

Fire Safety Notice

Highlands is not exempt from the risk of fire. While the estate takes reasonable measures to mitigate fire hazards on common property, each owner remains legally responsible for fire prevention on their own stand. Owners are therefore strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the information below, particularly Sections 1 to 3.

1. Owner Responsibility

Recent observations indicate that some building contractors are using cooking fires without adequate supervision or preventative measures. In addition, some stands lack basic fire prevention controls. Owners are reminded that they remain legally liable for any fire originating on their property, whether caused by contractors, occupants, or other activities.

Owners are also required, for insurance purposes, to demonstrate that reasonable fire prevention measures are in place.

Fire requires heat, fuel, and oxygen. The most effective prevention method is the removal of fuel. Tall grass, dry leaves, and highly flammable vegetation—particularly Mexican Marigold (*kakiebos*)—pose a significant risk. As a minimum standard, flammable materials should be cleared within an 8-metre radius of all structures. Grass should be kept short, dry matter removed, and low tree branches trimmed.

In the event of a fire, responders may be unfamiliar with individual properties and may arrive with limited equipment. Owners are therefore encouraged to:

- Clearly mark water taps
- Provide easily accessible firefighting equipment (e.g. extinguishers, sand, fire beaters)
- Familiarise themselves with the location of the nearest fire hydrant

Hydrants are primarily intended to supply high-pressure firefighting pumps; delays in locating them can significantly compromise response times.

2. General

Although veld fires are a natural occurrence, human activity is often a contributing factor, and people are frequently at risk when fires ignite. Fire-related matters are governed by the National Veld and Forest Fire Act (Act 101 of 1998), which places specific responsibilities on landowners. The trustees endeavour to ensure collective compliance with this legislation.

3. Legal Implications and Fire Use Guidelines

Where negligence can be proven (Section 34 of the Act), an owner may be held liable for damage to their own property as well as to neighbouring properties.

Owners are therefore requested—particularly during the dry season (typically June to October)—to ensure that no open fires are made except in properly prepared areas. Such areas must:

- Be at least 4 metres in diameter and cleared of all flammable material
- Have a stone or masonry wind barrier around the fire area
- Be equipped with immediate fire-extinguishing resources (e.g. extinguisher, sand bucket, hose, or fire beaters)

Open fires may never be left unattended and must be fully extinguished after use. Hardwood can retain heat for extended periods and may reignite hours later, particularly under windy conditions.

By law, all individuals are required to assist in firefighting efforts when fires occur, including those on neighbouring properties, as uncontrolled fires can spread rapidly and cause extensive damage.

4. Additional Preventative Measures

While prevention is the priority, fires may still approach residential areas. Owners are encouraged to maintain defensible space around buildings and ensure that emergency access points and firefighting resources are clearly visible and accessible at all times.

5. Legislation and Fire Protection Associations

The National Veld and Forest Fire Act of 1998 applies. Fire Protection Associations (FPAs), comprising local landowners, coordinate fire management strategies, training, and prevention efforts. Highlands participates in the relevant FPAs, which mitigates certain legal risks; however, individual owners are still required to take reasonable precautions. These include maintaining firebreaks, ensuring functional equipment, and supporting trained personnel.

6. Highlands Current Measures

Highlands has implemented the following fire mitigation actions:

- Extensive removal of brush, shrubs, and grass along public roads
- Re-established coordination with neighbouring farms

The logo for Highlands Wilderness features a stylized orange and black graphic of a mountain range with a white silhouette of a running animal (possibly a kudu or similar) in the foreground. Below the graphic, the word "Highlands" is written in a white serif font, and "WILDERNESS" is written in a smaller, orange, all-caps sans-serif font.

Highlands WILDERNESS

- Creation of firebreaks in cooperation with Lekkerbreek
- Manual fuel reduction along rocky fence lines where standard firebreaks are not feasible
- Acquisition of a fire engine with high-pressure pump, water tank, and basic firefighting equipment
- Refresher firefighting training provided to staff, many of whom have veld fire experience

May the only fires on Highlands be those we make safely and intentionally.
