

Working on Fire

Always Ready For the Fire Season



Read how the Working on Fire Programme prepares for the Summer and Winter Fire seasons with their much-sought-after Integrated Fire Management Services, specialised training, fire awareness education and partnerships.

**Saving Lives, Protecting the Environment,
Restoring dignity**



**forestry, fisheries
& the environment**

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



KISHUGU
FOR THE GREATER GOOD



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME



INTRODUCTION



Preparation is vital to a successful fire season

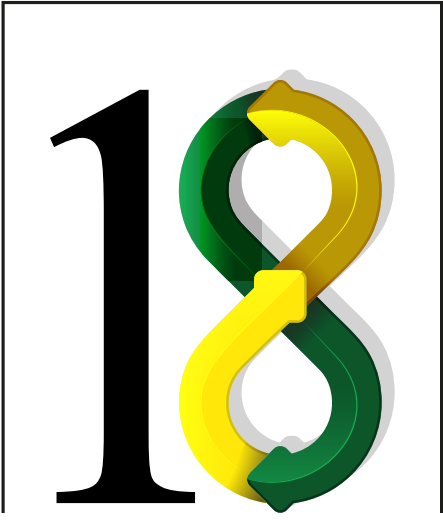
The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment’s Working on Fire Programme gets ready for the fire seasons with a series of activities that ensures our veld and forest firefighters are ready, both mentally and physically, to be dispatched to the fireline. South Africa has two Fire Seasons - the Summer and Winter Fire Season. The Summer Fire Season begins on 1 December and lasts until the end of April and affects the Western Cape and the western region of the Eastern Cape.

The northern provinces experience the Winter Fire Season, which begins on 1 June and ends end



WOF Chief Operations Officer:
Shane Christian

of October. The Working on Fire Programme has a footprint in these provinces and for the past 18 years has provided Integrated Fire Management Solutions in high fire-prone areas where WOF teams are based in the various provinces.



YEARS OF
SUSTAINABILITY



What is Integrated Fire Management Solutions?

Veld fires are becoming ever more frequent, and increased annual temperatures and climate change have impacted the occurrence and spread of fires. The WoF Programme provides a series of Integrated Fire Management Solutions (IFMS), which assists significantly in the prevention, detection, and suppression of wildfires.

IFMS consists of four Rs: reduction, readiness,

response, and recovery. In addition, IFMS includes fire awareness, fire prevention (fuel load reduction, prescribed burning, and preparation of fire breaks), resource sharing and coordination, training, identifying risks, fire detection, fire suppression, and fire damage rehabilitation. These activities create a sustainable and well-balanced environment, reduce wildfire damage, and promote the beneficial use of fire.



Climate change and impact on fires

Climate change had a negative impact across all continents and includes severe flooding, drought, and extreme weather conditions with an increase in the number and severity of disaster fires.

In South Africa we experienced major fires over the past number of years:
Knysna fires (June 2017)
George fires (October 2018)
Free State fires (October 2020)
Cape Town fires (April 2021)
Northern Cape fires (September 2021)

The WOF Programme has been instrumental in combatting these fires and continues to provide ground and aerial firefighting support to stakeholders across South Africa.



Preparation for the fire season

Disaster management, fire protection associations, and landowners must prepare well in advance before the commencement of the fire seasons.

Our WOF teams based in both these fire seasons begin their preparations three to four months before the start of the fire season and include assistance to landowners in fuel load reduction, preparation of fire breaks and prescribed burning, and also fire awareness activities in local communities and schools.

As part of our preparedness WOF also ensure that our firefighters are fully equipped with PPC and PPE and that our resources are strategically placed and that our vehicles and fire pumps are serviced before the fire season.

Other than standard skills training that is scheduled throughout the year at the Kishugu Training Academy. WOF also has Yellow Card Training Camps in the various provinces before the fire season.



Yellow Card Training Camps

The Yellow Card Training Camps (YCTC) ensure our veld and forest firefighters are theoretically and practically trained and assessed before the fire season. It is compulsory for all firefighters to attend YCTC before the fire season.

