



Greetings,

The new look 'All Fired Up' turns one this month, happy birthday to us! We hope you enjoy the revamped read and always look forward to hearing from you. Are we covering items of interest and keeping you informed? Is there anything missing? Please email your comments to manager@lefpa.co.za. Meanwhile, the fire season is almost upon us. Kindly read the activities for the month on the back page and ensure that you are on top of your fire game and ready to roll. Until next time.



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Permit Requests

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Prevent Wild Fires - 2017 Burning Prohibitions



The **Lowveld & Escarpment Fire Protection Association (LEFPA)** hereby objects to any burning operations within the Associations boundaries without a valid burning permit in terms of National Veld and Forest Fire Act 101 of 1998 Article 25(3) (a)(b)(c).

1. That, within the boundaries of the LEFPA and the Ehlanzeni District, no person shall from **1 June 2017 up to and including 31 October 2017** make a fire in the open air, or, if such a fire has been made, allow it to continue to burn or add fuel thereto, otherwise than:

A. fires made within a demarcated picnic or camping area or caravan park, or holiday resort, but only at places within such an area which have been specifically prepared and maintained for that purpose; provided that such fires are properly extinguished with water and/or sand;

B. fires for the preparation of food on residential stands;

C. fires made on residential and industrial stands in proclaimed townships;

D. fires made for initiation school purposes, but only at places which have been specially prepared and maintained for that purpose to prevent fires from spreading.

2. That, within the boundaries of LEFPA and the Ehlanzeni District, no person shall from **1 June 2017 up to and including 31 October 2017** destroy by burning slash originating from any timber plantation or self-sown exotic trees and or alien invasive plants.

3. That, within the boundaries of LEFPA and the Ehlanzeni District, no person shall from **1 June 2017 up to and including 31 October 2017** destroy by burning residue, cultivated crop fields and veld, clear or maintain a fire belt by burning or execute block burns, unless a burning permit has been obtained from LEFPA.

4. That in terms of Chapter 7, Article 25 of the National Veld and Forest Fire Act 101 of 1998, persons found guilty of offences will be subject to a minimum fine of **R 5000.00**

5. Burning Permits are subject to LEFPA Rules & Minimum Requirements (Version 8 April 2017) and any other relevant By-Laws within your Local Municipality

6. LEFPA recommends that all burning operations should be completed by **1 August 2017**, weather permitting.

7. **Contact Details for Burning Permits: 013 752 6419 or 0860 66 3473**

Elands Valley Ward Chair Charl De Kock Retires



Duncan Ballantyne congratulates Charl on his retirement.

Charl De Kock, Elands Valley Ward Chair, has retired from Sappi Forests. He started his forestry career as a pupil forester at Rosehaugh State Forest in 1979 when he took a transfer from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Forestry.

After 2 years at Saasveld Forestry College he returned to Rosehaugh for his 4th year but was transferred to Frankfort State Forest after 3 months to take up the Assistant Forester's post. It was here that Charl began to learn the practical application of firefighting from the local foreman and supervisors.

In 1990 he joined Sappi Forests at Venus plantation as a Silviculture Management Forester. Charl upgraded the Venus airstrip and was also involved in the design and building of a funnel to refill fire tenders with water from a helicopter. The first fire tender was loaded on the Venus airstrip. He was promoted to Forestry Manager, Nootgedacht District in 1995 and in 1998 transferred back to Venus as Forestry Manager. In 2004 Charl was transferred to Camelot South at Ngodwana and became the LEFPA Ward Chairman. The Ngodwana airstrip was also upgraded under his supervision.

Thanks from Ehlanzeni District Municipality

In the last issue we reported on the attendance of LEFPA at the Disaster Management Indaba which was held at Nuttinghouse. LEFPA has subsequently received a letter from Municipal Manager Mr FS Sibozza, thanking LEFPA for their support and contribution to the success of the event.

Building fruitful relationships is key in the management and suppression of wild fires. Expressing the municipality's gratitude for the Association's efforts, Mr Sibozza says LEFPA assists in ensuring that the lives of the communities in the area are improved.



Subscribe to Vital Weather

Vital Weather is a weather system that was developed and designed by CW Price of Johannesburg for Forestry, Emergency Services, Industry, Farming and wind farm assessments. A smart GPRS Modem interrogates the Weather Station, relaying data via GPRS to a central server at 5 minute intervals.

LEFPA has 34 web-based weather stations across four regions - **Lowveld, Escarpment, Highveld and Nkomazi**. Giel Hugo and his son, Giel Junior, supply regional forecasts for all four regions as well as 10 pin-pointed areas from their base in Bredasdorp. The daily FDI index is produced using data from Vital Weather and Vital Fire Weather.

There is a link to Vital Weather on LEFPA's website, www.lefpa.co.za. The link delivers up to date information on wind speed and direction, humidity, current temperature and rain. LEFPA members are encouraged to subscribe to the VitalFire Weather 'FDI via SMS', a service that sends two sms's per day to the registered subscriber. The sms at 10h00 has the actual information along with the 14h00 prediction while the 14h00 sms provides actual information as at 14h00.

In addition to the daily FDI actuals and predictions the sms will also provide the FDI prediction for the next three days. The prediction is only available during the fire season. The subscription rate is R285 including VAT per six month fire season.



