



LOCAL CHURCHES

Bushfire Risk Management Plan



Photo by [Matt Palmer](#) on [Unsplash](#)

PARISH NAME

.....

PROPERTY NAME

.....

DATE AGREED BY PARISH COUNCIL

.....

FORM COMPLETED BY

.....

Bushfire Risk Assessment



Objective

To contribute to mission effectiveness through faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted by God.



Risk Identification

This property has been identified as being in a designated Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) and requires a bushfire risk management plan.



Consequences

The consequences if bushfire can cause devastation to the church community, including:

Health & Safety

Bushfires can cause sudden danger due to their travelling speed and unpredictability (e.g. change of wind direction) and can result in serious risks to the safety of people who are trying to escape the area via congested roads.

Business Interruption

Congregation unable to meet in the building for several months, or possibly years. An alternative meeting place will need to be found, which may not be available if other public buildings have been damaged or destroyed by the fire. Even if an alternative meeting place is found, it may be an added cost and may not satisfactorily meet the needs of the congregation.

Financial Loss

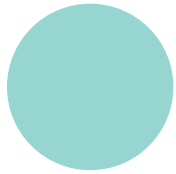
The insurance deductible will be a heavy burden on the local parish and/or the diocese in the short term. Further, insurers may be less willing to provide cover in the future, resulting in premiums becoming unaffordable or cover being withdrawn altogether.

Human Stress & Mental Health

The church community, many of whom may be suffering from losses to their personal property and the stresses of living in makeshift or shared accommodation, will have a high need for emotional and spiritual support. The vicar, who may have suffered their own personal losses, will be in high demand from stressed members of the parish community. The process of rebuilding the church will add a significant burden on the vicar and other leaders within the parish.

Community Disintegration

The cost of rebuilding to current fire standards may be assessed as being beyond the resources of the church, resulting in a decision to close the parish and leaving the community without a centre of worship.



Risk Analysis

Use the Risk Rating Matrix to determine your risk rating.

Example

Likelihood: Possible
Impact: Severe
Rating: **Medium-High**

Your Risk Rating

Likelihood:
.....
Impact:
.....
Rating:
.....

		Impact →				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
Likelihood ↑	Very Likely	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High	High
	Likely	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High
	Possible	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	Med Hi
	Unlikely	Low	Low Med	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi
	Very Unlikely	Low	Low	Low Med	Medium	Medium

RISK RATING	
ER = Extreme	Immediate action required to eliminate or reduce risk
H = High	Senior management attention needed
M = Medium	Action must be taken to eliminate or reduce the risk
L = Low	Managed by routine procedures



Risk Mitigation

The following checklists provide a handy guide for priority actions in preparation for bushfire:

Routine Bushfire Risk Management Checklist

Preparation Action	Responsibility (Who)	Complete by (When)
Trim trees overhanging buildings		
Trim branches of trees to more than 2m above ground		
Trim shrubs to ensure at least 2m clearance from trees and branches		
Remove shrubs near or touching wooden or glass features of the building		
Mow grass and remove the cuttings. Keep grass watered		
Remove material that can burn (mulch, leaves, doormats, outdoor furniture, etc.)		
Clear and remove all debris from roofs and gutters		
Block areas where embers can gather or enter the building (external walls, windows, doors, eaves)		
Repair damaged or missing tiles on roof		
Other (specify)		

Additional Bushfire Risk Management Actions

More Permanent Preparation Action	Responsibility (Who)	Complete by (When)
Fully enclose all areas under the building		
Ensure all areas under the building are clear of litter and twigs		
Install metal fly screens on all windows and vents		
Install metal gutter guards		
Position gas cylinders on side of building & away from trees and shrubs; direct any pressure valves away from building		
Install a fire sprinkler system to gutters		
Move garden beds away from buildings. Remove wooden sleepers in gardens at least 1m away from buildings		
Replace woodchips or bark mulch with stones		
Replace wood fences near buildings with metal fences		
Prepare a sturdy hose that will reach all around the building		
Ensure access to a reliable supply of water and have a diesel/petrol pump available (if applicable)		
Other (specify)		



Monitoring

Responsibility for decision making on the appropriate strategy and committing the necessary funds rests with the local parish council. The relevant diocese, as the owner of the building, carries responsibility for ensuring appropriate insurance cover.

Following agreement of the action plan, a project plan will be developed including appropriate timelines, budget and responsibilities. The parish council will monitor and discuss progress against the project plan at their regular meetings or at least quarterly.

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Taking Good Risks on God's Mission

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