## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WHEN VELDFIRE APPROACHES?

- Phone your local Fire Services and or Disaster Management Centre;
- Make decisions early carry out the planned response, that is, to evacuate or to stay?
- Dress in protective clothing;
- Move livestock to safer locations;
- Listen to radio for news;
- Wet garden and house especially on the side of the approaching fire;
- Plug gutters and fill them with water;
- Fill baths, buckets and dust bins with water in case the water supply fails and have mops handy;
- Seal any gaps between doors and floor using wet towels or similar items;
- Close up the house and screen off the windows;
- Remove curtains and furniture away from windows;
- If you decide to stay, go indoors when the fire arrives and remain there until the fire front has passed;
- Take fire hoses and other firefighting equipment indoors with you;
- Patrol the house interior including checking the roof cavity and extinguish any small fires immediately;
- Remain vigilant after the fire front has passed.

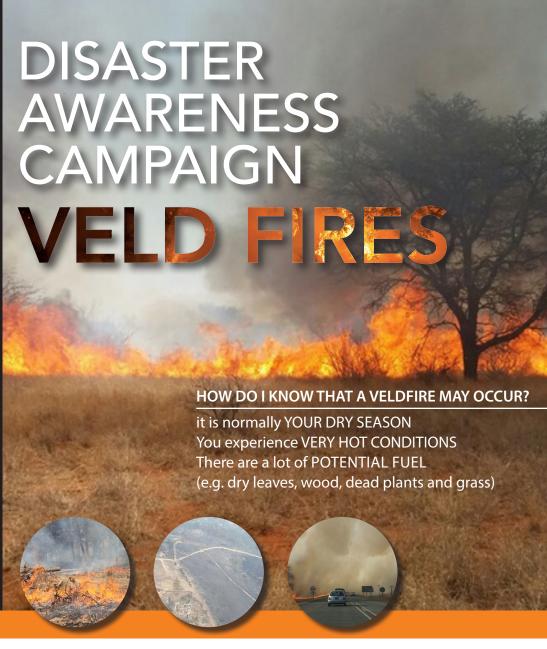
## USEFUL FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT

- Hoses
- Ladders
- Fire beaters, rakehoes and shovels.
- Torch plus spare batteries.
- Protective woollen blanket.
- Buckets (preferably metal) and mops.

- Knapsack spray.
- Suitable protective clothing.
- Gloves
- Sturdy boots or shoes and woollen socks.
- Large handkerchiefs to cover nose and mouth.
- Water bottles.

# WHAT IF I AM CAUGHT IN A FIRE WHILE DRIVING?

- Don't drive into or near veldfires. If caught in a veldfire don't drive through flames or thick smoke:
- Stop at a clearing or roadside in a low vegetation area. Turn ignition off, and hazard lights and headlights on;
- Stay inside unless near shelter. Keep vents, windows and doors closed. Lie inside, below window level, under a woolen blanket until fire front passes;
- After the main fire passes, if heat or fumes inside become severe, get out and move to already burnt ground, keeping your whole body covered;
- The petrol tank is unlikely to explode in the period you need to stay in the car while being shielded from the deadly radiant heat of the firefront.





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# FIREBREAKS

### What are veldfires?

All veld and forest fires are dealt with under the National Veld and Forest Fires Act (No. 101of 1998). This law defines a veldfire as a "veld, forest or mountain fire, where veld means the open countryside beyond the urban limit or homestead boundary". About 90% of veldfires are started by humans and the other 10% are started by natural occurrences such as lightning.

## How do I know that a veldfire may occur?

- It is normally your dry season;
- You experience very hot conditions;
- There are a lot of potential fuel (e.g. dry leaves, wood, dead plants and grass);
- You can clearly see long dry grass and plants;
- There are moderate to strong winds present.
- What should I do to reduce my risk of veldfire?
- If possible, make firebreaks around your home (use mower, spade, rake), trim branches well clear of the house;
- Clear roof and gutters of leaves, twigs, etc;
- Remove all rubbish, leaf litter and shrubs growing too close to house;
- Keep grass short and green;
- Fit wire screens to doors, windows, vents, and enclose all gaps, roof eaves and the area under your house;

- Keep a ladder handy for roof access (inside and outside) and fit hoses to reach all parts of the house and garden. If water is not connected, obtain a high-pressure pump;
- Store wood, fuel, paints, etc well clear of the house;
- If possible, check you have adequate insurance cover for yeld fire:
- Decide on a household plan to either leave early or stay to protect your home during a veld fire.



A firebreak is a strip of land where vegetation has been removed or modified to contain or to reduce the spread and intensity of any veld fire that may occur in or enter a property.

- An owner of land who is obliged to prepare and maintain a firebreak must prepare a firebreak with due regard to the weather, climate, terrain and vegetation of the area. A firebreak must –
  - → be wide enough and long enough to have a reasonable chance of preventing a veldfire from spreading to or from neighbouring land;
  - → not cause soil erosion;
  - → reasonably free of inflammable material capable of carrying a veldfire across it:
  - → be located in such a way as to minimise risk to the resources being protected;
- Do not rely on a firebreak to stop a veldfire;
- The effectiveness of a firebreak depends on its positioning and on regular maintenance.



# METHODS OF PREPARING FIREBREAKS

- → Ploughing;
- → Grazing;
- → Mowing and slashing;
- → Herbicides;
- → Burning.