



Lowveld & Escarpment Fire Protection Association Newsletter Issue 24 January 2018

Greetings,



We hope you have enjoyed a peaceful Festive Season and are greeting 2018 with enthusiasm and renewed energy. According to Numerology, 2 is 2018's number, meaning a year of change for everyone and predicting an increase in natural disasters. Whatever your thoughts on this, climate change will undoubtedly provoke higher fire risk. Be alert! Thank you for your loyal support, LEFPA looks forward to another year of working closely with our members. Until next time.

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Malelane Sugar, Agricultural & Industrial Expo

LEFPA supported the first Sugar, Agricultural & Industrial Exhibition held in Malelane in October 2017.

Farms in the region produce sugar cane, sub-tropical fruit and winter vegetables.



Globally, the South African sugar industry ranks 15 out of 120.

LEFPA enjoyed having the opportunity to meet our sugar industry members at the Expo.

Expression of Interest - LEFPA Aerial Resources 2019

Early days, we know, but LEFPA would like to advise interested parties that the LEFPA aerial resources contracts expire at the end of the 2018 fire season. By putting the expression of interest out at this early date, LEFPA is giving suppliers sufficient time to arrange additional resources if required. It is hoped to award the contracts by the end of October 2018.



Photo: WoF Facebook page

6 Tips to Reduce the Risk of a Home Fire

Jaco Badenhorst has spent time on the internet researching the top tips to reduce the risk of a home fire. He found this extract, well worth a read, in the *The Hartford Center for Mature Market Excellence*.

A fire can happen in a flash, catching you off guard and making it difficult to escape. Fortunately, knowledge of common fire hazards can improve your odds of preventing or surviving a home fire. Here are six common reasons house fires start, as well as what you can do to reduce your risk.

1. Cooking

Most cooking fires are caused by people's behaviour, not appliance failure. Most of these fires happen when people leave food cooking unattended on the stovetop, leave burners or ovens on after cooking or place combustibles such as potholders too close to heat sources. Beware of wearing loose-fitting sleeves near burners. Closely supervise your cooking and take extra care when frying or deep-frying food or when cooking with oils, butter or other grease products. Clean up food spills or accumulated grease that could catch fire.

Home sprinkler systems provide significant protection for your family and property. They are designed so that only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly on the fire. Ninety percent of fires are contained by the operation of just one sprinkler. If you are building or renovating a home, consider installing sprinklers, especially in a high-risk area such as the kitchen.



2. Heating

Supplemental heating sources add warmth to a home, but they *also* add considerable fire risk. Most home heating fires are caused by a failure to clean wood-burning devices, lack of proper clearance around space heaters, improper heater refuelling, or simple human error. Fireplaces are a popular home heating option, however, their use also increases your fire risk. Use a fire screen or fireplace doors to contain sparks, and keep combustibles at least three feet away. Keep your fireplace clean, using appropriate tools and containers for the ashes and coals. The same applies to braais.

3. Smoking

Smoking is one fire risk over which you have complete control. Carelessly leaving burning cigarettes unattended or disposal of lighted tobacco products is a leading cause of home fires. Not only that, but more people *die* in fires started by smoking materials than in any other type of fire. In homes where people smoke, there's a greater chance that matches or lighters might be left where children could play with them, further increasing the risk of a fire.

4. Candles

Nearly 40% of candle fires starts because candles are left unattended or used improperly. If you use candles, set them up safely and extinguish them when you leave the room, even if only for a few minutes. And take precautions to never fall asleep while candles are lit.

5. Electricity

Even in newer homes, increased demand from multiple appliances may strain a home's electrical system and increase your fire risk. Be sure to consult a qualified, licensed electrician to evaluate your home's electrical system or to assist you when you purchase, repair, or renovate a home. They can help you reduce electrical fire risks.

Take note of warning signs that may indicate electrical problems that could cause a fire. Contact a licensed electrician if you notice dimming or flickering lights; plug points or switches that are hot to the touch or emit an acrid odour; discoloured cords, plug points and switch plates; or repeated blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers.



6. Furniture

Upholstered seating may be one of the most dangerous items in the home because it contains foams and fillers that if ignited, burn rapidly, release tremendous heat and produce toxic gases. Most fatal home fires involve the ignition of upholstered furniture. Be particularly careful when smoking around upholstered furniture and always keep portable heat sources at least three feet away.

When shopping for upholstered furniture, choose products that are designed to be more fire resistant.

There has been a marked increase in bedding fires caused by small open flames such as candles, matches and lighters. In fact, most candle fires start in bedrooms. Don't smoke in bed, and keep open flames such as candles, matches and lighters away from all beds.

It's all plain common sense and mindfulness. Be Aware!

