

Level 1 BPAD Practitioner Accreditation and Training FAQ's for Western Australia



Fire Protection Association Australia Life Property Environment



Accreditation – General Questions

What is the Western Australian Bushfire Accreditation Framework

The Western Australian State Government is committed to having a professional bushfire consultant industry with accredited practitioners operating at appropriate levels by 2019. The State Government developed a framework for the establishment of accreditation schemes and the recognition of accrediting bodies.

Who is FPA Australia?

Fire Protection Association Australia (FPA Australia) is Australia's major technical and educational fire safety organisation. FPA Australia plays a pivotal role in providing authoritative advice and information on all aspects of fire safety and emergency management through a range of services to industry and the community. FPA Australia is a not-for-profit industry association.

Find out more about FPA Australia by visiting www.fpaa.com.au.

What is FPA Australia's Bushfire Planning and Design (BPAD) Accreditation Scheme?

FPA Australia administers a national accreditation scheme for bushfire practitioners known as the BPAD Scheme. The Scheme was first developed and implemented in 2006 in response to demands from the community, government and industry to establish a recognition program for Bushfire Planning and Design (BPAD) practitioners to assist the community undertaking development on land subject to bushfire impact.

Does FPA Australia's BPAD Scheme meet the requirements of the Western Australian State Government?

Yes - FPA Australia is the first accrediting body to be recognised by the State Government as providing training and accreditation for all three levels under the State Government's Western Australian Bushfire Accreditation Framework. FPA Australia has worked closely with the State Government to help ensure a successful accreditation system for bushfire practitioners was implemented in Western Australia.

Why should I seek accreditation?

Accreditation provides recognition to government and the community that practitioners providing bushfire planning and design services have professional skills and knowledge, are covered by appropriate levels of insurance, abide by a professional code of conduct and commit to ongoing learning to maintain knowledge

Do I need to be accredited?

*The State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas (SPP3.7) and the Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas **strongly recommend** the use of Accredited Practitioners. As such, Local governments and building surveyors are less likely to accept assessments prepared by non-accredited practitioners.*

In fact, several local governments and building surveyors have introduced a mandatory requirement that bushfire assessments and reports must be undertaken by accredited practitioners.

FPA Australia continues to advocate with government to make it a mandatory requirement for all bushfire assessment to be undertaken by accredited practitioners, this is consistent with the Government's stated aim of achieving a professional bushfire consultancy industry by 2019.

Why have different levels of accreditation?

Under the BPAD Scheme there are three levels of accreditation which reflect the different levels of skills, knowledge and experience required to undertake certain activities. The different levels allow practitioners to choose the level that best suits their business requirements and their skill levels. The different levels also allow customers to identify and select a practitioner who can provide a solution for their particular situation.

What type of work is a Level 1 BAL Assessor accredited to undertake?

Level 1 BAL Assessors are accredited to determine Bushfire Attack Levels using simplified methods and provide general advice on appropriate design and construction requirements consistent with AS3959.

Where do I go for more information on becoming an Accredited Practitioner in Western Australia?

Visit www.fpaa.com.au/bpad and download the BPAD Handbook for Western Australia and the application form. See below for further specific questions and answers relating to the accreditation process.

Training – General Questions

What training is available for people who work in the fields of building and planning in bushfire prone areas?
FPA Australia has developed two training courses specific to building and planning in bushfire prone areas.

The first course is a 5 day short course that provides participants with the required skills, knowledge and ability to determine a Bushfire Attack Level and provide advice on the required construction provisions.

The second course is a 2 day awareness course that provides participants with a broad understanding of the building and planning requirements for development in bushfire prone areas in Western Australia.

When and where are the training courses being held?

The training courses are held throughout the year. Courses are generally held in Perth, however where sufficient interest from a regional location exists, FPA Australia will consider running a regional course. A detailed course schedule is included in the course enrolment form and is updated regularly when additional course dates become available. The enrolment form for the bushfire training courses can be downloaded from www.fpaa.com.au/training.

Do I have to complete the training course to become accredited?

