



POLICY NO. 1/03

Guidelines
for the
Classification of Fire Trails

1 Introduction.

- 1.1 These guidelines provide the basis for the standardisation for identifying and mapping of fire trails across the State. Fire trails need to be identified and identifiable in a consistent manner so as to convey to fire management personnel the condition, purpose and accessibility of the fire trail. Fire trail identification and mapping needs to be effectively undertaken in the most efficient and effective means possible, recognising the need to minimise the cost of implementation.
- 1.2 It is recognised that local conditions may necessitate variations from these guidelines. Where this is the case variations should be noted in the Local Operations Plan. Trails may need to be closed for a period of time due to wet weather or other management requirements. In these instances the temporary closures will be notified to the Executive Officer of the Bush Fire Management Committee.

2 Classification of Fire Trails

There are three categories of fire trails identified in these guidelines:

2.1 Primary Fire Trail – This is a fire trail of strategic importance and/or is a primary feeder route to a network of secondary trails.

Primary fire trails should:

- avoid steep grades which may prevent the passage of Category 1 fire tankers;
- avoid sharp bends which may prevent the passage of Category 1 fire tankers without the need for three point turns;
- be of a general carriageway width \geq 4 metres; and
- have provision to pass every 250 metres or where topography allows.

Turnaround Areas – Dead ends should be avoided as far as possible. Where dead ends exist, a turnaround of sufficient radius for a full lock by a Category 1 fire tanker should be constructed (radius \geq 12 metres). If there is insufficient space for such a turnaround due to the topography, provision should be made to allow a maximum three-point turn (radius \geq 10 metres).

Clearing - Consideration must be given to adjacent vegetation along the length of the trail. The minimum clearance for heavy tankers is 4 metres.

Maintenance – Primary trails are maintained to provide safe four-wheel drive access by fire fighting vehicles.

2.2 **Secondary Fire Trail – This is a fire trail that can be used for control in both fire suppression and mitigation operations.**

This is a trail of moderate standard and the following is recommended.

Width - generally single lane 3.5 metres wide with provision for vehicles to pass where the topography allows.

Turnaround Areas - Where dead ends exist a turnaround of sufficient radius for a full lock by a Category 1 fire tanker should be constructed (radius \geq 12 metres). If there is insufficient space for such a turnaround due to the topography, provision should be made to allow a maximum three-point turn (radius \geq 10 metres).

Clearing - Consideration must be given to adjacent vegetation along the length of the trail. A minimum clearance for heavy tankers is 4 metres.

Maintenance – Secondary trails are maintained to provide safe four-wheel drive access by fire fighting vehicles.

It is recognised that there are some secondary trails that only provide for Category 7/9 light fire tankers and some secondary/dormant trails that are known as Prepared Fire Lines (P.F.L.) – hand tool lines.

2.3 **Dormant – Is a previously existing fire trail or temporary trail used for previous fire suppression (or other) operations that is now closed. Minimum work is required to reopen the trail.**

Condition assessment of dormant trails should be carried out annually. Where dormant trails revert to a condition requiring significant work to reopen (for example heavy growth), then the Bush Fire Management Committee should review if the trail is to remain classified as a dormant trail.

Other transport routes that may or may not be used for fire fighting purposes may be subject to wet weather or management provisions.

3 Fire Trail Marking

- 3.1 The purpose of marking fire trails is to convey sufficient information to fire crews on the identification of the trail for fire fighting purposes.
- 3.2 As such, the marking of fire trails should provide information that is visible, flexible and identifiable by fire crews.
- 3.3 **Visibility** can be achieved by ensuring signs are of a distinctive colour, reflective for night vision, are not obscured by vegetation, suitably located and at a height to be noticed. Markers should be placed at a height above the ground, free of obscuring vegetation. Markers should be located in such a way as to clearly indicate the direction of the trail and be placed in advance of entering that section of the trail.
- 3.4 **Flexibility** may be important for local conditions to indicate watering points, staging areas or other operational information. Where local conditions dictate the need for such information, identification measures should not be confusing or mistaken for essential fire trail information.

Where additional information is required, such information should be in accordance with the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee *Guidelines for Standard Incident Control Documentation* (6.08.01 Bush Fire Mapping Symbols). Where additional information signs are co-located with fire trail identifiers, they should be positioned adjacent to the fire trail identifier and separated by at least 5 cm.

- 3.5 **Symbols** need to be clearly identifiable, logical and readily recognised with minimal training.

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Chairman
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