



Additional Fire Protection for your Home

Sprinkler systems

These can be an expensive addition to your home but will add considerable protection to a well prepared property. Whilst computerised sprinkler systems are available, the majority rely on manual operation. Effective sprinkler systems must meet the following criteria:

- The ideal sprinkler is a metal butterfly type which overlaps and covers the total roof area plus 10m from the walls of the house. Ground or fence mounted impact drive sprinklers may be needed to cover the 10m around the house.
- Place sprinklers approximately 10m apart.
- Use metal pipes and sprinkler heads. Plastic pipe should be 40cm below the ground if used as it may melt in a fire.
- Place sprinkler heads along gutters, walls and ridge capping and under eaves, decks and flooring. Using only ridge cap sprinklers may not be effective in the high winds associated with bad fire days.
- To ensure sufficient water pressure, roof mounted sprinklers need a 38mm output centrifugal pump, close coupled to a 2.6 kilowatt petrol or diesel motor which will run up to 10 sprinklers. For more sprinklers, use a 3.7 kilowatt motor with the same pump.
- Protect pump from aerial ignition with a screen.
- Each sprinkler puts out approximately 15 litres of water per minute. A reserve water supply of 22000 - 25000 litres is needed to run a system for an average house for three hours. As mains water supply could be lost during a fire this must be an independent supply. This should protect the home from the beginning of ember attack until the fire has passed.

Supplementary water supply

A supplementary water supply is needed not only for sprinkler systems, but for hoses when connected to petrol or diesel pumps.

During a fire, water pressure is likely to be lost and an independent water supply will be necessary to extinguish spot fires. Water tanks, dams or swimming pools are ideal for this purpose.

For more information on bushfire safety and home fire safety, visit the Rural Fire Service website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or call the RFS Education Line on 1 800 654 443 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm).



For optimum use of the water supply you will need a petrol or diesel pump. Start the pump regularly to ensure it is in working order when you need it. (Where pumps are used a 38mm storz coupling will assist bush firefighters.)

Gutters and downpipes

If a bush fire is approaching your home, before the main fire front arrives there will be flying embers and debris thrown ahead of the fire (ember attack). It is often beneficial to be able to block downpipes and fill gutters with water as embers landing on the roof will be extinguished when they fall into filled gutters.

This can be achieved using simple home made devices, however, there are also commercially available plugs and valves for downpipes. Your local Fire Control Officer may be able to assist with these products.

Take care not to overfill gutters as this may lead to water damage to the house.

Document and personal record safety

As part of your home fire plan, consideration should be given to the fireproof storage of important documents and personal effects. A decision should be made as to which documents need protecting.

Whilst you can store your effects in a number of ways, fireproof safes are commercially available and can provide protection from all types of structural fires.

Extinguishers and fire blankets

Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are useful for the incidence of all fire types. Take care to ensure that any extinguisher purchased can be used on different fire types. Advice on the most appropriate extinguisher for your needs can be obtained from the retailer.

During bush fires, extinguishers are ideal for internal spot fires which have ignited furnishings.

Fire blankets can also be used for extinguishing internal fires. They are also useful for clothing fires. Ensure all such equipment is readily available and all members of the household are familiar with their use.

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