

RULES AND REGULATIONS
OF THE
POTCHEFSTROOM
FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION



1. Rules for the Fire Protection Association.

1.1 Chapter 4 of the National Veld and Forest Fire Act: Firebreaks

“Fire breaks” can be seen as the reduction of combustible material to ensure that under normal circumstances a fire cant spread from one owner/department to another and vice versa.

A fire break may also be prepared by slashing, administering of poison etc.

1.1.1 Minimum firebreak requirements

The minimum firebreak width is currently not prescribed by the National Veld and Forest Fire Act. Firebreak widths must be adjusted according to the risk. The width in the PFPA area of jurisdiction is as follows:

- a) 0 – 30 Ha Require a 3 meter width on the land owner side of the fence/border
- b) 31 – 1 000 Ha Require a 6 meter width on the land owner side of the fence/border. Fire breaks within the land/farm must also be in place.
- c) 1 001 - Ha Require a 10 meter width on the land owner side of the fence/border. Fire breaks within the land/farm must also be in place.

1.1.2 Rules for time of preparation

The cut-off date for the making of fire breaks in the area of jurisdiction of the PFPA is **30 June**. Only the FPO can extend this date with good reason.

SPR (Special Permission Required with the FPO)

TABLE 1

Activity	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Des
Slash burning	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Fire breaks	Yes	Yes	SPR	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Crop residue	Yes	Yes	SPR	SPR				Yes
Open fires	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Cane burning	According to the act and at the discretion of FPO & Chairman							

Activity	FDI higher than		
Slash burning	55	Not allowed	Not over weekends
Fire breaks	55	Not allowed	Not over weekends
Crop residue / Grazing	55	Not allowed	Not over weekends
Open fires	55	Not allowed	
Charcoal kilns	55	Seal kilns	

Landowners can apply for special permission to prepare firebreaks outside the parameters as specified above. Special conditions will have to be in place before permission will be granted.

Special conditions that will be considered

- Area must be safe
- Must have enough resources according to the risk
- No objection from neighbouring landowners
- Weather conditions at time of burn must be safe to burn.
- Area must be guarded until safe.

1.1.3 Rules regarding arrangements between neighbours.

It is expected from each landowner to have the following arrangements with his immediate neighbours.

- Land owner must log his intention to burn with ops room
- Landowner must inform his neighbours.
- Neighbour must have representation when boundary breaks are burned
- Must have communication with neighbours and Ops room.
- Landowners must adhere to minimum requirements.
- Standby resources available
- To look after property if owners is not on the farm
- To assist with fire fighting exercises
- To respect rules and regulations
- No burning on weekends and Public holidays.

1.1.4 Rules regarding protection of soil and biodiversity

- Firebreaks must be prepared in such a manner not to enhance soil erosion.
- Natural grass veld must be burned on a bi-annual basis to promote biodiversity
- Fuel load build up must be managed to reduce the impact of intense fires on soil and flora.
- Keep firebreaks and natural areas free of invader species.

1.2 CHAPTER 5 OF THE NATIONAL VELD AND FOREST FIRE ACT: FIRE FIGHTING

1.2.1 Minimum fire fighting equipment guidelines will be based on risk assessment of the owner or group of owners, or as determined by relevant insurance companies, this must be sufficient to manage firebreak burning and uncontrolled fires

Minimum fire fighting equipment requirements for Agricultural / Rural activities

Member Category	Bakkie sakkie	Fire tender 2500lt	Tractor trailer 2000 lt	Knapsacks	Beaters	Rake hoes / Hoes	Fire lighter	Mobile radios
Land Ha								
1-10				1	2	2		
11-50	1			2	4	4		
51- 100	1			3	6	6		1
101-1000	2			4	6	6	1	2
1000 - 5000	3	1	1	5	10	6	1	4
5000 – 8000	5	2	1	8	14	8	1	4
8000 -12000	8	3	2	10	20	10	2	6
12000 +	10	4	2	10	20	10	2	6

1.2.2 Recommended Training requirements

.Refer to minimum fire fighting training requirements as per National Forest and Fire act and dept Labour standards

Owners need to ensure that their personnel are trained in fire fighting to an acceptable standard.

FPO and the department can provide advice on required standards.

These standards are valid in terms of the National Qualifications Framework.

Personnel should preferably trained by accredited institutions and trainers.

FPO and the department can provide advice on accredited trainers

1.2.3 Minimum Safety Equipment and Protective clothing

For any person involved in fire preparation and fire fighting:

- 100% cotton overall
- A cotton t Shirt and under ware
- One pair ankle- length leather boots/ fire retardant gumboots
- Leather / cotton gloves

1.2.4 Compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act

Owners as defined in the act must ensure that they comply with provisions of the act.

Recommendations: A first-aider for team size of 5 people.

