

LANGA24 - SQA Unit Code D9N1 04

Contribute to the management of heather burning



Overview

This standard deals with the competence required by individuals who are involved in the management of heather burning as part of the management of wildlife habitats. It has been developed so that it can be applied to any area of heather habitat. This standard is aimed at those who work in game conservation on either a full- or part- time basis.

To meet this standard you will be able to

1. contribute to the development of heather burning plans
2. organise the practical requirements associated with safe burning
3. control heather burning activities
4. supervise individuals and teams in support of burning activities
5. react appropriately, within organisational procedures, to a fire escape incident

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Performance criteria

- You must be able to:*
- P1 establish the need for burning through the assessment of the potential burn
 - P2 contribute to the establishment of the burn plan taking account of site factors that will affect fire intensity, fire severity and rate of spread
 - P3 ensure that the burn plan specifies all burn requirements and conforms with legal and environmental constraints
 - P4 organise operational and resource requirements to support the implementation of the burn plan
 - P5 contribute to the establishment of contingencies to control deviation from planned burn
 - P6 liaise with people to confirm proposed burn plan (neighbours, agencies)
 - P7 use maps to give and receive accurate grid references, estimate distances and identify features
 - P8 use weather forecasts to establish if conditions are favourable to planned burn
 - P9 ensure the availability of resources to support the planned burn
 - P10 organise the establishment of fire breaks and controls
 - P11 implement a test burn to confirm appropriateness of burn conditions and to identify any adjustments required to burn plan
 - P12 brief all those involved in the burn on the planned burn and associated safety matters
 - P13 supervise the controlled igniting of heather according to specified lighting pattern
 - P14 control the burn according to planned burning requirements
 - P15 take immediate action to deal with variations from planned burning
 - P16 maintain effective communications with others throughout the burning process
 - P17 communicate effectively using radios
 - P18 organise resources to suppress fires and achieve planned burn
 - P19 evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the burn

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the legal restrictions controlling heather burning
- K2 the hazards associated with heather burning operations
- K3 the Muirburn Code
- K4 the estate fire plan and its associated operating procedures
- K5 the importance of burn planning
- K6 the resources and equipment required to support safe burning activities
- K7 how to assess the characteristics of heather habitat
- K8 the elements (heat, fuel, oxygen) that are required for fire to exist
- K9 the factors that affect fire behaviour
- K10 fuel types and loads
- K11 how the weather, fuel availability and terrain can affect the spread, intensity and severity of fires
- K12 the tools and equipment used to control and extinguish heather fires
- K13 the potential impact of heather burning activities on other aspects of the environment including game and other wildlife
- K14 why heather is burnt as part of wildlife management
- K15 the purpose and value of firebreaks
- K16 the health and safety requirements associated with heather burning
- K17 map reading skills in respect of 1:50,000 scale ordnance survey maps
- K18 checklists, maps and diagrams as important management tools
- K19 the information required by fire brigades when called out
- K20 how to implement and analyse test burns
- K21 how topography can affect the spread, intensity and nature of fires
- K22 different lighting patterns and how they can impact on the burn
- K23 procedures to follow in the event of an emergency
- K24 fire groups and their role in controlling emergencies

Additional Information

Glossary

Prescribed burning

The planned application of fire under pre-determined environmental conditions, within boundaries, to achieve resource management objectives

Topography

Shape of the land, especially slope and aspect

Fire Weather

Predicted climatic conditions covering the period of the burn, especially wind, air temperature and relative humidity

Fuel

The type, quantity, arrangement, distribution, and moisture content of the vegetation. This can be ground (peat), surface (heather and litter layer) or aerial (trees) fuels

Fire type

Either ground fire, surface fire or crown fire, the most common type is surface fire

Fire intensity

The pulse or rate of energy release that travels upwards from the fire

Burn severity

The heat pulse, and consequent impact on vegetation and soil, which travels down below the litter layer of a fire

Fire Escape

A burn that exceeds the fire prescription, often a runaway fire or wildfire

Wildfire

A fire that is not controlled

Burn plan

The preparation made for controlled burning of heather in a specific area

Muirburn Code

A Scottish code of conduct including legislation that must be complied with, in regard to burning vegetation

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