



MOUNTAIN BIKE AUSTRALIA

P1: Bushfire Policy V1.0

Revision Control

Version	Date	Prepared by	Notes
1.0	17 April 2015	Denise Cox - TADM	Policy created. Provided to Board for approval and comment

Previous Policy

NIL.

Next Scheduled Revision

April 2016

Document Approval

All changes to this policy must be approved by the MTBA Management Committee.

Distribution

- MTBA Management Committee
- MTBA Staff
- MTBA Clubs
- MTBA Private Promoters

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1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Provide direction in relation to the cancellation or postponement of mountain bike activities where there is a threat of bushfires;
2. Provide direction in relation to the preparation and implementation of risk minimisation and risk management strategies and plans.

2. Background

The activity of mountain biking generally takes place in a natural bushland environment and often in remote locations where participants and volunteers are required to ride or perform their duties away from the main event or activity hub.

Access and communication to these areas can be restricted due to distance and/or terrain, and communication often relies on two-way radios, mobile and satellite phones and direction/instructions from marshals.

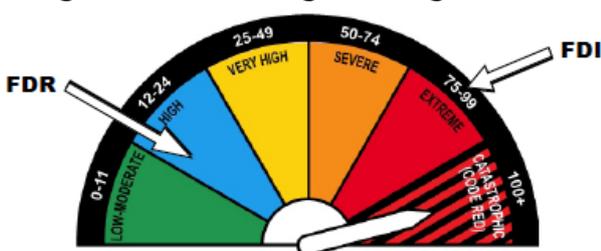
3. Content

Emergency Service Organisations accredited with a combat role for fire suppression throughout Australia produce a Fire Danger Rating (FDR) for each day during the bushfire season. This rating is based on how a fire is expected to behave if one should start on any given day. The FDR is determined by the Fire Danger Index (FDI) and is a combination of air temperature, relative humidity, and wind speed and drought conditions.

The relationship between the FDR and FDI are represented in the fire danger metre depicted in diagram 1 below.

All state and territories with the exception of Victoria define the most severe FDR as Catastrophic. Victoria use the term Code Red.

Diagram 1: Fire Danger Rating Meter



Refer to appendix one for further information on the FDR including an explanation of fire behaviour.

4. Implementation

During the bushfire season MTBA event staff will for every MTBA delivered event including National Series and National Championships across all disciplines, follow the steps below. These apply to events held on both private and public land.

1. If there is a bushfire present in the area or general vicinity including likely travel routes, the event will be cancelled or postponed after consultation with relevant emergency services.

2. Check the FDR for the area in the days preceding the event. This should include contacting relevant emergency service and/or land custodians to determine if there are any controlled burns planned for the area.
3. In the situation of a Catastrophic/Code Red or Extreme FDR for the immediate area, it is mandatory that the event be cancelled. Any decision is to be made in consultation with emergency services.
4. In the situation of a Severe FDR the event should be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with relevant emergency services and in consideration of the type of event (eg. point to point, staged race etc). However, it is strongly recommended that the event be cancelled. Evacuation routes must be considered as part of the risk management plan, marked accordingly on all event site plans and course maps and event staff briefed on their location.
5. If it is deemed safe for an event to proceed a thorough risk assessment will be conducted and significant risk minimisation, safety and precautionary strategies will be implemented in consultation with relevant emergency service agencies. These strategies will include identification of emergency meeting points and emergency evacuation routes from the event site. All strategies will be documented in a risk management plan and signed off by relevant authorities.
6. Throughout the above processes, MTBA will liaise with the host club and emergency services. It is recommended that club/promoters identify key contacts within their local rural fire service.
7. Information on cancellations will be communicated to participants, organisers, suppliers, contractors, land owners and other relevant stakeholders. Where possible, cancellations and communication of such should be made as soon as possible before the event to limit unnecessary travel by participants and others. Where possible, signage should be installed to close access road(s) and/or marshals in place to prevent access to the access to the site.
8. If a fire starts during an event, the event will be stopped immediately, the site vacated and emergency services notified and all relevant stakeholders consulted
9. It is strongly recommended that clubs and private promoters affiliated with MTBA adhere to the above recommendations or similar in assessing the conduct of mountain bike activities during the bushfire season or whenever there is a threat of or fire activity occurring.

This policy should be read in conjunction with MTBA's heat stress guidelines.

