

Plantation fire management and protection



Fire is a significant threat to plantation investment. All shires in the South West region require a Plantation Management Plan (PMP) to establish a plantation, and fire management is an important part of this plan.

Protection starts with site selection and design, which takes into account remnant vegetation and landscape features such as hills and surrounding land uses. Plantations are best protected from fire if sound management practices are in place and landholders have access to trained fire suppression resources.

Fire Management Plans

The Fire Management Plan is an integral part of the PMP and it will need to meet local authority requirements and the industry standard, *Guidelines for Plantation Fire Protection*, to be approved.

A copy of the Fire Management Plan should be kept onsite and easily accessible to those responding to a fire. These are usually placed in a canister near the entrance of the plantation.

Private growers rely heavily on local fire brigades to help with fire detection and suppression. Having a strong relationship with local brigades is the most effective protection against fire risk.

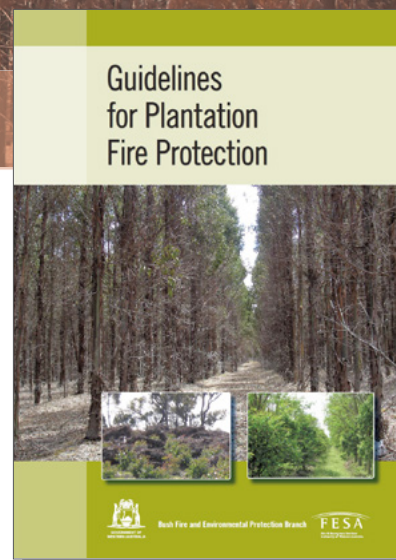


Fire Management Plans need to outline

- ✓ Landowner/manager's details and provide a 24 hour contact number
 - ✓ Contact details of local fire control agencies and neighbours
 - ✓ Details of the fire suppression equipment and operational arrangements
 - ✓ Details and maps of the plantation species and plantation layout including cell size
 - ✓ Mitigation measures to prevent a fire event in the plantation
- 1 Detection and response systems
 - 2 Water source signage
 - 3 Well maintained firebreaks and access routes with signage

Guidelines for Plantation Fire Protection (DFES 2011)

The Forest Industry Federation of Western Australia, along with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, has developed *Guidelines for Plantation Fire Protection*. These guidelines ensure that plantations meet the local authorities requirements.



Plantation firebreak standards

- ✓ Maximum cell size 30 ha
- ✓ Plantations must be setback at least 50 m from sheds and 100 m from houses
- ✓ External firebreaks must be 15 m wide and pruned to 4 m high for clear access
- ✓ Internal firebreaks must be pruned at least 6 m wide and 4 m high to allow for vehicle access
- ✓ Powerline easements 10-30 m clear each side
- ✓ Underground cables 10 m clear each side

Other fire mitigation measures to consider

- ✓ Remove all large vegetation and windrows before planting
- ✓ Conduct regular prescribed burning of adjacent remnant vegetation
- ✓ Introduce grazing once trees are large enough
- ✓ Manage weeds with herbicide or removal
- ✓ Maintain full canopy cover to reduce grass competition
- ✓ High prune trees near critical infrastructure to allow access for vehicles such as fire trucks



A good example of an external fire break that has a 15 m boundary

Our Plantation Advisory Service

The Forest Products Commission has extensive experience in managing plantations in Western Australia and can discuss options for landowners to grow and protect softwood investments.

Call 1800 241 688 or visit our website fpc.wa.gov.au/softwoodstrategy

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Phone: (08) 9363 4600
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Alternatively you can visit our website at www.fpc.wa.gov.au

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