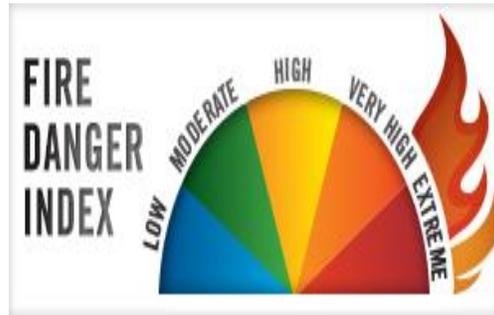




Greetings,

We have another packed issue this month and hope that the fire season remains quiet enough for you to enjoy the read. Our focus in June is to introduce the crews and pilots, with the hope that you don't have to meet them face to face! Don't neglect the activities for the month on the back page and keep up to date with the Fire Danger Index and WATCHOUT. Until next time.



Contact Us

LEFPA Nelspruit

Corné

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admin@lefpa.co.za

Permit Requests

Office: 013 752 6419

0860 66 34 73

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or

permit2@lefpa.co.za

Planned Burning Below Eskom Power Lines

Eskom has scheduled transmission outages to allow for planned burns beneath their power lines on the Eskom Motraco (Arnot-Maputo) line. The line is scheduled to be off from 26th to 30th June and again from 24th to 28th July.

Coordination of the line shut off will be managed by LEFPA.

Why manage vegetation under the power lines?

- to ensure safe clearances under and around the power lines;
- to ensure adequate access for inspection, maintenance and repair activities on the lines;
- to reduce fuel loads under power lines, mitigating flashovers.

Fire Critical Zones around transmission lines

A fire critical zone (the zone in which flashovers may occur) occurs within 5m from the vertical below the conductor, mostly in the mid-span area. Fires driven by a high fuel load and variable atmospheric conditions within this zone may lead to a flashover. Based on this, the area of the servitude within 5m from the outside conductors should be considered as critical for clearing or reducing other plants and fuel load posing a fire risk. Due to the highly variable effect of atmospheric conditions, 10m is regarded as a practical rule of thumb.

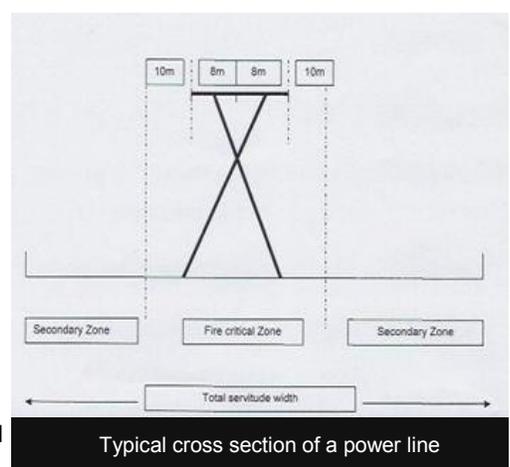
Flashovers are very likely when:

- the ambient air temperature is greater than 20°C;
- the relative humidity is less than 20% and;
- the wind speed is greater than 20km/h.

Fuel Management in the Servitude

The excessive removal of plants that do not present a fire hazard is not advised as it could increase the risk of erosion on certain soils and generates large quantities of fuel material to remove. Disposal of large quantities of cut material creates its own problems. As cut or slashed materials generate a fire risk, a selective cutting/fuel load reduction procedure is proposed which should adequately reduce fire risk without generating an unnecessarily large quantity of cut material to dispose of.

Cognizance should be taken of the possibility of soil sterilization and consequential plant succession that may occur because of these burns. Land owners must report all planned burns to Eskom so that the necessary arrangements can be made to safeguard the lines and prevent flashover incidents.



For any burning below the power line, authorization must be requested from Eskom Transmission 30 days prior to burning. Contact Veon Fourie on cell 073 579 8898 / 013 693 6150 / Veon.Fourie@Eskom.co.za.

Meet the 2017 Fire Season Pilots

LEFPA is delighted to welcome familiar faces back for the 2017 fire season - Rob Taylor and Riaan Foley, from Orsmond Aviation. They'll be on duty from 15th May until 15th November. On the 1st June until 31st October, Rob and Riaan will be joined by pilots from WoF as well as Hylton Taylor and Liam Mostert from AFS. Hylton has 14 fire seasons based in Nelspruit under his wing. At time of publication, the WoF pilots for the season had not been allocated, so we'll introduce them in the next issue.

We featured Rob and Riaan in the June 2016 issue of *All Fired Up*. Riaan has been flying since the age of 14 and his youthful energy and enthusiasm is a good balance to Rob's years of experience. Rob began flying fire seasons in the Lowveld in 1990 and has almost 40 seasons under his belt.

Both pilots enjoy their LEFPA fire seasons, Riaan remarking that the Association maintains extremely high standards that he works hard to live up to. LEFPA wishes them all the best for the 2017 season.

Welcome to both returning and new pilots!



Rob Taylor (left) and Riaan Foley (right)

Train, Train and Train Again

Knowledge is power and practice makes perfect and boy, have LEFPA provided a plethora of training courses over the past month. The Association hosted the first ever Aircraft Dispatcher D-312 training in South Africa, presented by Barb Whiteman, Kim Thomas and Sarah Doehring from the USA.

An Incident Command System (ICS) course was held at LEFPA in May, presented by Michelle Kleinhans from DIM and two instructors from the USA; Mike Meyers from the New York City Fire Department and Keith Wolfeman from the Smoke Jumper Base in Montana.

