responsible for implementing this provision, including notification to volunteers.

Funeral Services

In consultation with Funeral Directors and commensurate with risk (including consideration of site, time of service and potential numbers of attendees), RPCV will determine whether or not the scheduled service will proceed or need to be rescheduled. The preference will be that all services that proceed on a Code Red declared day are conducted as early as possible, which given these days are relatively foreseeable for a few days prior should be able to be arranged between RPCV, Funeral Director and family. This preferred arrangement will avoid the disruption associated with the need to totally reschedule the service for another day.

Where it is determined that a service will proceed the following additional conditions will apply to the service:

- Selection of the pre-determined neighbourhood safer place and/or area that attendees may be evacuated to and/or assembled will occur for all services
- An RPCV staff member will remain in attendance at the site for the duration of the service
- Carparking arrangements will be determined and directed under the direction of a RPCV staff member;
- A pre-service briefing to the attendees will be conducted indicating:
 - The heightened risk
 - The location of the pre-determined neighbourhood safer place and/or area that attendees may be evacuated to and/or assembled if by chance an emergency was to occur during the service
 - A request that attendees vacate the site as soon as possible at the conclusion of the service
- Preparations for a timely backfill, including having backfill already loaded on a truck and crew and equipment on site and ready, will occur with backfilling to occur as soon as possible following the conclusion of the service.

The Service Delivery Manager is responsible for implementing this provision, including notification to staff and contractors as well as direct liaison and consultation with Funeral Directors and where necessary families.

Visitation

On days of Code Red RPCV sites within the declared region will be assessed in line with the process adopted above for funeral services and if necessary may be closed to normal visitation.

The Service Delivery Manager is responsible for implementing this provision, including closure of sites and display of relevant signage.

HR Management

Staff living in Bushfire Prone Areas

RPCV will not refuse any reasonable request on a Code Red Day, Severe Day or a Day of Extreme Fire Danger from employees to take the relevant leave so as to action their Personal Bush Fire Survival Plan.

The following leave arrangements are outlined for employees that may be unavailable to attend employment duties during Code Red days subject to approval from the relevant supervisor. Where possible staff must obtain leave approved in advance (there is generally but not always prior notice of a declared Code Red day). In circumstances where this is not possible staff must:

- Notify their supervisor by telephone of such absence at the first opportunity on the day of absence; and
- Complete the appropriate leave application on their return.

Suspension of work

In circumstances where the work place is deemed unsafe and/or alternate duties are not available, employees may be granted paid leave for the duration of the declared Code Red bushfire period.

Organisation of home based work

The RPCV CEO and the employee may enter a formal agreement where the employee can work from home for an approved short-term/emergency arrangement only to cater for the declared Code Red bushfire period.

Leave Entitlements

Employees will be asked to use existing leave available, such as annual leave or accrued time (rostered, time in lieu, rostered days off etc..) in the event of their inability to attend work for the declared Code Red bushfire period.

Carers' Leave

Employees with responsibilities to care for dependent members of their immediate family or household may use carers' leave entitlements for the purposes the declared Code Red bushfire period in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement.

Unpaid Leave

Employees may apply for Leave Without Pay in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement.

Emergency Services Leave

Employees who are a registered member of an emergency service (such as the CFA or SES) and have received an official request from that emergency service to assist with response may access emergency leave.

Checklists

Attached to this Policy is a range of checklists designed to be modified and applicable for implementation of the provisions of this policy. The Service Delivery Manager is responsible for

implementing arrangements associated with these checklists, that are also to be signed and filed for future reference as may be required.

Delegations/Authorisation/Responsibilities

1. The CEO will be responsible for the overall management of RPCV's *Safety 1st Strategy* and the integration of this policy into the framework.
2. The Service Delivery Manager is responsible for the implementation and management of this policy, including the necessary notifications and determinations arising therein.
3. The Customer Service Manager is responsible for business continuity management in accord with the outworkings of this policy.

