

Key Points

- A minimum 20 metre zone of reduced fuel around a building increases its chances of survival.
- Most sheds are not ember-proof.
- Most homes damaged during a bushfire are as a result of ember attack.
- Sheds storing flammable material should be more than 20 metres from the house.
- Constructing or retrofitting your home to meet the Australian Standard 3959—*Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas*; and addressing bushfire risks in accordance with the *Planning for Bushfire Risk Management Guidelines* will ensure your house has the best bushfire protection.

Definitions

- **Surface fire** is the fire burning the leaves and scrub on the top of the ground.
- **Ember attack** is where burning bark and other fine flammable materials are carried forward of the fire.
- **Direct flame contact** is where the fire touches an object.

Consider sheds in your plan

It is important to consider sheds in the **Building Protection Zone (BPZ)**. If a shed within the home's BPZ catches fire, it may expose the building to direct flame contact and or radiant heat, resulting in the building being damaged.

The BPZ is a buffer zone between a bushfire hazard and a building. In this zone, fuel loads are minimised to reduce potential flame, radiant heat, ember and smoke attack.



Left:
A shed
destroyed by
bushfire within
a home's
Building
Protection
Zone.

20 metre zone of reduced fuel

Managing and reducing fuel loads for a minimum of 20 metres around a building will increase its chances of survival from a bushfire.

Within the BPZ, ensure that:

- tree crowns are a minimum of 10 metres apart
- trees are skirted or pruned up to a height of 2 metres
- no tree is located within 2 metres of a building
- tree branches do not overhang buildings
- there is a gap between shrubs and buildings of 3 times their mature height
- trees and shrubs do not have elevated dead material within their crowns
- lawns are kept short and green, where possible
- fences are constructed using non-combustible material, but preferably not located in the BPZ.

The majority of building damage and loss in a bushfire is due to ember attack. These burning embers get into gaps within the building, igniting the material inside. It can take a number of hours before the burning becomes apparent and by that time the building may not be able to be saved. Most sheds are constructed of corrugated steel that will not burn, however they are not ember-proof and will usually contain flammable materials.



Right: Overhanging trees and flammable material near buildings reduce their chance of survival.

Sheds that contain flammable material

Sheds containing flammable material increase the fuel load and should be avoided within the BPZ.

The potential threat of a shed to a home can be reduced if:

- The BPZ extends to 20 metres out from the shed.
- The shed does not contain flammable material.
- The valve on gas bottles face away from the building.
- The shed is ember-proofed by blocking all gaps around eaves, roof spaces and ledges.
- Leaves and twigs from the gutters, sides and under the shed are removed.
- Paths next to buildings and the driveway are positioned to provide protection for the shed and house.
- Firewood is not stored within the BPZ and/or within 20 metres of the shed.

 **For more information contact the Environmental Protection Branch on 9395 9300, email: environment@dfes.wa.gov.au or visit www.dfes.wa.gov.au**