



BUSH FIRES ACT 1954
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
TOTAL FIRE BAN
Section 22C

Lighting or use of fire, or carrying out activity in the open air that causes or is likely to cause fire, during a total fire ban

Correspondence No. 24/119318

Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Pursuant to the powers delegated and sub-delegated to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Deputy Commissioner, I hereby exempt the **Regional Power Corporation (t/a Horizon Power)** under section 22C of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, from the operations of the provisions of section 22B of that Act, subject to compliance with the specified conditions hereunder.

This exemption applies to **Horizon Power** employees and its contractors for the purpose of carrying out works across the electrical network managed by Horizon Power throughout Western Australia **during a declared total fire ban**.

Work listed below must be conducted in accordance with the 'Specified Conditions' of this exemption notice during a **declared total fire ban**:

- low and high voltage disconnection and re-connection of customer supplies; and
- operating the Transmission and Distribution networks **open-air switchgear** to energise and isolate the electrical network, *commonly referred to as switching*; and
- displacing energised conductors; and
- *urgent hot work* required to repair or maintain the electrical network for the continued provision of the electricity service.

SPECIFIED CONDITIONS

1. Notification

- 1.1. A copy of this exemption notice is to be accessible and readily available, if requested.
- 1.2. Notification is provided to DFES and the relevant **Local Government Authority** between 24 hours and 30 minutes prior to the restoration works commencing, via the approved [online notification form](#) insofar as is reasonably practicable where there is an emergency.
- 1.3. If the works are to be carried out within **three (3) kilometres** of land managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), the relevant Parks and Wildlife Service's Regional Duty Officer must be informed between 24 hours and 30 minutes prior to the activity commencing. *DBCA managed land means CALM Act Land, as set out in regulation 24AA of the Bush Fires Regulations 1954.*

- 1.4. Where possible the landowner on whose property the work is being undertaken, is to be advised prior to the activity occurring.
- 1.5. Any fire occurring as a result of the work, whether extinguished or not must be reported to the DFES Communications Centre on 08 9395 9210.
- 1.6. If any fire occurring as a result of the work cannot be controlled or suppressed, it is to be reported immediately via 000.

2. Fire Prevention

- 2.1. During a declared total fire ban when the fire danger rating issued by the Bureau of Meteorology is **catastrophic** for the place of work, any work specified in this notice which is **not considered urgent work** must cease. *Urgent work means works as specified in this notice, necessary for the continued provision or restoration of the electricity service, carried out by an essential service provider.*
- 2.2. During a declared total fire ban Horizon Power will assess weather conditions and heed warnings, carry out a comprehensive risk assessment prior to undertaking any works, and implement fire prevention controls to mitigate fire risk. *The risk assessment and applied fire prevention controls will be implemented and recorded by Horizon Power and will be provided to DFES upon request.*

3. Site Requirements: Off-road activity i.e., line patrols, fault finding when occurring on land which contains vegetation.

- 3.1. Horizon Power will comply with regulations 24ZH – 24ZL of the *Bush Fires Regulations 1954* when carrying out any *off-road activities*.

4. Site Requirements: **Switching** of open air electrical switchable assets for *identified* and *unidentified faults* and displacing energised conductors

- 4.1. Where switching of open-air switchgear or the displacing of energised conductors is to be carried out at sites within a **thirty (30) metre radius** of combustible bush or grassland the following controls will apply:
 - 4.1.1. during onsite switching operations a **ten (10) metre radius** must be clear of inflammable material around the open-air switchgear contacts, pole, and pole base; and
 - 4.1.2. at least two (2) *approved fire extinguishers* must be available on the ground at the point of the switching activity.
- 4.2. Where a **ten (10) metre radius** cleared of inflammable material **cannot be achieved** as described in clause 4.1:
 - 4.2.1. any combustible material within a **ten (10) metre radius** of the open-air switchgear must be damped down with water; and
 - 4.2.2. there must be an *approved firefighting vehicle* comprising of a minimum of **four hundred (400) litres** of water and crewed by two (2) able-bodied and trained persons (*fire detection officer* and switching officer) located in close proximity to where the work occurs.
- 4.3. Personnel as required in clause 4.2 must be trained in:

- 4.3.1. the operation of the *approved firefighting vehicle*; and
- 4.3.2. the suppression and fighting of bushfire; and
- 4.3.3. the use of *approved fire extinguishers*.

