



Bushfire Safety



Total Fire Ban – Upper Primary

Introduction

The 'Total Fire Ban' safety message explores the issue of the rules applicable to Total Fire Ban days.

Bushfires can occur at any time, but are more likely and can be more dangerous in particular areas and at certain times of the year. During this 'Fire Danger Season' (also known as 'Bushfire Season' or 'Bushfire Danger Season'), restrictions are placed on various activities to help reduce the risk of a bushfire starting. Rural areas are divided into 'fire ban districts'. Some days will be declared as 'Total Fire Ban' days, due to a combination of factors that increase bushfire risks.

It is recommended that you read the 'Background Information For Teachers' before undertaking this lesson.

Links to Australian Curriculum

Geography

- Understanding that environments are important to people and animals and that we have a responsibility to look after them.
- Recognising the impact that bushfires and other natural disasters have on environments and communities.
- Developing ideas about how to prepare and respond to natural disaster events.

Health and Physical Education

- Identify, plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing of self and others in various situations.

English

- Accessing relevant prior knowledge or personal experiences to make meaningful connections to events, issues and ideas in a text.
- Sharing ideas and points of view relating to a text.



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Science

- Daily and seasonal changes in the environment can affect the Earth's surface.

Learning outcomes

Participating in this lesson will help students to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Students will consider why certain activities are banned on a Total Fire Ban day.
- Students will learn how the 'Fire Danger Rating' system helps them to be better prepared in the event of a bushfire.

Resources

You will need:

- 'Total Fire Ban' safety message video <http://vimeo.com/31055533> (running time: 30 sec)
- interactive whiteboard (IWB)
- 'Total Fire Ban Choices' activity sheet
- 'What's the Rating?' activity sheet
- information about what people can and cannot do on Total Fire Ban days. This information can be accessed via your state or territory fire agency.

Lesson steps

As a class, watch the video, 'Total Fire Ban' <http://vimeo.com/31055533>

Ask students to discuss the safety message, record their responses. Questions could include:

- What were the activities that could not be done during a Total Fire Ban?
- Why couldn't Trev's dad use the welder?
- Jimmy said that they could have a barbecue if they followed what?

In the video Jimmy says that the day is a Total Fire Ban day. Ask students what they think this means. What sorts of things or activities do students think would be banned or restricted on a Total Fire Ban day? Visit the website of your state or territory fire agency to check if suggestions are correct or incorrect.



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Display the **'Total Fire Ban Choices'** activity sheet on an IWB and have students determine if each of the listed activities is acceptable on a day of Total Fire Ban. Discuss reasons for the choices. Students could also complete this individually on a hard copy.

Display your state/territory 'Fire Danger Ratings' (you will find this on your state or territory fire agency website) on an IWB. Discuss each of the ratings. Explain that the ratings are determined by many factors including amount of rainfall, time since last rainfall, drought, humidity, air temperature, etc. Working in pairs, students to complete the **'What's the Rating?'** activity sheet.

Please note: you may need to spend some time discussing how weather factors affect Fire Danger Ratings before undertaking this activity. There is more information in the 'Teacher Background' and 'Student Background' information documents or visit your state or territory fire agency website.

When all pairs have finished, go through each scenario as a class and ask students to justify their choices (it is important that students understand the factors that go into deciding the danger rating).

Community service announcements are often used to inform the public of a Total Fire Ban day. Working in small groups students to create their own community service announcement about either a Total Fire Ban day or to tell people what the 'Fire Danger Rating' is for that day. This announcement could be a:

- short television commercial
- social media post (ensure students meet the age limit requirements before choosing this approach)
- print ad
- poster
- radio ad or jingle
- short video or animation (similar to the Li'l Larikkins videos).

Further activities

Here are some suggested extra activities to extend the students' learning.

- Invite someone from your state or territory fire agency to speak to the class about Fire Danger Ratings and how they are calculated in the field. They could also speak about Total Fire Bans and ways to prepare for bushfire season.
- Students to research what a fire needs to start and stay alight.
- Make a 'Fire Danger Rating' chart. Display it in the classroom or at home.
- Visit the CSIRO website www.csiro.au to find out more about Fire Danger Ratings. You will need to key 'fire danger fact sheet' into the website search box.



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- Find out how Fire Danger Ratings are calculated by visiting the CSIRO website www.csiro.au. You will need to key 'grass fire danger meter' into the website search box.
- During the fire season, select a class member to be responsible for checking the fire rating and warnings each day. Make a chart or board on which he/she can write the information so everyone can see it.

Extra resources

For more information visit your state or territory fire agency website:

- ACT Rural Fire Service
<https://esa.act.gov.au/actrfs/>
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
<http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/>
- Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
www.pfes.nt.gov.au/Fire-and-Rescue.aspx
- NSW Rural Fire Service
www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)
www.qfes.qld.gov.au/
- South Australian Country Fire Service
www.cfs.sa.gov.au/
- Tasmania Fire Service
<http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/>
- WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)
www.dfes.wa.gov.au/