

FRANKLIN
HARBOUR



SA CFS Grassland Fuel Curing Policy





South Australian Country Fire Service

GRASSLAND FUEL CURING POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2016



Government
of South Australia

APPROVED

Name: Greg Nettleton
Title: Chief Officer
Date:

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Author: Phil McDonough
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SA COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE
GRASSLAND FUEL CURING POLICY

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1. Introduction

Grassland fuel curing is the process of the progressive dying and drying out of grass after flowering (annual grasses) or drought (perennial grasses) and is expressed as a fraction of the dead material in the grass sward (Cheney and Sullivan 1997). Fuel curing has a major effect on the rate of spread of grassland fires and as a consequence it is an important input into the Grassland Fire Danger Meter (CSIRO – modified McArthur Mk 4).

Fuel curing assists in the prevention, preparedness and response activities of the SA Country Fire Service. These include:

- Fire Danger Season date assessment
- Local permit conditions
- Hazard analysis for Section 105F notices
- Fire Danger determination
- Total Fire Ban declaration
- Prescribed Burn Plan development
- Incident Action Planning, in particular Options Analysis

This policy describes the methodology for assessing the degree of grassland fuel curing in South Australia.

The CFS acknowledges the use of the CFA Grassland Fuel Curing Guide as the official assessment tool for Grassland Fuel curing in South Australia.

2. Authorisation

The Grassland Fuel Curing Policy is authorised for use in the SA Country Fire Service.



GREG NETTLETON
Chief Officer
SA Country Fire Service

DATE

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3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process for the assessment and recording of Grassland Fuel Curing and Grassland Greening in South Australia.

4. Policy

Grassland Fuel Curing

Grassland Fuel Curing Assessment will generally commence on 1 September annually or as determined by the Deputy Chief Officer.

Each Bushfire Management Committee (BMC) will select four (4) sampling sites in each local government area, or an amount to ensure adequate assessment coverage across the council area. These selected sites will be used to assess the grassland fuel curing, fuel loading and grassland greening for the entire season.

The Local Government Fire Prevention Officer (FPO) will assess the grassland fuel curing % and grassland fuel loading for each sampling site using the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Grassland Curing Guide.

The FPO will enter the grassland fuel curing % and fuel loading into the Grassland Curing Online System. This will be done every week and completed by close of business every Wednesday. Once the curing % reaches 100% cured there is no longer any requirement to provide the curing % assessments, however any significant change in fuel loading will still need to be recorded.

The use of other agency staff and CFS volunteers in more remote areas of the State is encouraged. This will enable the CFS to have a more comprehensive assessment of the Grassland Fuel Curing across the state. The number of these people should be determined by each Regional Office and BMC to ensure they have adequate assessment coverage.

Each CFS Regional Headquarters will log into the Grassland Curing Online System and verify all assessments submitted by 0900 every Thursday.

Changes in fuel loads, such as harvesting, need to be included in the weekly reports as this has a direct effect on fire behaviour and has an impact on the declaration of Total Fire Bans. (Note: The McArthur MK 4 Grassland Fire Danger Index meter assumes a standard average pasture of 4.5 t/ha)

The State Coordination Centre Support Officer (SCCSO) will complete the process by submitting the collected assessment data to the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) every Thursday morning. The SCCSO will also export the data readings and distribute to all Regions through the operations email addresses. This is intended for situational awareness.

5. Grassland Greening

At the onset of the season change where annual seed begins to germinate and perennial grasses begin to regenerate the amount of greening will be measured as the percentage of living green material in the grass sward.

The FPO/Observer will record the grassland greening for each of the same sites that were assessed for grassland fuel curing.

The FPO/observer will provide an average grassland greening as a reversed % for assessment site. For example at the commencement of greening process, the site may be assessed as 10% green it would be recorded as 90% cured. This is recorded in the Grassland Curing Online System. This will continue until a figure of 80% cured/green is reached or until advised otherwise by CFS. Figures will be submitted by close of business each Wednesday.

The CFS Regional Headquarters will verify these figures by 09:00 each Thursday.

Although the Regional Prevention Officer is the regional custodian of this procedure all Regional Headquarters will have access to a generic log on and are encouraged to have all operational staff trained in this procedure to ensure this procedure is not overlooked and staff are maintaining situational awareness across the region.

The State Coordination Centre Support Officer(SCCSO) will complete the process by submitting the collected assessment data to the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) every Thursday morning. The SCCSO will also export the data readings and distribute to all Regions through the operations email addresses. This is intended for situational awareness.

6. Training

Grassland Fuel Curing, fuel load assessment and Grassland Greening will be included as a module of the Fire Prevention Officers Course.

7. Data

The data is recorded within the online system and will be available to be exported at anytime.

8. Continual improvement

This policy will be reviewed biennially and updated to incorporate the outcomes of any reviews and lessons learned

9. Bibliography

Cheney, p. and Sullivan, A. (1997) Grassfire: Fuel, weather and fire behaviour, CSIRO, Australia.

Country Fire Authority Victoria (2000) Grassland Curing Guide, CFA, Victoria, Australia.

Department for Environment and Natural Resources (formally DEH) Overall Fuel Hazard Guide (April 2006)



Ref:

MEMORANDUM

To: CHIEF OFFICER *W 06/09/16*
From: DIRECTOR PREPAREDNESS OPERATIONS/COMPLIANCE
Date: 27/09/2016
Subject: UPDATED FUEL CURING POLICY

Greg,

Attached is the updated Grassland Fuel Curing and Greening Policy for your approval.

The main changes are:

Removal of paper recording

Inclusion of online reporting for observers and Regional Staff.

There has been some wording changes to enhance the document.

Consultation has occurred with the Council Fire Prevention Officers, Regional Prevention Officers, Director of State Operations and SA CFS Compliance Officer.

The updated Policy is attached for your signing. Once signed please forward back to the SA CFS Compliance officer for distribution and recording in objective.

LEIGH MILLER
DIRECTOR PREPAREDNESS OPERATIONS
APPROVED