4.4. Where a fault **cannot be identified** visually on the affected network the following shall apply:

- 4.4.1. an approved Horizon Power risk assessment must be completed prior to any reinstatement of electricity supply; or
- 4.4.2. re-instatement of electricity supply is only to be undertaken if the fire behaviour index (FBI), for the area the re-instatement of electricity supply is to occur, is consistently **below** the index of **forty (40)** for the preceding hour.

4.5. On completion of the open-air switching operations, the *fire detection officer* at the site where the open-air switch gear operations are occurring, shall monitor the site for any signs of ignition and must not leave until they are satisfied that there is no fire, or anything likely to cause a fire at the site.

5. Site Requirements: Urgent hot work being carried out in the open air required to repair or maintain the electrical network, for the continued provision of the electricity service.

The following conditions only apply to *hot work* where it is *urgent work* being carried out by an *essential service provider*.

- 5.1. Fire resistant barriers sufficient to prevent the escape of hot particles or sparks must be placed around the *urgent hot work*.
- 5.2. The ground within a **ten (10) metre radius** of the *urgent hot work* must be cleared of inflammable material and/or damped down with water.
- 5.3. At least two (2) approved fire extinguishers in proper working order must be located in close proximity to where the hot work is occurring.
- 5.4. During a declared total fire ban, if the *urgent hot work* is carried out **within thirty (30) metres** of land containing any bush, crop, pasture, or stubble (vegetation), the amount of firefighting water set out in the following table must be provided:

Fire danger rating for the work site	Volume of firefighting water required (litres)
No rating	500 L
Moderate	1000 L
High	1500 L
Extreme	2000 L

- 5.4.1. The firefighting water must be contained in one (1) or more *approved firefighting vehicles* located in close proximity to the *urgent hot work* and capable of traversing the work site.

- 5.5. At all times when the *urgent hot work* is being carried out, there must be at least one (1) fire detection officer, other than the person carrying out the hot work who is dedicated solely to detecting and suppressing any fire that may be caused.
- 5.6. The fire detection officer and at least one (1) other person must remain at the site for at least 20 minutes after the hot work is completed and must not leave until they are satisfied that there is no fire or anything likely to cause a fire on the site.
- 5.7. During a declared total fire ban, when the **fire danger rating** issued by the Bureau of Meteorology is **catastrophic**, Horizon Power will comply with regulations 24E-24J of the *Bush Fires Regulations 1954* when carrying out *urgent hot work* in the open air.
- 5.8. During a declared total fire ban when the hot work *is not urgent* Horizon Power will comply with regulations 24E-24J of the *Bush Fires Regulations 1954* when carrying out *hot work* in the open air.

Period of Exemption

This exemption is valid from 1 July 2024 through until 30 June 2026 unless varied or revoked.



CRAIG WATERS AFSM

Deputy Commissioner, Operations of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, as sub-delegate of the Minister under sections 15 and 16 of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*.

13 June 2024

Appendix A – Definitions

June 2024

Approved fire extinguisher means:

- a fire extinguisher suitable to extinguish the fire likely to occur in relation to the activity; and
- has a capacity of at least 9 kilograms or 9 litres; and
- complies with the current Australian Standard.

Approved firefighting vehicle means a vehicle that:

- has one or more water storage tanks mounted upon it; and
- is capable of traversing the site; and
- is equipped with:
 - a. at least 20 metres of 19 millimetre diameter fire hose fitted with an adjustable nozzle in proper working order, having a full spray pattern capable of projecting a 6 metre jet of water; and
 - b. a pump in proper working order that is capable of delivering a minimum of 120 litres of water per minute at 700 kPa through the connected hose.

Fire Detection Officer means an able-bodied person, other than the person carrying out the hot work, who is trained in:

- a) the operation of approved fire extinguishers; and
- b) the operation of the approved firefighting vehicle's location on the site (if required); and
- c) the suppression and fighting of bush fire (if within 30m of vegetation).

Hot work means the operation in the open air of:

- a) welding apparatus of any kind; and
- b) power operated abrasive cutting disc of any kind

Urgent work means works as specified in this notice, necessary for the continued provision or restoration of the electricity service, carried out by an essential service provider.

Essential service means **electricity services**.

Open air means anywhere not fully enclosed i.e., where sparks could escape.