These camps simulate actual fire-active situations, and their primary objective is to ensure that all firefighters are competent on the fire line. Each person will be allowed to practice firefighting skills such as hose lay and line construction. In addition, each team will review standard mobilisation procedures and learn environmentally sound camping methods. During this camp, each team member will review all the fireline safety and survival training procedures and participate in different exercises such as firewall exercises. The Firewall Exercise has two main objectives:

- To allow firefighters to pass through an active fire front simulating the procedure of passing

- through a fire in an entrapment situation and
- To allow firefighters to practice the use of knapsacks and beaters during an active fire.

The WOF fitness standard assessments also make up part of the camps. This includes the 2.4-kilometre run, sit-ups, push-ups, and pull-ups. The assessments end with a route march, in which teams participate in a 10-kilometre march, testing leadership skills, teamwork coordination, endurance, and strength as they can be expected to go for long hours combating fire on the fire line. At the end of each assessment camp, firefighters that have passed their assessment receive a yellow card which is accreditation that they can be dispatched to the fire line. Once all our Yellow Card Assessment Camps are completed in all the provinces, our firefighters will be ready to assist partners, Fire Protection Associations, and stakeholders in integrated fire management and suppression of wildfires during the fire season





Prevention measures are put in place

Working on Fire Western Cape teams hit the ground running, after a well-deserved rest after the Summer Fire Season, assisting various partners with fire prevention work. Partners such as Table Mountain Park, Cape Nature, and other private landowners take advantage of the quiet days and get the WOF teams to assist with prescribed and ecological burns.

The Kleinmond team assists Cape Nature in a fire break in Pringle Bay, in the Overberg, and the Newlands team in Cape Town assists the Table Mountain National Park with prescribed burns at Tokai. The park said the burns are necessary for the reproduction and growth of the Fynbos in the area. It also serves as a fuel load reduction exercise to minimise the spread of a fire.



The WOF Western Cape Kleinmond team assisting Cape Nature with a firebreak.

The Heilderberg team, alongside the City of Cape Town firefighters, assisted the Helderberg Nature Reserve in the recent fire season with an ecological burn. The burn was aimed at reducing

Fynbos, which accumulated for over 50 years and placed neighboring properties at risk. The burns are in line with the Working on Fire Programme’s vision of protecting the environment.



Reducing the fire risk around properties



The WOF Eastern Cape Mkhambathi team putting fire preventable measures in place before the fire season.

Participants from the Working on Fire Eastern Cape Mkhambathi team conducted WOF’s much-sought-after Integrated Fire Management Services at the Mkhambathi Nature Reserve and its surroundings.

The team conducted manual fuel load reduction in the form of slashing by removing overgrown vegetation to reduce the fuel to prevent runaway fires from spreading and affecting the reserve.

The Base Communication Representative of the team, Akhona Dlamini, said every year when the province approaches the winter fire season, they work hard and put measures in place to minimize fire risks.

“This area tends to get overgrown grass and if it is not taken care of, it might play a big role in spreading fires. We also advise the community to take responsibility for their properties ensuring they make fire belts and remove fuel near their properties,” Dlamini said.



Alien plant removal contributes to water supply



WOF Limpopo Tzaneen HAT assists with the removal of alien invasive plants at the George’s Valley.

The Working on Fire Limpopo Tzaneen High Altitude Team is always hard at work assisting partners with the removal of alien invasive plants - Pantula Pine and Saliga Gum - Alien invasive plants are a major threat to the biodiversity in the catchment areas, possibly



Overgrown vegetation contributes to fires



WOF participants doing manual fuel load reduction for the landowners.

Working on Fire Free State firefighters worked around the clock preparing landowners and communities for the winter fire season.

Since the beginning of the year, the WOF teams have embarked on various projects implementing Integrated Fire Management Services for various landowners, stakeholders, and communities they operate in.

“We saw it beneficial to start implementing IFM services at an early stage due to the heavy

rainfall the province received, which has increased vegetation fuel across the province,” said Bongani Mashiane, Ground Operations Manager.

