
Victorian Government Policy

Replacement of Essential Water Following Bushfire – 08/09 Bushfire Season

A Victorian
Government
initiative



Created by:	Date - Version
DSE, Land and Fire Management CFA, Operations	06/11/2008 - 3
Endorsed by	Date
Chief Fire Officer CFA	18/11/2008
Chief Fire Officer DSE	18/11/2008
Central Government Response Committee	2/12/2008

Victorian Government Policy Replacement of Essential Water Following Bushfire

Purpose

The policy has been developed with the intention of relieving genuine hardship in the community caused by the continued dry conditions across Victoria by replenishing private water supplies used during fire operations.

This policy was initiated and implemented through the 2006/07 and 2007/08 bushfire seasons and is again in place for the 2008/09 bushfire season.

Scope

This policy relates to bushfire emergency events only and the use by fire agencies of essential water obtained from private properties for fire suppression / operations.

Policy

This policy states that in the event of fire, regardless of where the fire starts, if essential water is taken from domestic and stock or irrigation dams, water needed for essential use will be replaced (up to the quantity taken) when requested by the landholder. The primary purpose is to ensure that landholders have a sufficient volume of water to sustain;

- The health of affected residences and pets;
- The health and productivity of their stock;
- Agricultural and horticultural crops, permanent and intensive industries.

Principles of this Policy

- This policy is underpinned by the understanding that bushfire risk is a shared responsibility between government, community and individual landholders.
- This policy is implemented as part of the state emergency recovery arrangements.
- This policy requires that essential water replaced will not exceed volumes taken by fire operations.
- This policy places the onus on the landholders to contact their local municipality if essential water is taken for fire fighting purposes.
- This policy requires that essential private water supplies will not be replenished if there is no request made by the landholder.
- This policy remains focussed on community impacts and is not intended to support fire services.

- This policy remains focused on encouraging the community to continue to allow free access to water from private property to suppress fires.
- This policy aims to replace essential water within 48 hours of the need being established. Where operational issues impact on this, relevant emergency management personnel will negotiate the timing of the replacement and address the most immediate priorities.
- This policy will be applied in an equitable and fair manner.
- This policy will be well communicated and understood within Victoria, as well as informed individuals, land owners, land managers and businesses are often best placed to assess and manage their own exposure to risk to bushfire.

Definitions

Bushfire	-A fire involving grass, scrub, or forest.
Recovery	-The coordinated process of supporting emergency-affected communities in reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing.
Rehabilitation	-The operations and decision taken during or after a fire to re-establish land subject to fire suppression and mitigation works to as near as practicable to its pre-incident condition.”
Essential Water	-Water needed to sustain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health of affected residences and pets • The health and productivity of their stock and; • Agricultural and horticultural crops, permanent and intensive industries.

Related Documents

- Essential Water Replacement - Guidance Document for Local Government and State Government Departments and Agencies, Nov 2008.
- Joint DSE and CFA Standard Operating Procedure for Essential Water Replacement 2008.