5. References

ACT Emergency Services Agency – www.esa.act.gov.au

Bureau of Meteorology – www.bom.gov.au

Country Fire Authority Victoria - www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Department of Fire and Emergency Services - www.dfes.wa.gov.au

New South Wales Rural Fire Service – www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

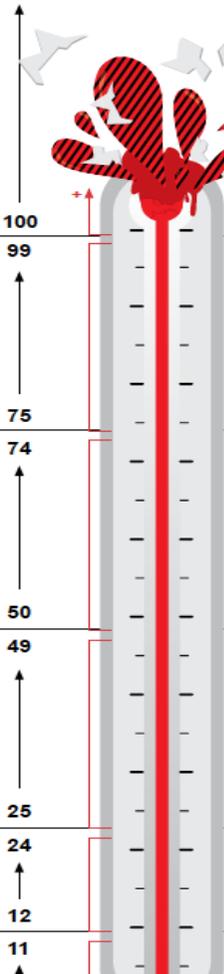
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services - www.pfes.nt.gov.au

Rural Fire Service Queensland – www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au

South Australia Country Fire Service - www.cfs.sa.gov.au

Tasmania Fire Service - www.fire.tas.gov.au

Appendix One: Summary of Fire Danger Rating

Fire Danger Rating	Fire Danger Index	Fire Behaviour	Impact Potential	What Should I Do?
CATASTROPHIC  CATASTROPHIC	100 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a fire starts, some fires will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and very fast moving with highly aggressive flames extending high above tree tops and buildings. A thick river of embers will attack homes violently causing other fires to start rapidly and spread quickly up to 20 km ahead of the main fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire will threaten suddenly, without warning and be incredibly hot and windy making it difficult to see, hear or breathe. Lives will be lost, people injured and homes and business destroyed or damaged. Even well prepared and constructed homes will not be safe. Expect power, water and phone networks to fail as severe winds bring down trees, power lines and blow roofs off buildings well ahead of the fire. <p>DO NOT EXPECT A FIRE TRUCK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that your survival is the primary consideration in any decision. The safest option is for you and your family to leave early, hours or days before a fire occurs. Under no circumstances will it be safe to Stay and Defend. Ensure you stay well informed of current fire activity by monitoring local media and regularly checking for updates on the ESA website www.esa.act.gov.au or by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.
EXTREME  EXTREME	99 75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a fire starts, fires will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving with flames in the tree tops, and higher than roof tops. Thousands of embers will be blown into and around homes causing other fires to start and spread quickly up to 6 km ahead of the main fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire will threaten suddenly, without warning and be very hot and windy making it difficult to see, hear and breathe. Lives may be lost and people injured and expect homes and business to be destroyed or damaged. Only very well prepared, constructed and actively defended homes are likely to offer any degree of safety. Power, water and phone networks are likely to fail because severe winds will bring down trees, power lines and blow roofs off buildings well ahead of the fire. <p>DO NOT EXPECT A FIRE TRUCK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that your survival is the primary consideration in any decision. Leaving early (hours before) will always be the safest option for you and your family. Implement your Bush Fire Survival Plan. If your Bush Fire Survival Plan includes the decision to Stay and Defend, only do so if your home is well prepared, constructed and you are currently capable of actively defending it. Stay well informed of current fire activity by monitoring local media and regularly checking for updates on the ESA website www.esa.act.gov.au or by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.
SEVERE  SEVERE	74 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fires will be difficult to control, unpredictable and fast moving with flames that may reach the tops of the trees and be higher than roof tops. Expect embers to be blown into and around homes causing other fires to start and spread up to 4 km ahead of the main fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire can threaten suddenly, without warning and be hot and windy which at times will make it difficult to see, hear and breathe. There is a chance lives may be lost and people injured and expect that some homes and business will be destroyed or damaged. Well prepared, constructed and actively defended homes are likely to offer safety during a fire. Power, water and phone networks may fail as winds may bring down trees, power lines and blow roofs off buildings ahead of the fire. <p>DO NOT EXPECT A FIRE TRUCK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that your survival is the primary consideration in any decision. Leaving early (hours before) is the safest option for you and your family. Follow your Bush Fire Survival Plan. Staying and defending is an option if your home is well prepared, constructed and you can actively defend it. Stay informed of current fire activity by monitoring local media and regularly checking for updates on the ESA website www.esa.act.gov.au or by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.
VERY HIGH  VERY HIGH	49 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fires can be difficult to control quickly and may be fast moving. Embers may be blown into and around homes causing other fires to occur up to 2 km ahead of the main fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire can threaten suddenly, without warning and it may be hot and windy and at times difficult to see, hear and breathe. Loss of life and homes is unlikely. Well prepared and constructed homes that are actively defended can offer safety during a fire. Power, water and phone networks may fail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that your survival is the primary consideration in any decision. Leaving early (hours before) is the safest option for you and your family. Activate your Bush Fire Survival Plan. Stay informed of current fire activity by monitoring local media and regularly checking for updates on the ESA website www.esa.act.gov.au or by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.
HIGH  HIGH	24 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fires can be controlled but can still present a threat. Embers may be blown ahead of the fire and into and around homes causing other fires to occur close to the main fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fire may threaten suddenly and without warning. Loss of life and homes is highly unlikely and well prepared homes that are actively defended can offer safety during a fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure your family and home is well prepared for the risk of bush fire. Review and practice your Bush Fire Survival Plan. Monitor local media for fire activity and regularly check the ESA website www.esa.act.gov.au or by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.
DEBATABLE  DEBATABLE	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fires can be easily controlled and are slow moving with low flame heights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no risk to life or homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure you have a current Bush Fire Survival Plan. Ensure your family, home and property is well prepared for the risk of bush fire.