The teams are working together with the Fire Protection Associations to implement IFM services for various landowners across the province because reducing the fuel load minimises the risk of wildfires spreading and causing more damage.



Safety of the community a priority

Working on Fire Gauteng teams continuously conduct fuel load reduction and alien plant removal before the winter fire season across the province.

The JS Moroka team’s crew leader, Surprise Kgwedi, said the team clears out tall grass in public facilities like community centers and clinics to minimize the spread of fire because the safety of the communities is a priority.

The Leeuwfontein team removes pompom alien invasive plants in the nature reserve because it is

a threat to vegetation, grazing land, and wetlands. One of the dangers of Pompom is that it fuels fires during the winter fire season.

The crew leader type I, Merriam Semoka, said Pompom grows a lot during the off-season and the Biodiversity in the nature reserve guides them through removing and nipping it out.

The Heidelberg team conducts manual fuel load in Rensburg by chopping down the reeds which serve as a hide-out area for the criminals.



The WOF Gauteng Leeuwfontein team removing the alien plant - Pompom.

disturbing the delicate natural balance in ecosystems. The team recently concluded this exercise at George’s valley, Tzaneen and despite the challenges posed by unfavourable weather conditions, the teams showcased the WOF value of excellence and ensured a job well done. Removing the invasive

plants and clearing the catchment areas contribute to George’s Valley River, the Tzaneen dam, and the Letaba River. The High Altitude Project has five (5) teams in Limpopo comprising a total of 59 participants.



Dispatch and Coordination: Heroes behind the scenes

The Working on Fire Dispatch and Coordination department plays a vital role in WOF’s Integrated Fire Management Services and is one of the core departments within the Ground Operations unit.

Led by their Head of Department, Tracey Carter, the department is tasked with handling the ground and aerial movements of WOF. The WOF dispatchers are based in various Dispatch Centres around the country and are the first point of contact with partners when WOF resources are needed in Integrated Fire Management services. The dispatchers, consisting of Type 1, 2, and 3 are supervised by the Provincial Coordinators, who in turn report to the National Dispatch and Coordination Coordinator, Moses Manganye.

Summer and winter fire seasons

The department works hard throughout the year - in both seasons - and when they change, WOF has to relocate quite a large number of resources - ground and aerial - from the northern provinces to the Western and Eastern Cape and vice versa. Hotshot teams, pilots, vehicles, and aircraft arrive in the different provinces, and their movements are supervised by the Dispatch and Coordination.

2021/2022 Summer Fire season

In the recent Summer Fire Season, the department dispatched a total of 207 ground teams to a total of 269 fires. WOF aerial resources provided aerial firefighting support and flew a total of 759.49 hours.

“A special thanks goes to all our Provincial Coordinators (ProCos) and National Coordinator, who are always available to step in and assist where needed. There is never an easy fire season but the dispatch function is always manned without fail,” Tracey Carter said.

Fire Season preparations

The department shifts its focus to a new season when another ends and some dispatchers, who



usually work during the previous season, avail themselves again and work back-to-back fire seasons, a dedication that deserves praise.

Dispatcher refresher training

Before any season begins, the Dispatchers Type 1 and 2 go through refresher training.

The three-day training consists of a day going over operational changes and workshoping any issues and highlights resulting from the previous seasons.

The second day is spent on theory and practicals on the Aviation Emergency Response Plan. The third day is spent refreshing dispatch procedures, and practicals of dispatches, followed by the theoretical exam.

All Dispatchers, internal and external, have passed their practical assessments and theoretical exams with flying colours this year and will be deployed to their Dispatch centres for the winter season.

Fireweb application

The department recently introduced the Fireweb app which will streamline the “paperwork” with

quicker turnaround times in processing the movements and getting them checked and signed off. Route forms are pushed through to the crew leader's cell phone and once their tasking is complete they can capture the required information directly on the app and do the necessary mapping of production done, which is a requirement from our funder DFFE. The Regional Managers then need to verify that the information and mapping is correct. Once this has happened, the Dispatchers can then give the movement a last check for correctness and then close the movement off. This then goes through to the Provincial Coordinators for signoff.

