

## NSW Department of Education

# Bushfire Season Information for schools visiting Riverina Environmental Education Centre

**This brochure provides information for principals and teachers planning excursions to Riverina Environmental Education Centre (REEC) during bushfire season. As REEC is identified as Category 1 school in a bushfire prone area additional procedures are in place during the bushfire season. As a Category 1 school, REEC school is required to temporarily cease operations when a catastrophic fire danger rating is issued in our area.**

## Introduction

The NSW Department of Education has conducted bushfire assessments for NSW government schools in bushfire prone areas. These results have been validated by an independent external expert and reviewed in consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

A small number of schools have been identified as being at risk if a fire were to break out on a day when a catastrophic fire danger rating is issued for the local area. This includes the Riverina Environmental Education Centre.

To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of students and staff, the NSW Department of Education has determined that on days when a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating is issued for the area the school is in, the school will temporarily cease operations for the day(s) the rating is current. Alternative excursion arrangements will be put in place on these day(s).



## What is a Fire Danger Rating?

A Fire Danger Rating is the expected fire danger on a particular day and is determined by considering a combination of factors including air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and drought. The ratings range from Low – Moderate to High, Very High, Severe, Extreme and Catastrophic.



## What is a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating?

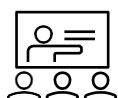
A Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating means that if fires broke out they would be uncontrollable, unpredictable and very fast moving. For more information on Fire Danger Ratings, visit the [NSW RFS Website](#).



## When will I know if REEC won't be operating the next day?

The State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) notifies the Department at approximately 4:00pm each day when there are catastrophic fire danger ratings predicted for the following day. This means that the school will only receive notification of a catastrophic fire danger rating after school hours the day before the forecast is issued.

REEC will notify the coordinating teacher as soon as possible using the mobile number provided on the student welfare return form that the catastrophic fire danger rating has been issued. The staff of the visiting school are required to contact all relevant staff, parents and carers using their own communication system.



## What alternate arrangements will be in place if REEC isn't operating?

A member of the REEC team will make contact with the teacher responsible for coordinating the excursion when the school reopens. Wherever possible, the excursion/s will be rescheduled.



## Will REEC be affected by Severe or Extreme Fire Danger Ratings?

During the bushfire season, including days of severe or extreme fire danger rating, REEC will continue to operate as normal unless advised otherwise by emergency services. Communication with the coordinating teacher will follow the procedures outlined above. During the bushfire season REEC staff will be vigilant and monitor local conditions, particularly on days when severe or extreme fire danger ratings are issued.



## Plan and Prepare

The NSW Rural Fire Service has resources for all residents to plan and prepare for the bushfire season. It is important that you consider the safety of your own home from bushfire.

Please find more information and resources on the [RFS website](#).



## Learn more

We appreciate your cooperation during the bushfire season. For further information about Fire Danger Ratings and the bushfire season, please refer to the [NSW Rural Fire Service website](#).

The Department's [School Safety website](#) has also been established to provide up to date information during bushfires and other situations such as floods or storms.

Please contact REEC if you have any questions on 6932 9134.



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