

## **Summary of Veld and Forest Fire Act (Act 101 of 1998)**

### **Every owner on whose land a veldfire may start or burn.**

- Must prepare and maintain a fire break on his or her side of the boundary
- Must have the minimum equipment as stated by the FPA
- Must have trained staff
- Must have a responsible person if not permanently on the farm
- Must have protective clothing for staff at fires

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR FIREBREAKS**

An owner who is obliged to prepare and maintain a firebreak must ensure that, with regard to the weather, climate, terrain and vegetation of the area

- It is wide enough and long enough to prevent a veldfire from spreading to or from neighbouring land
- It does not cause soil erosion
- It is reasonably free of inflammable material capable of carrying a veld across it

Firebreaks can be ploughs, hoed, graded or chemically treated

### **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

Small farms of one to ten ha can combine with neighbours to ensure minimum equipment only if they are members of a FPA and also in writing

All other members and non-members' FPA area will:

- At least one tractor/trailer/bakkie unit off 500l of water with pump or PTO driven
- 2 x Knapsakpumps
- 2 x Firebeaters
- 1 x Fire lighter
- 1 x Radio/cell phone
- 1 x First aid kit
- 5 x Basic fire fighters
- 1 x Responsible person

Basic fire fighters must have a one piece cotton overall and leather ankle boots. Other types tend to burn or stick to a person when exposed to heat

### **REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES ON YOUR PROPERTY**

1. Keep grass short around the house/cottage and shed
2. Prepare a fire break or hoe around rubbish dumps and staff quarters as many fires occur here
3. Teach your staff about the danger of fire
4. Do not leave a open fire un attended
5. Put a notice in weekend cottages with regard to the act
6. No burning of firebreaks/grazing camps or rubbish dumps from Friday to Monday/Public holidays or Longweekends

7. Obtain a permit before any burning takes place from your local Fire Protection Officer
8. No burning is allowed if the Fire Danger Index is in the Yellow

## **DUTIES TO PREPARE AND MAINTAIN FIREBREAKS**

- If an owner intends to prepare and maintain a firebreak by burning he/she must determine a mutual agreeable date or dates with the owners of adjoining land for doing so, and inform the FPA for the area
- If agreement cannot be reached such owner must give the owner of adjoining land and FPA for the area at least 14 days written notice of the day or days during which he/she intends burning firebreaks (weather permitting)
- An owner of adjoining land who has agreed on a day or who has received a notice must burn his/her fire break on the boundary concerned on the same day or days
- Be present at such a burn
- Ensure that a sufficient number of persons are present on his side of the boundary (minimum requirements of the FPA in the area)
- Owners of adjoining land may agree to position a common firebreak away from the boundary only if they are a member of a FPA and also in writing to the FPA
- **An owner may not burn a firebreak/grassing camps if a Fire Protection Association objects to the proposed burning or the Fire Danger Index is in the yellow**

## **ACTIONS TO FIGHT FIRES**

- Any owner who has reason to believe that a fire on his/her land may endanger life, property or the environment must take all reasonable steps to notify
  - The Fire Protection Officer
  - The owners of adjoining land
  - Do everything in his/her power to stop the spread of the fire
- Any person who considers it necessary for the protection of life, property or the environment or for preventing a fire from spreading or for extinguishing it
- Enter any land
- Destroy trees, grass, crops or other vegetation
- Remove or order to be removed any vehicle or other things

## **FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATIONS (FPA)**

These associations must deal with all aspects of veldfire prevention and fire fighting

- Make rules which bind members and non-members
- Communicate fire danger rating
- Organise and train its members
- Provide management services
- Appoint a Fire Protection Officer
- Training and support for communities in the area
- The FPO must enforce the rules of the association as well as the Act

## **OFFENCES AND PENALTIES**

## **FIRST CATEGORY OFFENCE**

- Any person who lights,uses or maintains a fire in the open air when a fire prohibition is declared
- Any owner,occupier or person in control of land on which a fire occurs who fails to take reasonable steps to extinguish the fire or to confine it to that land or to prevent it from causing damage to property on adjoining land

## **SECOND CATEGORY OFFENCE**

### **Any person who, in the open air:**

- Leaves unattended a fire which he/she lit,used or maintained before that fire is extinguish
- Lights uses or maintains a fire,whether with or without permission of the owner,which spreads and causes injury or damage
- Throws,puts down or drops a burning match or cigarette
- Lights,uses or maintain a fire in a road reserve
- For a purpose other than the burning of a firebreak
- Smoke where smoking is prohibited

### **Any person who:**

- Fails to prepare a firebreak when obliged to do so
- Fails to give notice of intention to burn a firebreak
- Burns a firebreak when a FPA has objected
- Fails to inform adjoining owners when wanting to burn
- Fails to meet the standard of readiness for fire fighting
- Refuses to assist a FPO
- Hinders or obstructs any person in fighting a fire

## **PLATORAND AREA FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**