

Dear all

Kindly receive the severe weather alert below and disseminate widely as stipulated in the NAC and EWC terms of reference.

In light of this severe weather alert as produced by the South African Weather Service (SAWS) and other centers, the following advisory guidelines are suggested. It is emphasized that these advisories are broad guidelines and should be interpreted considering the local aspects of the region such as soil types, cultural preferences and farming systems. Depending on the particular region, the prioritization of the guidelines will differ. The basic strategy to follow would be to minimize and diversify risk. The province should further simplify, downscale and package the information according to their language preference and if possible use local radio stations and farmers' days in disseminating the information

National Warning issued by SAWS valid: 10 February 2021

Extremely high fire conditions are expected over Namakwa District of the Northern Cape as well as the northern parts of the West Coast District and the Drakenstein Municipality of the Western Cape.

What to do when veldfire condition is forecast:

Prohibitions of fires in the open air during periods of high fire hazard, and the establishment of fire control committees

To control fires, an alarm system, fire fighting teams, and beaters must be organized in advance and plans prepared

What to do during a veld fire:

Livestock should be moved out of grazing land to unbarred land/ploughed field for safety.

Water is generally not available in sufficient quantities or at adequate pressure for the control of major fires; however, sand or other loose mineral soil material can be an effective method of control.

Following are a number of concerns and recommendations:

Provinces should always ensure that the firebreaks are in place. An owner of the land who is obliged to prepare and maintain a firebreak must ensure that, with due regard to the weather, climate, terrain and vegetation of the area, the following is taken care of in terms of installing the firebreaks (chapter 4 of National Veld and Forest Fire Act No. 101 of 1998):

1. A firebreak has to be wide enough and long enough to have a reasonable chance of preventing a veld fire from spreading to or from neighboring land.
2. A firebreak does not cause soil erosion and
3. A firebreak is reasonably free of inflammable material capable of carrying a veld fire across it.
4. Farming communities should establish fire protection associations to prevent and control veld fires as required by the National Veld and Forest Fire Act (Act No. 101 of 1998).

The Fire Brigade Services Act provides for the establishment, co-ordination and standardizations of fire brigade services. Local authorities, that is, municipalities, are empowered to establish and maintain a fire brigade service, intended to be employed for the following purposes:

- a) Preventing the outbreak or spread of a fire
- b) Fighting or extinguishing a fire
- c) The protection of life or property against a fire or other threatening danger.
- d) The rescue of life or property from a fire or other danger

Improved communication among members about, for example, fire hazard conditions. The outcome sought is to achieve better integration of community preparedness, prevention, suppression and recovery strategies as key elements of veld fire management.

A comprehensive list of strategies can be found in the monthly NAC Advisory. It can be accessed from the following websites: www.dalrrd.gov.za. For more information contact:-

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