Yes – To apply for Accreditation an applicant will have to provide evidence of having successfully completed the 5 day short course. Please note that this course is only one component of the mandatory requirements that must be met before applying for accreditation. Accreditation is a separate process to enrolling in the training course and additional fees will apply for those people interested in applying for accreditation.

I can't make one of the scheduled courses - will there be more training scheduled?

Yes – The course schedule is always being updated. Download the course enrolment form for the latest course schedule or contact FPA Australia to be placed on a waitlist, and we will advise you when additional courses are released.

BAL Assessor Training for Bushfire Practitioners

What is covered in the BAL Assessor 5 day training course?

The course covers a wide range of elements including:

- bushfire behaviour
- bushfire planning and building legislative requirements in Western Australia
- assessing and determining bushfire attack levels using AS3959
- knowledge of bushfire impact and building design to mitigate bushfire impact; and
- knowledge of bushfire resistant construction

How do I enrol in a training course

Download and complete the course enrolment form from www.fpaa.com.au/training.

How long does it take to complete the training?

The course is generally delivered over 5 consecutive days from Monday to Friday. Occasionally some courses are split across two weeks to provide flexibility to participants who have difficulty in attending a full week of training.

At the end of the course, participants will be required to complete an assessment task which may take a further 5-10 hours.

Where can I get further information?

Download the course brochure from www.fpaa.com.au/training or click here. For further information contact the FPA Australia Training and Education team.

Building and Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas – Awareness Training

What is covered in the 2 day awareness course?

The course covers a wide range of elements including:

- bushfire behaviour
- bushfire planning and building legislative requirements in Western Australia
- understanding of the application of AS3959; and
- bushfire specific documentation to support building and planning applications

How do I enrol in a training course

Download and complete the course enrolment form from www.fpaa.com.au/training.

How long does it take to complete the training?

The course runs for 2 consecutive days. No additional time commitment is required outside of the course times.

Where can I get further information?

Download the course brochure from www.fpaa.com.au/training or click here. For further information contact the FPA Australia Training and Education team.

Applying for Accreditation

I've completed the 5 day training course – when do I receive my accreditation?

Completing the 5 Day BAL Assessor Training Course is only one requirement that must be satisfied before accreditation can be granted. All applicants must download the BPAD Handbook, read it thoroughly and complete the Application Form. Additional fees for accreditation apply.

I completed the training course but I don't meet the "Experience" requirements – can I apply for accreditation?

Yes – If you have successfully completed the training course but haven't completed five BAL Assessment reports in the last 12 months, you can apply for Interim Accreditation using Pathway 2 in the BPAD Handbook. You will have 12 months to complete 5 BAL Assessments and demonstrate that you have the required skills and knowledge to be granted Full Accreditation

Do I need to have the required insurance in place before I can apply for accreditation?

No – You may apply for accreditation before you take out the insurance requirements stipulated in the handbook, however you will not be granted accreditation until you provide evidence of appropriate insurance cover. This allows you to purchase your insurance cover once you have met all of the other requirements for accreditation.

What information is required when providing a referee for the BAL Assessment Reports?

The purpose of the referee for the BAL Assessment Reports required to be submitted with your application for Level 1 Accreditation is to validate that the reports submitted are your own work. You are not required to provide two referees for each report, you can include two referees who can validate all five reports if this can be arranged.

An appropriate referee can include amongst others, your client, a planning officer, building surveyor or DFES employee. It could be in the form of an acknowledgement you received when you submitted the original report, for example an email acknowledging submission or receipt of report.

Alternatively a statement from two unrelated individuals stating that you are the author of the submitted reports or that they are aware that you have prepared at least 5 BAL Assessment Reports over the previous 2 years will also suffice. The statement cannot be prepared by a colleague who works for the same company as the person applying for accreditation.

Do I have to be a member of FPA Australia to be accredited?

No – Membership of FPA Australia is optional. Membership provides additional benefits including access to discounted insurance and opportunities to contribute to the bushfire industry through professional forums and meetings. Additionally, Corporate members of FPA Australia will be promoted as “Providers of Choice” for the provision of BPAD services on our website.