



**Lowveld & Escarpment Fire Protection Association Newsletter Issue 25 February 2018**

## Greetings,

February lies slap bang in the middle of the off-season, a period when on the fire side, things are usually quiet and peaceful. However, there have been a few unexpected fires this late in the summer and one is reminded of the value of your LEFPA membership. The costs of a wildfire that began on your property and spread further afield could be crippling, many times your membership fees. Pass your copy of All Fired Up along to your non-member neighbours - a united block of LEFPA members strengthens your protection and support levels. Until next time.



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**LOWVELD & ESCARPMENT  
FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**

## The Legal Benefits of LEFPA Membership

In the past *All Fired Up* has featured correspondence received from relieved members, grateful for the legal benefits provided by their LEFPA membership. The law requires landowners to comply with the National Veld and Forest Fire Act, whether they are members of an FPA or not. LEFPA assists it's members to fulfil their legal responsibilities by providing guidance as well as advice on reducing the risk of wildfires and coordinates activities before, during and after fires and during the fire season.

LEFPA membership ensures that there is no presumption of negligence in civil claims for damages in the event that a fire from the member's land causes loss or damage to a neighbour. Insurance companies will often grant a rebate on premiums for members of an FPA.



The benefits of LEFPA membership are highlighted when disaster strikes and the successful court case fought by a member, guided and supported by LEFPA, underlines the full scope and value of being backed by the association. The drawn-out legal battle between neighbours reached the Supreme Court before the neighbour and insurance company eventually negotiated a settlement which compensated the LEFPA member for the loss and damage incurred.

It's a good idea for you, our member, to share your monthly newsletter with your neighbours who are not members. The legal and cost saving benefits of co-operating to combat and prevent wildfires in your area are immense.

## Summer Runway Maintenance and Upkeep

The aerial firefighting fleet includes bombers which, unlike helicopters, can't lift water out of the closest dam but have to return to the nearest runway to reload with water. Fires, of course, aren't obligingly placed close to a runway either!

Every year before the fire season commences, the runways are inspected by a vehicle before the first plane arrives for runway training of the pilot and loading crews. Once everyone is happy with the runway surface, the safety officer of each service provider certifies that the runway is serviceable for the coming season.



Important points to note:

- Runways should be mowed at least twice a month with a rotary tractor mower,
- This stimulates the grass to grow sideways and not form tufts that cause the runway surface to be uneven,
- Attention must be paid to the drainage to prevent furrows and dongas forming that WILL break aeroplanes,
- Summer maintenance is key to a good surface in the winter, assisting with better service to the client and faster fire suppression,
- Safety on runways is critical – prevent animals, pedestrians and vehicles accessing the runways and fill mole holes,
- Spectator value is a huge problem, thus put measures in place to prevent people accessing the runway,
- The remote locations of these runways leads to a serious issue with vandalism and theft ,
- All LEFPA Runways are on members properties and are private strips always marked with a letter 'P',
- Runways will be manned during the fire season by qualified bomber loaders and there will also be an airstrip supervisor present.

Aeroplanes are costly to fly and maintain. If the maintenance and upgrade of our runways is not up to scratch the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will close them. This will force the bombers to operate from a runway which may be further away from the fires they are suppressing thus increasing cost and decreasing fire attack efficiency. LEFPA management, service providers and the pilots kindly request that members with runways comply with this critical task.



## Blitz Vinnig Fires Caused by Lightning

Lightning never strikes twice, they say. 'They' are wrong – a recent NASA-funded study has found that lightning storms were the main cause of massive fires in Alaska and northern Canada. In addition, experts have said that lightning strikes were the cause of the 2017 Knysna fires. The really grim news is that lightning storms are increasing as a result of climate change, so we can expect more fires to be ignited by lightning.

The study, led by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of California, Irvine, found increases of between two and five percent a year in the number of lightning-ignited fires since 1975. Lead author Sander Veraverbeke of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, said "We found that it is not just a matter of more burning with higher temperatures. The reality is more complex: higher temperatures also spur more thunderstorms. Lightning from these thunderstorms is what has been igniting many more fires in these recent extreme events."



This unpredictable ignition element is going to cause landowners and FPA's headaches and unfortunately the control of lightning is completely out of human hands. Knowledge is key, however. You can't stop lightning striking but you can do your utmost to limit the fuel load and damage potential of a lightning-ignited wildfire.

## Basic First Aid for Burn Wounds

Jaco Badenhorst has kindly put some helpful advice together to treat burns.

