



Lowveld & Escarpment Fire Protection Association Newsletter

Issue 41 June 2019



Greetings,

The aircraft have arrived and the 2019 Lowveld fire season has kicked off. We cover safety and preventing burn injuries in this issue which we hope you will find useful. Regrettably, for space reasons we are forced to hold over Johan Louw's informative series on Alien Invasive Plants this month. We rely on our members to act responsibly and with wisdom; please don't neglect the activities for the month on the back page.

Have you taken part in the All Fired Up survey included in last month's issue? If not, please click on the link and take 2 minutes to give us your input.

www.surveymonkey.com/r/GY8GDYZ

Until next time.



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International Firefighter Day 4th May

Following International Firefighter Day 4th May celebrations were held at the Nelspruit Methodist Church on Sunday 5th May to mark the occasion. It was also the perfect opportunity for LEFPA to open the 2019 Lowveld fire season and receive blessings from the congregation.

LEFPA Manager Andre Scheepers welcomed a long list of attendees from the City of Mbombela Fire Rescue, municipal officials and representatives from MPU Working on Fire, ORRU, PDMC, SAPS, Hi Tech Ambulance Service and Kanyilanga Forestry as well as FPA members and officials. On this day, the wildland and structural firefighters were the guests of honour.

After his opening, Andre handed the floor over to City of Mbombela Fire and Rescue official, Mr Petrus Mthiyane, who gave the keynote address. In his speech, Mr Mthiyane quoted Lt JJ Edmondson's 1999 treatise, *'The Role of Firefighters in Today's Society.'* Fire trucks sounded their sirens for 30 seconds in remembrance of fallen heroes before Reverend Allen Booth closed the parade with a Communion service and scripture reading from John 21 - "Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish"

LEFPA Management extends their thanks to everyone for their dedication and attendance and urges our firefighters to take care throughout the season.

www.frimedia.org



Burning Rules & Regulations Effective 1 June 2019



LEFPA would like to draw your attention to the published Fire Prohibition effective 1 June 2019 - **NO** slash burning is permitted until the end of November 2019.

As per the Minimum Rules and Requirements (2017), fire break burning will only be allowed with a valid burning permit. Call 0860 66 3472 to apply for a permit should you need to burn fire breaks between now and the end of November.

LEFPA strongly recommends that **ALL** burning operations are completed by 1 August.

Tips to Prevent Burn Injuries

Fires burn more than forests and houses, people get burnt too. Burn injuries are unfortunately fairly common but some due diligence and care goes a long way to preventing these painful injuries. We've curated a number of useful tips to assist in preventing burns and administering emergency first aid. Please share these with your family and include them in regular Toolbox Talks with your staff.

When chilly winter weather and shorter days set in, people light candles, paraffin stoves and open fires for lighting, heating and cooking. Add small children to this combustible mix and the risk of burn injuries increases exponentially.

At home do not:

- Cook eggs in a microwave. The heat build-up can cause the shell to explode, spewing hot egg into the air.
- Cover fires made on the ground with sand. Sand retains heat for hours, causing some fancy hot foot dancing should someone walk over it. Pour water over fires and coals.
- Leave hot drinks, cooking oil, porridge or lit candles and paraffin stoves within reach of children.

At home do:

- Repair all faulty electrical plugs and cables.
- Keep flammable substances safely locked away.

Outside the home, should you notice missing cover plates on power poles or broken fences and locks on substations, **report the damage.**

Basic burn First Aid:

- If someone has caught alight they should stop, drop and roll on the ground to put out the flames.
- In the case of electrical shock turn off the power before attempting to assist the victim.
- Flesh continues to burn after removing the burn source - keep the burn area under cold, running tap water for 20 minutes. **DO NOT APPLY** ice or ice water as it will further damage the skin.
- The old wives tale about applying butter is a definite no-no. The oil could trap the heat and deepen the burn.
- Hot water will burn skin at temperatures much lower than boiling point. It only takes 3 seconds exposure to water at 60°C to cause burns serious enough to require surgery.



What to do in the event of a serious burn - Cool, Call and Cover!

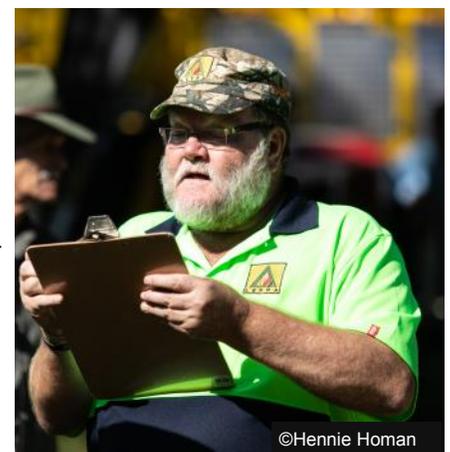
- Cool the burn with running cold tap water for 20 minutes. Remove all clothing and jewellery, unless it is melted or firmly stuck to the wound.
- Call for help - **10111** or your doctor for advice.
- Cover with cling film or a sterile, non-fluffy dressing or cloth. Keep the patient warm until medical attention arrives.

Thank You!

LEFPA Manager Andre Scheepers has received a warm letter of appreciation and gratitude from Dr Mmaphaka Tau, Deputy Director (Head) National Disaster Management Centre, for Andre's 'inspiring and researched presentation' to delegates at the 6th National Annual Fire Safety and Prevention Seminar held in Limpopo Province.

The letter goes on to say that "Your in-depth understanding and ability to present the subject in such an interesting way produced one of the most memorable seminars in our fire safety and prevention history."

