

Horses and Bushfires



If you are a horse owner you need to develop a bushfire survival plan that includes what to do with your horse.

You may choose to find a safe area on your property for the horse to shelter or you may decide to relocate your horse.

Identifying a safe place for your horse

Walk around your property and choose a safe area where horses can be placed if it is not possible or practical to relocate them. The area should:

- be as large as possible. This may be created by opening gates to several paddocks.
- be closely grazed or a large well fenced sand area that does not have any trees or buildings nearby that will burn easily.
- have a dam with easy access.

Identify several routes to get the horse to its safe place from your property, as it will depend where the fire is on the day.

Relocating your horse

If your plan is to relocate your horse you need to make arrangements ahead of time for a place to temporarily relocate your horse. Options may include showgrounds, sale yards, racetracks, pony club grounds or with family and friends.

If you cannot take your horse to family or friends, contact your local ranger when writing your survival plan to get advice on where there may be emergency paddocks or stables in your area. These safe places cannot be guaranteed, as conditions could change on the day, so make sure you also have a back-up plan.

Decide which horses you will move. Ensure your horse float is roadworthy and ready to make the trip.

Make sure your horses are float trained and if the fire is at night you need to be confident that you will be able to move the horses in the dark.

What to take:

The horse handler should wear clothing made of natural fibres (boots, jeans, long sleeved shirt) and gloves to avoid rope burn.

You should prepare an emergency kit ahead of time. It should include:

- wire cutters and a sharp knife.
- fire-resistant container to be used for water.
- extra lead rope and halter.
- woollen blanket and towels.
- horse first aid kit.
- emergency supply of food.

Safety tips

For the safety and wellbeing of your horse the following safety tips should be observed.

- do not shut your horse in the stable as that will give it no chance of saving itself in the fire.
- do not let your horses out of their paddock onto the road. This not only endangers emergency personnel who are fighting fires but also the horse itself.
- use a soft rope halter or headstall (not nylon) instead of metal collars or halters. Some horse gear may be flammable and metal gear would get very hot, so such items should be removed from the horse.
- do not leave a rug on the horse if the fire is close. Rugs burn and a horse cannot get them off.

REMEMBER:

Make sure your horse is identifiable (brand, microchip or address on its head gear) in case it gets loose during an emergency.

For further information on how to prepare for a bushfire visit:

www.dfes.wa.gov.au

Call 000 to report a fire

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.