**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What are Staged Permits?**

In the past several CFA districts and municipalities have staged permits.  That is the permit conditions change in stages from extremely strict to less strict depending on the seasonal conditions, cropping activity and other factors.  In CFA Districts 5 and 6, CFA will issue new/revised S13 permits to reflect the current stage, ***if the applicant applies for the next staged permit when that stage commences****.*  Further detail regarding staged permits are available upon request.  Please email [SWRPermits@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:SWRPermits@cfa.vic.gov.au) if you would like further information in relation to staged permits.

**What do I use to measure the permit weather conditions?**

There are several tools you can use to ensure you are burning within permitted weather conditions.  For example, you may use a local Automatic Weather Station (AWS), other local fixed weather station or handheld weather stations (for example kestrel).

**Do I need to confirm weather conditions using an AWS?**

An AWS provides weather readings to a high degree of accuracy. However, it is important to note that weather conditions can vary significantly the further the distance your land is from the AWS. For this reason, CFA strongly encourages you to use a local fixed or handheld weather station (for example kestrel or similar), and then validate these readings using other sources including but not limited to your closest AWS, a local municipal weather station or other publicly available station. CFA strongly encourages landholders to take a photo and/or accurately record weather readings prior to ignition. For the purposes of clarity, a handheld weather station **is acceptable** for confirming local weather conditions.

**Whose responsibility is it if I burn outside of permitted weather conditions?**

It is the permit holders’ responsibility to ensure they meet all permit conditions.

**Can I burn during Stage 2 conditions with a stage 1 permit?**

At all times you are required to meet the permit conditions documented on your permit.  If it is stage 2 and you only have a stage 1 permit you may burn provided you meet the conditions on the permit you hold.

**Why do I have to reapply for a permit when the season changes from stage 1, 2 or 3? Why isn’t it automatic?**

Depending on weather conditions, some will be able to burn immediately on receipt of their permit. Others may not accomplish the task. We are not in a position to determine if you require another permit without contact from you.

**I lease the land to be burned why do I have to name the landholder?**

Ultimately the landholder approves actions that take place on their property. Falsification of details to which a permit applies may incur penalties under legislation.

**I haven’t given notice of my intention to burn, does that matter?**

It is a mandatory requirement that a permit holder give notice of intention to burn to:

1. each owner or occupier of land contiguous with the are to be burned;

2. the Officer in Charge of the local fire brigade;

3. ETSA; and

4. if located within 3km of a State forest, national park or protected public land notice must be given to the appropriate forest officer.

By not complying with the conditions of a permit you may be liable to penalty, imprisonment or both.

**Why do I have to provide a map?**

Schedule 13 burning conditions differ between fire districts. If your property is on a district boundary we are able to determine the correct conditions on your permit. Additionally, CFA is legally obliged to know the exact area in which a burn is to take place. A roadside address alone does not provide sufficient detail to cover our legal obligations.

**Why is the process between fire districts different?**

Historically local shires have issued Schedule 13 permits. Each shire has operated independently and as such created a process that suited them. CFA is currently in the process of trying to standardise the process.

**Can I have my permit today?**

Whilst we endeavour to issue permits as quickly as possible, we can only issue them with correct information and in order of receipt. With the number of applications we receive we are not in a position to guarantee same day turn around. We request your patience and ask that you give us seven (7) days to process your request.

**Why do you need to know what type of fuel I am burning?**

The burning of different fuels (i.e. crop stubble as compared to tree debris etc.) are covered by different permits. We need to determine that you are applying for the correct permit and if not, direct you accordingly.

**Must all the fire units be crewed at all times?**

Permits detail the number of people and units required to monitor a Schedule 13 burn. Failure to comply with permit conditions may result in you being liable to penalty, imprisonment or both. For the purposes of clarity this means where the permits specify a number of appliances and crew, these must be crewed in accordance with the permit conditions.

**Why patrol early next morning?**

CFA strongly recommends patrolling regularly for at least 48 hours following the burn. Often the best time to identify ‘hot spots’ can be during dusk or dawn as you may readily see the ‘red glow’ of unextinguished vegetation. Patrolling the fire early the following morning also provides the ideal opportunity to confirm that all ‘hot spots’ are fully extinguished prior to the new day. This is a requirement of the S13 Permit.

**Why can't I allow stumps and woodpiles to burn out?**

Permits are issued on the basis that a burn is monitored and extinguished within a required timeframe. Failure to comply with permit conditions may result in you being liable to penalty, imprisonment or both. Heavy timber, is explicitly excluded from a S13 permit as heavy timber can burn for many days and even weeks after the burn. A S13 permit requires the fire be fully extinguished within the day/night. If you intend to burn stumps, woodpiles or other heavy timber a S14 permit should be requested.