As if that wasn't enough, CMO have carried out Incident Action Plan and Fire Boss training, while the Bomber Loader Training will continue at all LEFPA runways until 6th June.

LEFPA believes that you can never be over-prepared or over-trained for the Fire Season, these are critical key factors in ensuring fast, efficient response and minimizing risk to Fire Fighter safety. For further information on available training contact the LEFPA offices 013 752 6419 and ask for a quote. All training can be carried out on site.



L - R Keith Wolfeman, Mike Meyers, Kim Thomas, Barb Whiteman and Sarah Doehring

Fire Danger Index (FDI)

The FDI is LEFPA's fire danger barometer; a formula based on a combination of factors - outside temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and the amount of rain that has fallen in the past 24 hours. These factors combine to calculate a percentage which falls into one of a series of colour coded indices and is classified one of the following:

Safe, Moderate, Dangerous, Very Dangerous and Extremely Dangerous. The FDI concept was first put forward by Mike Laing of the Rhodesia Department of Meteorological Services, in *Forecasting Bush and Forest Fire Weather in Rhodesia*, published in March 1978.

LEFPA's predecessor, the Lowveld Fire Protection Association, was formed in 1984 and began using the FDI based on the Rhodesian model. Today's FDI has been slightly modified over time and is known as the 'Lowveld Model', which is the standard used nationally to assess and classify fire risk.

LEFPA sponsors the lunchtime FDI report on Radio Laeveld which is a daily report for the Lowveld, Escarpment and Onderberg regions.

Fire Alert Stages	BLUE	GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	RED
Fire Danger Index	0 - 20	21 - 45	46 - 60	61 - 75	76 - 100
Fire Behaviour	SAFE	MODERATE	DANGEROUS	VERY	EXTREMELY DANGEROUS
Flame Lengths (m)	0 - 1	1 - 1.2	1.2 - 1.8	1.8 - 2.4	2.4 +
Fire Control Guide Contact LRFA or Fire Hawk to attain the latest information regarding fire danger rating application.	Low fire hazard Controlled burning operations can normally be executed with a reasonable degree of safety.	Although controlled burning operations can be done without creating a fire hazard, care must be taken when burning on exposed, dry slopes. Keep a constant watch for any unexpected wind speed and direction changes.	Controlled burning is not recommended when the FDI exceeds 45. Aircraft should be called in at the early stages of a fire.	NO CONTROLLED BURNING OF ANY NATURE should take place. Careful note should be taken of any sign of smoke anywhere - especially on the up-wind side of any plantation. Any fire that occurs should be attacked with the maximum force at hand, including all available aircraft at the time.	ABSOLUTELY NO BURNING - All personnel and equipment should be removed from field. Fire teams, labour and equipment are to be placed on full stand-by. At the first sign of smoke, every possible measure should be taken in order to bring fire under control in the shortest possible time. All available aircraft are to be called without delay.

Aerial Resources

The aerial fire fighting resources contracted to LEFPA for the 2017 fire season are supplied by Aerial Farming Services (AFS), Orsmond Aviation and Working on Fire (WoF). Orsmond Aviation have 2 Thrush on standby from 15th May until 15th November, with 2 Hueys, 2 802's and 3 spotter planes from Working on Fire and 2 Thrush from AFS coming online from 1st June to 31st October.

AFS, Orsmond and WoF bring invaluable experience and aerial skills to the arsenal of fire suppression resources at LEFPA's fingertips. Over previous fire seasons, LEFPA has built up excellent relationships with these service providers.

LEFPA welcomes Orsmond, WoF and AFS to the 2017 Lowveld fire season and is hoping for a safe season.



Take that! Firebombing in action.

WATCH OUT

Acronyms are mental filing systems to aid easy recall of essential information. There is so much activity at a fire but to LEFPA, the safety of Fire Fighters is paramount and the Association advises members to teach their Fire teams to **WATCH OUT**.

WATCHOUT is an acronym used to remind Fire Fighters of potential dangers concerning their safety and to give advice on **Safe Work Practices and Procedures**.

An understanding the meaning of the acronym will help Fire Fighters to perform a comprehensive **Risk Assessment**.

Weather dominates fire behaviour, so stay abreast & informed on weather conditions and changes;

Actions must be based on current and expected fire behaviour;

Try to establish at least two safe escape routes;

Communicate with LEFPA or your Team Leader, your fire crew and adjoining crews;

Hazards: be aware and beware of variations in fuels and topography;

Observe changes in wind speed and direction, temperature, humidity & cloud cover;

Understand your **instructions** AND make sure that your instructions are understood;

Think clearly, **be alert** and **act decisively** before your situation becomes critical.



Managing the Fire: The **safety** and **success of fire suppression** hinges on the **command, control and communications systems** that are set up to control the incident.

Communications: Communications are vital to the successful outcome of fire suppression or any other incident. A communications plan is developed to provide communications for the whole of the incident; determined by its complexity and size.



Activities for the Month - June

- Train airstrip loading crews.
- Check airstrips on a weekly basis.
- Attend LEFPA meetings regularly.
- Ensure Eskom servitudes are burnt.
- Burn your firebreaks as per your plan.
- Distribute your standby rosters to all neighbours.
- Advise all staff of call-out and dispatch protocols.
- Obtain FDI forecast on a daily basis from LEFPA.
- Identify and mark completed fire breaks on a map.
- Perform daily and weekly checks of all equipment, using checklists.
- Perform checks to ensure readiness and quick reaction at all times.



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!**