



Bushfire Safety



Australasian Fire and Emergency
Service Authorities Council

What's a Spot Fire? – Upper Primary

Introduction

The 'What's a Spot Fire?' safety message explores the issue of spot fires being created by flying embers and sparks. Spot fires can cause major damage to properties. It is important to protect your home from this risk by covering gaps and drainpipes where embers or sparks might cause a fire.

It is recommended that you read the 'Background Information For Teachers' before undertaking this lesson.

Links to Australian Curriculum

Geography

- Understanding that environments are important to people and animals and that we have a responsibility to look after them.
- Recognising the impact that bushfires and other natural disasters have on environments and communities.
- Developing ideas about how to prepare and respond to natural disaster events.

Health and Physical Education

- Identify, plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing of self and others in various situations.

English

- Accessing relevant prior knowledge or personal experiences to make meaningful connections to events, issues and ideas in a text.
- Sharing ideas and points of view relating to a text.

Science

- Daily and seasonal changes in the environment can affect the Earth's surface.



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Learning outcomes

Participating in this lesson will help students to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Students will learn what a spot fire is and how they start.
- Students will learn how they can minimise the risk of spot fires occurring around their home and school.

Resources

You will need:

- 'What's a Spot Fire?' safety message video <http://vimeo.com/31114061> (running time: 30 sec)
- interactive whiteboard (IWB)
- '**Spot Fire Audit**' activity sheet.

Lesson steps

As a class, watch the video, 'What's a Spot Fire?' <http://vimeo.com/31114061>

Ask students to discuss the safety message, record their responses. Questions could include:

- What was Amy's Mum doing?
- Why do the gaps need to be covered?
- What was she using to cover the gaps?
- What else could be used?
- What is a spot fire?
- What other gap did Trev say needed to be covered?
- Can you think of any other areas that may be prone to spot fires?

In the video, Amy's Mum said spot fires can start from flying embers or sparks. Brainstorm what might cause sparks, and what sort of weather or vegetation conditions would make it ideal for spot fires to occur.

In small groups, students to walk around the school grounds and use the '**Spot Fire Audit**' activity sheet to record any areas that might present spot fire hazards. They could consider areas where embers may be trapped, areas of dry vegetation and equipment that could cause sparks. When finished, each group should share their findings with the rest of the class.



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Explain to students that if spot fires are dealt with quickly, they can be extinguished before causing any major damage. Spot fires can be extinguished with things such as wet towels, buckets of water, wet mops, water pistols, hoses, etc. Ask students to brainstorm any other household items that could be used.

Safety note: Children should not be encouraged to extinguish spot fires themselves, however they can help to prepare buckets of water, wet towels, etc.

Working in small groups, students then formulate a plan to address the hazard areas. This can include costing materials or labour to address the hazard and planning for options to extinguish spot fires. Once the plan is formulated and costed it should be presented to the principal or school board.

Provide each student with a copy of the activity sheet to take home and repeat the activity for their home and yard.

Further activities

Here are some suggested extra activities to extend the students' learning.

- Invite someone from your local bushfire service to speak to the class about ways to prepare for bushfire season.
- Research types of material that would be suitable to use when covering gaps. What properties do the materials have that make them suitable?
- There have been many instances of fires starting from sparks and embers in Australia. Students to find one example, read about it and discuss how it could have been prevented.
- Students to research what a fire needs to start and stay alight.



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Extra resources

For more information visit your state or territory fire agency website:

- ACT Rural Fire Service
<https://esa.act.gov.au/actrfs/>
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
<http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/>
- Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
www.pfes.nt.gov.au/Fire-and-Rescue.aspx
- NSW Rural Fire Service
www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)
www.qfes.qld.gov.au/
- South Australian Country Fire Service
www.cfs.sa.gov.au/
- Tasmania Fire Service
<http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/>
- WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)
www.dfes.wa.gov.au/