

PREEKSTOEL COASTAL ESTATE FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN, STILL BAY EAST

November 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

This fire management plan is aimed at mitigating the potential risk of damage to Preekstoel Estate and neighbouring properties caused by run-away veld fires.

Due to the Municipal land directly north and east of Preekstoel Coastal Estate and the Geelkrans Nature Reserve further to the east, it will be necessary to put a fire break around the outside of the Preekstoel development to control any fires that may start on the development and spread out to the surrounding properties, or that come from the surrounding properties themselves. Whilst Blombos Strandveld is not a fire prone vegetation type, the surrounding properties do contain high densities of rooikrans vegetation. These areas are particularly vulnerable to fire during the hot and windy summer months. The Preekstoel development site will be cleared of all rooikrans and will be landscaped with typical Blombos Strandveld species. It is also envisaged that with the removal of all rooikrans from the property and with the high disturbance of the site to construct building platforms that a dense matt of rooikrans seedlings will grow on the site. Such seedlings will need to be sprayed to control their growth and propagation.

2. RISK EVALUATION

The following can lead to run away veld fires, or more severe fires on or near to Preekstoel residential Estate:

- Lightning Strikes. Whilst lightning may occur naturally in the Still Bay area, such phenomena cannot be controlled.
- Surrounding overgrown areas, especially with thick stands of alien vegetation (mainly rooikrans) are located around the Preekstoel development site. These areas pose the greatest threat to run-away fires as they are a source of high fuel loads and should be managed.
- Overgrown road verges. Roads are effective fire breaks and should be kept clear of vegetation at all times. Vegetation of road verges provides fuel for fires and are at a greater risk of burning due to their proximity to traffic and human activity. Also, they pose a significant threat as they can block emergency access of escape routes.
- Fires originating on the property. This can be from machinery or human activity and it is important to minimize this risk through proper training and use of machinery.
- Fires originating from neighbouring properties. These risks are difficult to manage, but staff should be vigilant for fires (or activities that could lead to fires) on neighbouring properties.

3. FIRE PREPAREDNESS

3.1. EQUIPMENT

The following equipment has been identified as necessary for the management of potential fire threats and should be purchased by the Estate, kept on site and maintained in good working order:

- 10 x Fire beaters
- 2 X drip torches
- 1 x first aid kit
- 3 x cellphones

- 4 x 1000 litre water tanks
- 1 x dedicated 1000 litre fire-fighting water cart plus a suitable 4X4 LDV.

3.2. STAFF TRAINING

The following staff are to attend yearly fire-fighting training through an accredited training institute:

- 1 x Crew Leader
- 5 x Fire Fighters

3.3. FIREBREAKS AND OTHER PREVENTION

Firebreaks are an integral part of our Fire Management Strategy, and with the help and advice of the local Southern Cape Fire Prevention Agency (SCFPA) the following demarcated and adequately sized fire breaks are to be made:

- West on the remainder of Erf 599;
- North on Erf 216;
- East of Remainder Erf 599 and Remainder Erf 593;

These firebreaks are to be created by brush cutting partially natural Blombos Strandveld. These firebreaks are to be maintained annually to ensure they are clear of vegetation to augment movement (pedestrians and off-road vehicles).

Additional mitigating steps are to be created as follows:

- Alien species must be eradicated on a systematic basis by follow-up weeding on an annual basis on the surrounding properties to the west, north and east.
- The fire breaks shall be brush cut of vegetation no higher than 30cm in height if flammable material.
- Gutters on buildings should be clean of combustible material.
- Maintenance of firehoses within the development must be ensured.
- Any chemical items to be stored according to legislation.
- All dwelling units to have dedicated and safe fire places, and fires to be extinguished after use.
- Staff must be regularly gathered to discuss fire awareness and prevention, especially related to smoking and no fires will be allowed on the Estate for the burning of any waste.
- Dedicated staff smoking areas must be demarcated with sand buckets for extinguishing cigarettes and matches.

4. EXTERNAL RESOURCES

SCFPA must be on hand to provide advice, training and warnings around fire risks and prevention.

The Estate must have adequate insurance for fire related damage as well as air support for fighting fires.

5. NEIGHBOURS

A list of neighbouring properties, with names and telephone numbers must be kept on site in case of emergencies.

6. FIRE FIGHTING OPERATIONS

6.1. STANDARD PROCEDURES

An adequate number of staff members are to receive annual fire-fighting training to be best able to manage fire risks.

For all staff though (including those who have not undergone training), the following procedures are to be followed:

In case of a run-away fire starting on or near to the property, the following steps are to be followed:

- As soon as smoke is detected, stop all activities and begin to extinguish the fire
- Call staff and neighbours for help
- Call the Fire Brigade and SCFPA
- If buildings and/or human lives are threatened, call for air support.

6.2. GENERAL SAFETY

The following principles of fire-fighting must be adhered to:

- Fight aggressively, but provide for safety first.
- Act based on the current and expected future fire behaviour.
- Take current and forecast weather conditions into account (wind, heat, rain).
- Ensure firefighters receive clear instruction from a leader, and understand them.
- Determine safe areas and escape routes.
- Establish lookouts for potentially dangerous or high value/risk areas.
- Stay alert, keep calm, make clear decisions and act decisively.