First aid boxes to have minimum requirements as per Health and Safety Act

1.3 GENERAL RULES REGARDING THE USE OF FIRE

Picnic and camp fires: may be lit only in a permanently constructed fireplace surrounded by ground that is clear of all combustible matter for a distance of at least 2 metres, or at a site surrounded by ground that is clear of all combustible matter for a distance of at least 2 metres; may not be left unattended until entirely extinguished.

Smoking: no person may drop or throw down any lighted cigarette, match or anything burning. No person may light or carry a lighted cigarette or match within 15 metres of any of stacks of grain, hay, or straw or any standing crops, dry grass or crop residue and plantation slash.

Prescribed burning, including the burning of firebreaks: Owners intending to conduct a prescribed burn or to burn a firebreak must obtain a “Bravo number” from the control room to conduct the burn at any time between 1 May and 30 October. He or she will also require a permit on any day outside this season if moderate or higher fire danger is predicted for that day.

Notify your neighbours, the Fire Protection Officer and the area commander of the PFFA at least 24 hours before you light any fire and keep an eye on weather conditions. Make sure someone is in attendance for the whole time a fire is lit. Observe all conditions of your Fire Permit.

1.4 RULES GOVERNING MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS

Mutual aid agreements should be of such nature that they do not hinder the initiation and progress of fighting fires. The following would facilitate cross boundary help:

- Help should be voluntary but automatic in the event of a runaway fire
- Over kill is better
- Compensation should be arranged after the event
- General consensus should be that owners will compensate for help rendered.
- Corporate may decide to bear own cost of help within reason

1.5 FIRE PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS DURING PERIODS OF HIGH FIRE DANGER

High Fire Danger - Total Fire Ban:

When a forecast of a high fire danger rating is broadcast by the SA Weather Services and the forecast is published in the public media according to the requirements of the Act, a total fire ban applies from midnight at the start of the day of high danger, until further notice. High fire danger starts at FDI of 56. Total fire ban from FDI 60.

The FDI will be available every day at the Disaster management control room as well as all the area commanders in the PFFA area of jurisdiction. Readiness levels will be tested by the ground ops co-ordinator. Landowners must be on high alert and reaction

time must be within 2 minutes. Fire crews must be strategically placed to cover high-risk areas.

All airstrips must be manned and spotter must patrol the area to help spot fires.

All fire reports will be treated as a potential disaster and an over kill approached must be followed. The extended attack plan must be implemented within the first 30 min.

During a Total Fire Ban, no fire may be lit in the open.

This includes incinerators, garden refuse fires and picnic or barbecue fires that burn solid fuel, e.g. wood or charcoal.

Gas or electric cookers may be used only:

- On a yard within 20m of the house or dwelling or in an area with FPA approval.
- Under the control of an adult.
- If the ground within 3m of the barbecue is cleared of all materials that could burn.
- There is a continuous supply of water available.

1.6 FIRE PREVENTION AND PREPEREDNESS DURING PERIODS OF MODERATE FIRE DANGER: FIRE RESTRICTION PERIODS

1.6.1 DEFINITION OF PERIODS

The Potchefstroom fire restriction period applied from **1 July to 31 October** annually or as prescribed and recommended by the FPA in abnormal seasons

1.6.2 Conditions for the issuing of permits to burn

See 1.3 above

1.6.3 Special precautions applicable

See 1.3 above

1.6.4 Requirements during seasons of early onset

In any year when the winter drought sets in early, as judged by the level of the Drought Index, the Fire Protection Officer may publish an earlier date for the fire restriction period.

1.7 APPROPRIATE FIRE REGIMES FOR PRESCRIBED BURNING

Grasslands are not to be burnt more often than once in two years, and must be burnt between 31 March and 15 May.

1.8 SMOKE MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION CONTROL

When burning along roads and towns care must be taken not to allow smoke to cause dangerous or unpleasant conditions.

1.9 CATCHMENT PROTECTION (PROTECTION OF SOIL AND WATER VALUES)

See 1.7 above

1.10 MANAGEMENT OF ALIEN INVASIVE PLANTS

Where there is a chance of alien invasive plants proliferating after a burn i.e. burning where wattle seed beds occurs then suitable plans should be initiated to control the alien invasive plant growth

1.11 Enforcement

The following will be enforcement officers regarding provisions under the Act, by-laws affecting fires and the rules of the FPA as applied within the area of the FPA;

- The Fire Protection Officer
- Forest Officers of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- Members of the SAPS
- Any PFFPA member that has duly been appointed as a peace officer

1.11.1 By-laws for non-members

Municipal by-laws in terms of the Fire Brigade Services Act apply to the areas within declared townships and require homeowners to meet prescribed building standards with regard to fire protection and to keep their yards clear of flammable material within 10 m of any structure.