Wow, Andre! High words of praise indeed. Congratulations, LEFPA is proud of you. Keep up the good work!



©Hennie Homan

Flying High at the Lowveld / Kishugu Air Show

The skies above Mbombela roared and rocked on May 11th when the new action-paced 'fast and furious' format of the annual Lowveld / Kishugu Air Show took off. From 14h00 to the spectacular fireworks display closing the event at 18h00, spectators were enthralled and spellbound by the aerial action. The air show lived up to expectations and was, as always, well attended.



'Hotspot', the LEFPA pilots crew room, was open and we were pleased to meet and greet the many members who popped in to say 'hi' to a few of the pilots and share a Prego roll and a cold one with the team.

Who could forget the spectacular 1995 Ellis Park Rugby World Cup final fly over by Laurie Kay in a Boeing 747? Well, the 2019 Air Show spectators were treated to a fly over of their own when an SA Airlink Embraer enroute from OR Tambo to KMIA was diverted above Nelspruit Airfield to thrill the crowds.

Over and out from the Air Show until next year.

2019 Season Aerial Resources

The aerial firefighting resources contracted to LEFPA for the 2019 fire season are supplied by Aerial Farming Services (AFS), Orsmond Aviation, WoF and Leading Edge Aviation. Orsmond has supplied two Thrush aircraft with a further two provided by AFS.



Over previous fire seasons, LEFPA has built up excellent relationships with Orsmond, WoF and AFS while Mark Jackson, owner of Leading Edge, has an impressive history flying with WoF and Bird Dog Aviation amongst others. LEFPA is delighted to announce the signing of a 5-year contract with Leading Edge Aviation commencing this season.

AFS, WoF, Orsmond and Leading Edge bring invaluable experience and aerial skills to the arsenal of fire suppression resources at LEFPA's fingertips. This is skilled, dangerous work and LEFPA wishes these brave men everything of the best and turbulence-free skies beneath their wings!

They're Here! The Choppers Have Landed.

Leading Edge Aviation bring Chopper Alpha (Huey UH-1) and Chopper Zulu (Black Hawk UH-60) into the LEFPA fleet of aircraft. Chopper Zulu will be based at Nelspruit Airfield from June to the end of October for the winter fire season while Chopper Alpha will be on standby from 15 May to 15 November, weather permitting.

Owners of Leading Edge, Mark and Charmaine Jackson, have an impressive flying pedigree in the Lowveld. They have been in the aviation business since 1981 and during this time Mark has freelanced for a number of companies flying helicopter charters, game work and medevac (EMS) work. After selling their shares in Lowveld Aircraft Services in 1996, they established Leading Edge Aviation. In 2005, Mark began training as a firefighting pilot under the instruction of Tosh Ross. They purchased the Huey, ZS-HLA, in January 2006 and, based in Graskop with Bird Dog Aviation, began aerial firefighting during the 2006 winter season. From January 2007 until October 2018, Mark flew for WoF.

In 2016 Leading Edge Aviation purchased a Sikorsky UH-60A Black Hawk and converted it for firefighting. Chopper Zulu flew for Sappi in September and October 2018 with good results and in March Leading Edge won a one-month contract in the Cape.



Having been awarded their own AOC, Leading Edge are now under contract to LEFPA during the 2019 winter season. Both the Huey and the Hawk were used for rescue work in the Zimbabwe eastern border area following Cyclone Idai, moving 140 tons of medical supplies, clothing starter kits and food.

The Leading Edge crew comprises Mark and Peter Jackson, Tosh Ross (chief pilot), Charles Burger, Doug Elliot Wilson and Stephen Jackson (co-pilots). Crew Chief is Peter Fetting assisted by Sean Boreham. CEO Charmaine Jackson runs the administration.

"We are very enthusiastic and excited about our future as a role player in the industry, and grateful for the opportunity to serve our community", says Mark. From all of us here at LEFPA, welcome to our family!

Safety First and LACES

Safety is and always will be LEFPA's No 1 priority, which means that preparation for the fire season keeps everyone busy in the run up to May. All runways have been inspected and CMO has finished training the bomber loaders.

All runway signage has been upgraded by LEFPA and this will now become a MUFPA standard for any FPA using aircraft in the province. Our photo below features Hloliwe Josephina Silinda proudly showing off Glenthorpe Airstrip. She began working at Glenthorpe Airstrip as a crew member in 2003 and was appointed Crew Leader in 2006.



An acronym added to our lexicon is **LACES**, an easy way for us to remember key fire safety checkpoints:

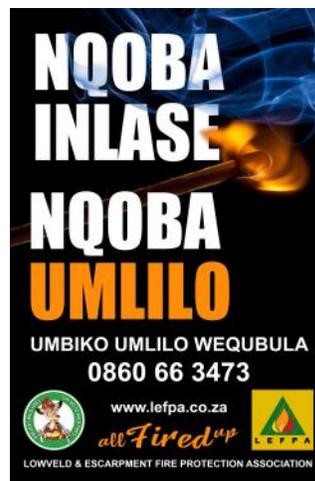
Lookout, Awareness, Communications, Escape Routes, Safety Zones.

So let's tie our bootlaces and put our best foot forward to have the safest fire season yet!



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:

- **Please remember to attend the AGM in the LEFPA Boardroom at 09h00 on 13th June. New Board members for 2019/2022 will be announced at the meeting as per the nominations.**
- 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 Ivina for more information.
- **SUCCESS cannot be spelt without U. Attend and participate - we need your contribution!**