Related Policies/Documents

- *Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Management Policy*
- *Adverse Event & Incident Guidelines*
- *Risk Management Guidelines*

Policy Manager

CEO

Division: Executive Services

Policy Stakeholders

- Board
- Board Committees
- CEO
- CSM
- SDM

Policy Stakeholders

Approved: 12 January 2016 Board Meeting

Policy author: Graham Fountain (CEO)
Review Period: Every 2 years
Title: Code Red Bushfire Safety Policy

Version: v1.00
Adopted: 12/01/2016
Last Modified: 12/01/2016

PRE-SEASON CODE RED CHECKLIST

- Identify who might have changed or have restricted availability on a Code Red Day on weekdays, weekends & after hours by asking the following questions:
- Lives within 150m of hazard (bush/grassland)
 - Vulnerable family member(s)
 - Impacted by school/childcare closures
 - Impacted by unavailability of usual carer
 - Requirement to travel through high bushfire risk area to reach usual work Location
 - Fulfils identified business critical function
 - Able to undertake an operational support role

Availability is then confirmed with any associated restrictions

- Review Business Continuity Plans (BC Checklists) and Crisis Management Plans in place including identification of business critical activities and associated action plans .This extends to exercising, testing and amending BC plans as required.
- Identify the vulnerability of RPCV assets & infrastructure
- Walkthrough and desktop exercise of Code Red Plan
- Confirm critical IT and communication systems have contingency support arrangements
- On-going consideration of potential scenarios and consequences
- Development of communications strategy

Actioned by:

Date:

Policy author: Graham Fountain (CEO)
Review Period: Every 2 years
Title: Code Red Bushfire Safety Policy

Version: v1.00
Adopted: 12/01/2016
Last Modified: 12/01/2016

Four Days Before a Potential Code Red Determination Checklist

- Confirmation and dissemination of safety messages to operational workforce i.e. Hydration
- Notification to RPCV Staff, Contractors and Funeral Directors
- Consideration given to fire in the landscape and fire predictions – changes made to readiness
- Availability of key staff and contractors and consideration given to pre-positioning of support resources
- Agree and disseminate through multiple mediums - community information and messages
- Determine impact day of the week will have on availability and scheduled services
- Time in Lieu/leave, wherever possible, restricted to maximise surge capacity for response
- Non critical meetings, non-essential travel and training postponed.
- Identification of contractors working within RPCV sites and review and confirm work arrangements for following days.
- Review services (including 'pick-up service') occurring within RPCV sites and provide advice to Funeral Directors re: cancellation and/or alternate arrangements.

Actioned by:

Date:

Policy author: Graham Fountain (CEO)
Review Period: Every 2 years
Title: Code Red Bushfire Safety Policy

Version: v1.00
Adopted: 12/01/2016
Last Modified: 12/01/2016

Code Red Day Checklist

- Situational awareness including management and monitoring of incidents as they occur in accordance with operational procedures
- Organisational command structure informed of issues and strategies as they emerge
- Issue of warnings and advice to affected staff, contractors and clients as required, including quality assurance to ensure that all warnings and advice are relevant and tailored
- Briefing and reporting to staff and contractors
- Where required enact Business Continuity Plans
- Maintain risk and consequence plan(s) and enact mitigation activities as required
- Resource scheduled events and ensure backfilling arrangements are enacted as soon as possible
- Monitor resourcing of new incidents and ensure surge capacity is both planned and implemented where necessary
- Travel through or to bushfire prone areas should not be undertaken unless there is a requirement for urgent operational activities
- Revisit, modify (where required) and reissue any updated operational messages
- Monitor the effect of wind/dust/fire on RPCV sites

Actioned by:

Date:

Policy author: Graham Fountain (CEO)
Review Period: Every 2 years
Title: Code Red Bushfire Safety Policy

Version: v1.00
Adopted: 12/01/2016
Last Modified: 12/01/2016

The Day After a Code Red Day Checklist

- After Action Review to analyse performance
- Consult with Funeral Directors regarding impacts and/or lesson learnt
- Reschedule and/or assess impacts on service provision
- Inspect all RPCV sites to assess any adverse impacts
- Confirmation and release of internal messages
- Confirmation and release of key agency messages to the community
- Staff, volunteer and contractor mental health and well-being
- Analysis of organisational impact completed
- Advice to insurers (as required)
- Monitor fatigue and staff, volunteer and contractor wellbeing
- Review Code Red Policy and update where required

Actioned by:

Date:

Policy author: Graham Fountain (CEO)
Review Period: Every 2 years
Title: Code Red Bushfire Safety Policy

Version: v1.00
Adopted: 12/01/2016
Last Modified: 12/01/2016