



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE,
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS



VELD FIRE AWARENESS

The Heartland of Southern Africa - development is about people!

WHAT ARE VELD AND FOREST FIRES?

In South Africa all veld and forest fires are managed under the National Veld and Forest Act (No. of 1998). This law defines a veld fire as a “veld, forest or mountain fire, where veld means the open countryside beyond the urban limit or homestead boundary”. Veld fires are therefore any fire which occurs outside the boundaries of urban built areas and pose the potential of running out of control.

Veld fires are actually naturally stored solar energy that is out of control? That's because trees convert all that sunlight into oils that get stored in leaves that end up burning like petrol.

Many of our natural areas are fire adapted they need regular fires in order to keep healthy and reproduce. This is called the fire regime, it differs according to the ecosystem, Veld fires can lead to regeneration of local plant life. Fires that burn too frequently change the combination of plant types and can lead to plant extinctions.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT A VELD FIRE MIGHT OCCUR?

- ✓ It is normally during rainy season.
- ✓ During hot conditions
- ✓ There is a lot of fuel load (e.g. dry leaves, wood, dead plants and grass).
- ✓ The ground vegetation is continuous, with little bare earth showing, allowing a fire to spread from plant to plant.
- ✓ There are moderate to strong winds present.

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN A VELD FIRE?

- Mow, disk or graze vegetative firebreaks to avoid a build-up of excess litter and to control weeds
- Inspect all firebreaks for woody material
- Inspect firebreaks at least annually and rework bare ground firebreaks as necessary
- Repair erosion control measures as necessary
- Control access by vehicles or people



- Stabilize bare ground firebreaks, which are no longer needed

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN BREAKING A VELD FIRE?

- Use barriers such as streams, lakes, ponds, rock cliffs, roads, field borders, skid trails, landings, drainage canals, railroads, cultivated land, or other areas as existing firebreaks. Electric lines-hazardous in heavy smoke –may conduct electricity
- When using barriers consider the effects of wildlife and fisheries
- Locate firebreaks near ridge crests and valley bottoms
- Wind predictable-firebreaks located perpendicular to wind and on windward side of the area protected
- Located on contour to minimize risk of soil erosion

NUMBERS TO CONTACT

Mobile phones emergency - 112

Police and fire - 10111

Ambulance - 10177

Disaster Management - 0800 222 111

Disaster management is everybody's business. In case of any Disaster, members of the public are encouraged to report any incident to their district offices or provincial disaster management centre on the toll free number 0800 222 111