Ten Golden Rules for Mitigating Uncontrolled Fires



Ten green bottles fell off the wall, but understanding and following our 10 Golden Rules will ensure a safer fire season. Print this page out and stick it on your fridge to prevent a smash this fire season!

1. **Make effective fire breaks** on your property borders before the fire season commences on 1st June. This helps protect your property and prevent a fire spreading to neighbouring properties.
2. **Notify neighbours** when you plan to burn fire-breaks and give written notice to inform neighbours of your intention to burn.
3. **Plan your fire-break programme** with your neighbours and get your neighbour's approval of your plan of action. Should neighbours find it impossible to come to agreement, contact LEFPA for advice.
4. **Insist on your neighbour's presence** when fire-breaks on common boundary are being made. This will ensure that all parties take responsibility for any eventualities.
5. Ensure that **weather conditions** are acceptable for burning firebreaks. Check the Fire Danger Rating (FDI) and regulations for your region with LEFPA.
6. **Burn fire-breaks early.** If you have the resources, consider burning fires at night when weather conditions are usually more favourable for burning. Be aware of burning restrictions enforced in certain regions.
7. **Don't light a fire in the open** if you cannot control it. Ensure that you have sufficient staff, resources and equipment to cope with all eventualities. Lighting a fire within a road reserve, except in fireplace built for that purpose, is also prohibited in terms of the National Veld and Forest Fire Act No 101 of 1998.
8. **You are responsible** for doing all you can to prevent a fire from spreading to neighbouring properties - if a fire spreads it can cause extensive damage and the landowner from where the fire originates may be held liable for damages.
9. **Don't leave a fire unguarded** or unattended before it is properly extinguished - unexpected winds can re-flame cinders.
10. **Carelessness with fires is considered a criminal offence** (according to the National Veld and Forest Fire Act No 101 of 1998).

Health Hazards at a Fire

It is vital that you are aware of and know how to avoid illnesses and problems that may result from vigorous firefighting activity and exposure to smoke, dust and heat. If you have a medical condition (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease or epilepsy) that could be aggravated by fire suppression work, you should seek medical advice to ensure you are capable to carry out such work.

Smoke and Dust Hazards: Smoke and dust are ever-present irritants to your eyes and lungs at fires. Prolonged exposure to heavy smoke can be hazardous. In addition to restricting visibility, heavy smoke contains carbon monoxide (CO), which is a poisonous gas.

Fatigue: The conditions and work at a fire incident can be physically stressful and demanding and fatigue is a key factor which affects performance. Exposure to radiant heat and smoke for a lengthy period of time may increase your level of physical stress and the likelihood of fatigue.

Dehydration: Perspiration is the body's cooling system; dehydration will occur if fluids and electrolytes lost through perspiration are not replaced. On days of total fire ban and extreme fire danger, one should increase hydration in case of a call out to a fire. Water and an electrolyte replacement drink should be consumed regularly. You should always drink more water than you need in order to prevent dehydration.

Heat-related illness: fire fighters also face the risk of heat related illness such as heat **cramps**; heat **stress**; heat **exhaustion** and **heat stroke**.

Heat cramps - common muscular cramps that can occur in the heat, during or after exercise, especially when an unfit person has worked hard and perspired a lot. The onset of heat cramps is caused by failure to maintain adequate hydration, appropriate rest and cool down periods.

Heat stress - you suffer heat stress when your body's cooling systems (perspiration and circulation) are stressed but not overwhelmed by the heat load.

Heat exhaustion - this condition develops as a result of exhaustion from working in the heat. If the body is heat stressed for too long without adequate fluid intake, dehydration develops. This leads to weakness as well as reduces the body's capacity to continue perspiring.

Heat stroke - heat stroke is the least common but most severe heat-related illness. It occurs when the body's cooling systems are overwhelmed and the body's temperature rises to dangerous levels, at which time the body starts to "cook" internally. In severe cases of heat stroke, the process is irreversible and death will rapidly follow.

Be sensible and safe out there!

Notice of a Corporate Creditors Meeting



LEFPA will hold a creditors meeting on the 25th May at 11h30 in the Boardroom, following the Board meeting. Andre Scheepers will lead the meeting with inputs from Corné Martyn, Susan Daniels and Mark Wagner.

This meeting will serve to establish better communication between LEFPA and members' creditors personnel. Getting to know these key people will ensure that LEFPA submits documentation directly to the correct people, reducing the lead time on payment receipts.

LEFPA will contact the pertinent members in due course with an invitation to attend.

Practicing Skills for the 2017 Fire Season



Activities for the Month - May

- Get airstrips operational.
- Activate manual lookouts.
- Start using readiness checklist.
- Attend LEFPA meetings regularly.
- Are all your roads graded or slashed?
- Prepare firebreaks around homesteads.
- Ensure all fire-related training is completed.
- Develop an all-risk prevention plan for each risk.
- Ensure that all-risk action plan is fully implemented.
- Burn open areas on rotational burning programmes.
- Issue Personal Protective Equipment to all your fire crews.
- Do all your fire-fighting vehicles comply with LEFPA standards?
- Make sure that all staff are familiar with LEFPA's response plan.
- Remind all your staff of the dangers of warming fires, smoking, etc.
- Commence firebreak burning (ensure Eskom servitudes are burnt).
- Make sure that all your fire crews have been for their annual medical check-up.



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!