Firefighting May Increase Risk of Heart Attacks

Mark Wagner has submitted an interesting piece he found online, www.health24.com/Medical/Heart/News/firefighting-may-increase-heart-attack-risk-20170405. Firefighting is a risky job and exposes firefighters to heat, a great deal of physical and mental stress and toxic materials such as gases. However, a study at the University of Edinburgh has found that the intense heat and strain could put firefighters at a greater risk of heart attack as the physical demands may trigger the formation of blood clots and impair blood vessel function. This may explain why heart disease is the leading cause of death among firefighters. In the United States, heart disease accounts for nearly half of annual on-duty firefighter fatalities, said Dr Nicholas Mills, lead researcher on the Edinburgh study.



The scientists say that the findings should encourage medical practitioners to pay closer attention to this group's unique needs, even going so far as to keep firefighters with signs of existing heart disease from participating in strenuous emergency duties.

The authors suggested that some of these health risks can be reduced inexpensively with limited heat exposure, cooling and rehydration. "The combination of extreme physical exertion and heat is unique to firefighters, so the findings are not directly applicable to the public," Mills added. However, the combination of heavy physical exertion, soaring heat and air pollution can present an increased risk in everyday life. "As such, we recommend that anyone who is exercising in high ambient temperatures should take regular breaks, keep well hydrated and allow time to cool down afterwards," he said.

Best Foot Forward 2018

While 2017 was considered a successful fire season in the LEFPA area, the increase in catastrophic wildfires around the world should be kept in mind. The Lowveld and Escarpment region cannot afford to host the devastation that occurred in Knysna, Portugal, California and Canada last year.



Get 2018 off on the right track by being well-trained and prepared. These factors play a crucial role in the swift and successful suppression of a fire on your property. Fire doesn't read a calendar, it responds to environmental circumstances so ensure that no matter the time of year, you have minimized any opportunity for those pesky flames to sprout. While weather, environment and some other issues are beyond your control, housekeeping and awareness on your property are your responsibility and best protection against severe loss and damage by unforeseen wildfires.

Activities for the Month - January

- Mow airstrips.
- Update firebreak registers.
- Identify all fire-related risks.
- Attend LEFPA meetings regularly.
- Classify and map fuel load status of all areas.
- Prioritise and schedule firebreak preparation plan.
- Inspect the condition of power-lines and servitudes.
- Slash burning allowed if weather permits - get a burning permit from LEFPA.
- Develop a training programme for your drivers, crew leaders and proto teams.



Important Note:

- The LEFPA office will close on 15 December 2017 and reopen on 8 January 2018
- A skeleton staff will be available between 06h30 and 11h00 from Monday 18 December to Friday 22 December 2017 to issue any permits required.
- The office will be open for permits from 3 January to 5 January 2018 between 07h00 and 12h00.

2018 LEFPA Calendar

JANUARY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
1 NEW YEARS DAY						
8 LEFPA OFFICE OPEN						
18 LEFPA EXCO MEETING						
25 LEFPA PLANNING MEETING						

FEBRUARY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			
8 LEFPA GENERAL MEETING						
8 LEFPA CREDITORS MEETING						
22 LEFPA EXCO MEETING						

MARCH						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
8 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING						
21 HUMAN RIGHTS DAY						
22 LEFPA EXCO MEETING						
30 GOOD FRIDAY						

APRIL						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
2 FAMILY DAY						
9 LEFPA OPERATIONALS MEETING						
12 LEFPA GENERAL MEETING						

MAY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
1 WORKER'S DAY						
7 LEFPA OPERATIONAL MEETING						
10 LEFPA GENERAL MEETING						

JUNE						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
11 LEFPA OPERATIONAL MEETING						
14 LEFPA AGM						
16 YOUTH DAY						
21 LEFPA BOARD MEETING						

JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
9 LEFPA OPERATIONAL MEETING						
12 LEFPA GENERAL MEETING						
30 LEFPA OPERATIONAL MEETING						

AUGUST						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
2 LEFPA GENERAL MEETING						
9 NATIONAL WOMAN'S DAY						

SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						
3 LEFPA OPERATIONAL MEETING						
25 LEFPA GENERAL MEETING						
20 LEFPA BOARD MEETING						
24 HERITAGE DAY						

OCTOBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
8 LEFPA OPERATIONAL MEETING						
11 LEFPA GENERAL MEETING						
27 LEFPA FIRE SEASON FUNCTION						

NOVEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
5 LEFPA OPERATIONAL MEETING						
8 LEFPA GENERAL MEETING						
22 LEFPA BOARD MEETING						

DECEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	28	29	30
31						
14 LEFPA OFFICE CLOSE						
17 DAY OF RECONCILIATION						
25 CHRISTMAS DAY						
26 DAY OF GOODWILL						

FIRE SEASON: 1 JUNE 2017 TO 31 OCTOBER 2017 - MEETINGS START AT 9H00

3 JANUARY 2017 - 31 MAY 2017 & 1 NOVEMBER 2017 - 31 DECEMBER 2017: MEETINGS START AT 10H00