**The Australian Fire Danger Rating System**

## Background

In September 2022, Australia implemented the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS). This is a nationally consistent system for fire danger ratings based on the latest scientific research. This will result in more accurate predictions for fire danger. It has fewer levels (from 6 to 4). It also has clearer, simplified messaging for all communities.

The department worked with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to update our bushfire risk methodology in line with the changes. There were minimal changes to the methodology and department policy because of the AFDRS.

The changes were implemented for last bushfire season, but this information sheet is a reminder.

## Key Changes

The below outlines the approach under the AFDRS:

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| A picture of the current Australian Fire Danger Rating chart, with six tiers of fire danger rating including low-moderate (green), high (blue), very high (yellow), extreme (red) and code red (red with black hatching). | A picture of the new Australian Fire Danger Rating chart, with four tiers of fire danger rating including moderate (green), high (yellow), extreme (orange) and catastrophic (red).  |
| **Old Victorian Fire Danger Rating** | **New Australian Fire Danger Rating** |

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| **Fire Danger Rating** | **Key messages for the community** |
| **Catastrophic** | If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost. For your survival **leave bushfire risk areas.** |
| **Extreme** | Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous. **Take action now** to protect your life and property. |
| **High** | Fires can be dangerous. **Be ready to act**.  |
| **Moderate**  | Most fires can be controlled. **Plan and prepare.** |

* **Extreme** fire danger rating (FDR) under the AFDRS covers what used to be known as Severe and Extreme.
* **Catastrophic** fire danger represents the worst conditions (previously Code Red).

As a result, the triggers for pre-emptive relocation and closure on elevated fire danger days were adjusted slightly to reflect this new system.

* **Category 1 and Category 2 schools** will relocate or close in accordance with their pre-approved plan on a day forecast **Extreme FDR** for their LGA.
* Like before, **all schools on the BARR (Category 1-3) and Category 4 list** must close on a forecast **Catastrophic FDR** day in their weather district. Their buses will be cancelled. All other buses that travel through the **Catastrophic FDR** area will also be cancelled.

## Bushfire Safety for Workers training

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) offers an e-learning module called **Bushfire Safety for Workers**. This course is highly recommended. It was designed to support people who work in and travel through bushfire risk areas as part of their job. It was updated to reflect the AFDRS. Visit the CFA website: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/atrisk>

## Learn more

If you have any questions, please contact your regional emergency management staff or email emergency.management@education.vic.gov.au.

Visit <https://www.afac.com.au/initiative/afdrs>.