



GUIDELINES FOR BEE SMOKERS

Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc

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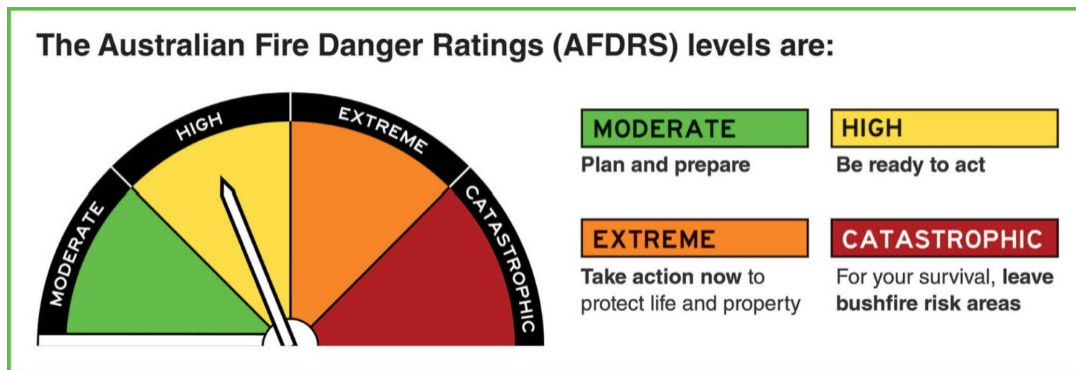
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Queensland Beekeepers' Association Branches: BRISBANE – STANLEY RIVERS – TOOWOOMBA – WARWICK – WIDE BAY

Understanding Australia's Fire Danger Ratings

It is best practice for all Beekeepers to familiarise themselves and their staff with the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System and the subsequent actions you should take in relation to your beekeeping activities, respective of the current warning rating on any given day.

From the 1st of September 2022, Australia has a simplified, action-orientated fire danger rating system.



The move to a simpler system is informed by extensive community consultation and backed by improvements in science, which will mean we can better predict areas of greater risk on days of fire danger.

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System uses four easy to recognise rating levels, each with a message to encourage you to take action to protect yourself and others in the face of bushfire risk.

The fire danger rating levels are:

- **Moderate:** Plan and prepare
- **High:** Prepare to act
- **Extreme:** Take action now to protect your life and property.
- **Catastrophic:** For your survival, leave bush fire risk areas.

The white bar under Moderate indicates No Rating for days where no proactive action is required by a community. This does not mean that fires cannot happen, but that any fires that start are not likely to move or act in a way that threatens the safety of the community.

To learn more about the Fire Danger Ratings click on the link below

<https://afdrs.com.au/>

In the event of a fire call 000

Before lighting your bee smoker

Explore and understand the current fire danger ratings and fire bans

This can be completed by visiting the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) website QFES Current Fire Danger Ratings and Fire Bans:

QFES Fire Danger Ratings - <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/prepare/bushfire/fire-danger-ratings>

QFES Current Fire Bans - <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/safety-education/using-fire-outdoors/fire-bans-and-restrictions>

Observe local weather conditions

Beekeepers should regularly visit the Bureau of Meteorology to stay informed of current weather warnings and weather forecasts. QFES strongly urges all beekeepers to observe local weather forecasts and where possible avoid lighting smokers during hot and windy conditions that exacerbate the risk of fire. Beekeepers can review local weather forecasts by visiting the Bureau of Meteorology website.

BOM QLD - <http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/index.shtml>

Ensure you have provisions to extinguish a fire

All beekeepers should carry sufficient water and have access where possible to a fire extinguisher that provides you with the means to extinguish a flame, sparks or any combustion caused as a result of using your bee smoker.

Lighting a bee smoker

All beekeepers should ensure their bee smoker is lit in an environment that mitigates the risk of flames or sparks escaping the fire chamber.

The QBA recommends lighting your smoker from the tray of a ute or truck, or on the ground in a space that has been cleared and is free of leaf litter and/or dry grass.

Using a bee smoker during a fire ban

In the first instance, beekeepers should postpone any beekeeping activity that requires the use of a bee smoker during a fire ban.

Beekeepers are permitted to light a bee smoker during a fire ban as a bee smoker is considered to be a contained fire. However, where possible the QBA strongly recommends avoiding any need to work bees during extreme fire danger.

All Beekeepers should use extreme caution when lighting smokers during a fire ban ensuring they have adequate provisions to extinguish any fire, flame, or spark that ignites as a result of the use of the smoker.

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Working hives with your bee smoker

Dedicated and maintained fire breaks around your hives

Beekeepers should maintain a cleared and dedicated fire break around their hives to protect the hives from fire and prevent the ignition of fires as a result of the use of a bee smoker. Regularly mowing or whipper snipping long grass around your apiary is a great preventative measure to ensure you mitigate the risk of fire to your hives and the local environment.

Beekeepers using apiary sites under permit should refer to the permit conditions to ensure their sites are compliant with any fire break requirements.

Placement of lit bee smokers

Beekeepers should employ extreme caution when actively working honey bees with a lit bee smoker. When using a bee smoker beekeepers should ensure the smoker is well-positioned (on even ground where possible) when placing it down to avoid the smoker falling over and opening up. Never leave a bee smoker unattended for extended periods of time.

Extinguishing your smoker

The QBA recommends extinguishing your bee smoker on completion of any work conducted in the apiary.

To extinguish a bee smoker beekeepers can empty the contents of a smoker in a safe spot free from any flammable material (dry grass, leaves etc.) and douse the smoking contents of the bee smoker with adequate volumes of water.

Where beekeepers wish to keep their smoker lit between apiary sites, bee smokers should be stored in a fire safe box that is free from any flammable material. Beekeepers should plug their smoker to prevent oxygen from accessing the fire chamber.

Beekeepers using apiary sites under permit should refer to the permit conditions associated with the use of transporting bee smokers between apiary sites.


Using your smoker during fire bans

QFES have asked QBA to recommend all beekeepers to ensure their bee smokers are extinguished in entirety prior to leaving an apiary site during fire bans to mitigate the risk of a potential fire.

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Disclaimer of Liability

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This document was prepared by:	J Martin, Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc  www.qbabees.org.au

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