### Is it a minor burn or a major burn?

If it's not clear what level of care is needed, try to judge the extent of tissue damage, based on the following burn categories:  
**1st-degree burn** - the least serious type, involving only the outer layer of skin. It may cause redness, pain and swelling. If it involves much of the hands, face, feet, groin, buttocks or a major joint, seek emergency medical attention.

**2nd-degree burn** - this is a more serious burn. It may cause red, white or splotchy skin and blisters as well as pain and swelling. If the 2nd degree burn is smaller than 7cm in diameter, treat as a minor burn. If it covers the major areas listed above, seek immediate medical attention.

**3rd-degree burns** - these involve all layers of the skin and underlying fat, muscle and bone may be affected. Burned areas may be charred black or white. The patient may have difficulty breathing, carbon monoxide poisoning and other toxic effects.

### Treatment of minor burns:

- Cool the burn to pain. Hold the burned area under cool (not cold) running water for 10 to 15 minutes or until the pain eases. Or apply a clean towel dampened with cool tap water.
- Remove rings or other tight items from the burned area. Do this quickly and gently, before the area swells.
- Don't break small blisters. If blisters break, gently clean the area with mild soap and water, apply an antibiotic ointment and cover with a non-stick gauze bandage.
- Apply moisturizer or aloe vera lotion or gel, which may provide relief in some cases.
- If needed, take an over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen
- Consider a tetanus shot. Make sure that your tetanus booster is up to date.
- See your doctor if you develop large blisters. Large blisters are best removed, as they rarely will remain intact on their own.
- Seek medical help if the burn covers a large area of the body or if you notice signs of infection, such as oozing from the wound and increased pain, redness and swelling.

### Treatment of major burns:

- Call emergency medical help for major burns. Until an emergency unit arrives, take these actions:
- Protect the burned person from further harm. If you can do so safely, make sure the person you're helping is not in contact with smouldering materials or exposed to smoke or heat. DO NOT remove burned clothing stuck to the skin.
- Check for signs of circulation. Look for breathing, coughing or movement. Begin CPR if needed.
- Remove jewellery, belts and other restrictive items, especially from around burned areas and the neck. Burned areas swell rapidly.
- Don't immerse large severe burns in cold water. This could cause a serious loss of body heat (hypothermia) or a drop-in blood pressure and decreased blood flow (shock).
- Elevate the burned area. Raise the wound above heart level, if possible.
- Cover the area of the burn. Use a cool, moist, bandage or a clean cloth.

## Activities for the Month - February

- Mow airstrips.
- Prepare chemical tracer belts.
- Attend LEFPA meetings regularly.
- Train your employees in fire management.
- Finalise a firebreak agreement with your neighbours.
- Draw up an action plan for non-conforming firebreaks.
- Slash burning allowed if weather permits - get a burning permit from LEFPA.
- Remind harvesting teams to construct gates in slash lines.

The logo for Sappi, featuring the word "sappi" in a bold, blue, lowercase sans-serif font.

LEPA would like to thank Sappi for sponsoring the monthly activity desk pads to all Mpumalanga FPA's

### **Important Note:**

- Basic Firefighting Training is available to LEFPA members. Interested parties can contact the LEFPA office.
- FDI weather emails and SMSs are available to LEFPA members, contact Corné for more information.
- **SUCCESS cannot be spelt without U. Attend and participate - we need your contribution!**



## Basic Fire Fighting and Refresher Training 2018

Preparing the candidates on how to Size up a fire and to develop a plan of attack.

<b>Cost per Delegate:</b>	<b>Basic Fire Fighting:</b> R300.00 +VAT/delegate	<b>Basic Fire Fighting Refresher:</b> R165.00 + Vat / delegate
<b>Course Duration:</b>	<b>2 Days</b>	<b>1 Day</b>
<b>Course Dates:</b>	<b>As per your arrangement</b>	<b>As per your arrangement</b>
<b>Location &amp; Venue:</b>	<b>On Site</b>	<b>On Site</b>
<b>Availability:</b>	<b>20 Delegates per training course</b>	<b>20 Delegates per training course</b>

- Introduction
- The science of a fire
- The use of canvas hoses
- Some causes of forest fires
- Types of Forest fires
- Classification of all fires
- Fire duty and fire season organization
- Basic Principles of fire fighting
- Emergency measures at a fire
- "Laces"
- The 10 standard Fire fighting orders
- 18 situations that shout "watch out"
- Personal Protective Clothing
- The use of hand tools
- Manual fire line construction
- Burning an escape route as last resort
- Communication at a fire
- Discipline at a fire
- Fire fighting in the evenings
- The fire fighter and his team
- Mopping up



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