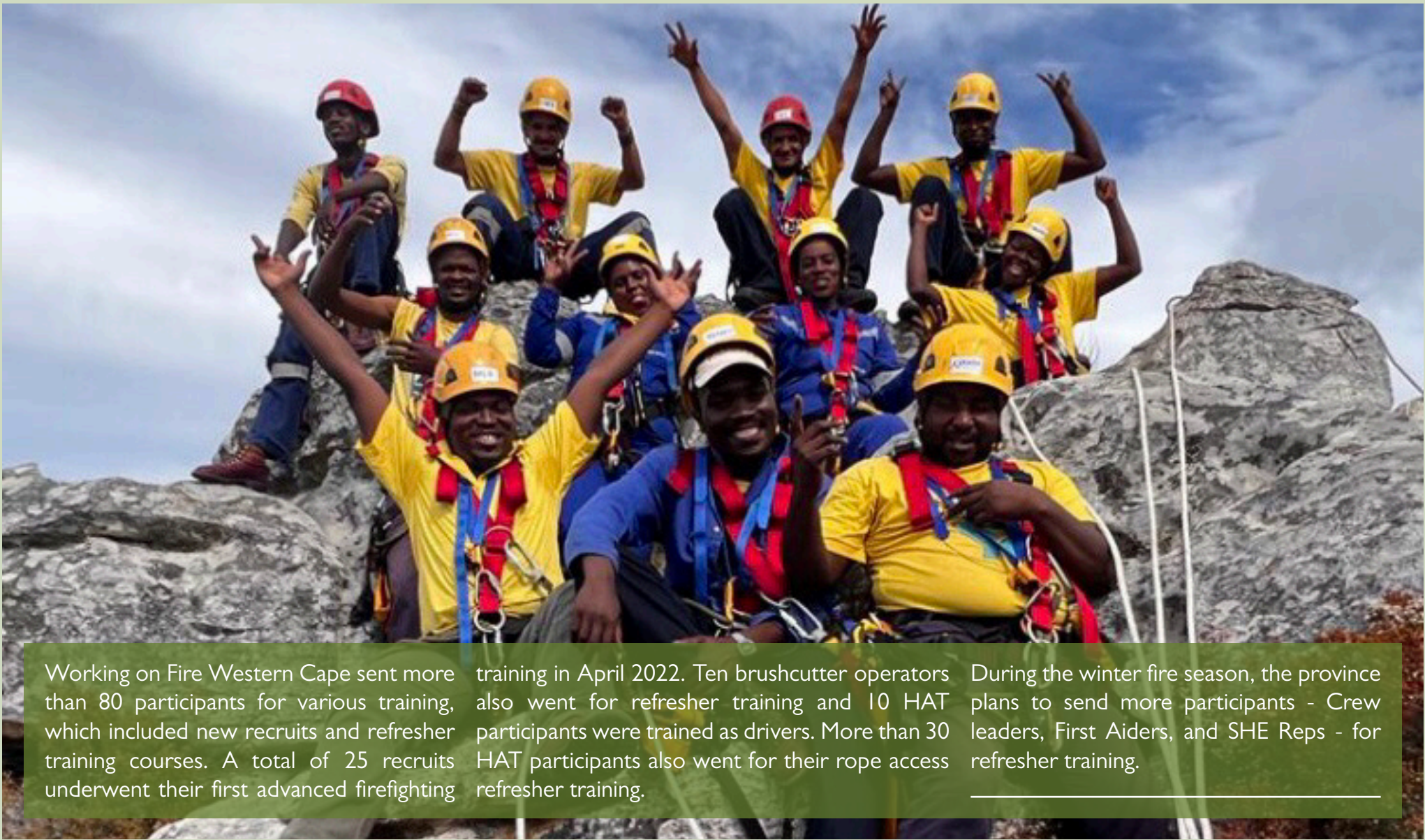
Head of Department - Tracey Carter

Thank you to all the Dispatchers, Provincial Coordinators, and the National Coordinator for all your hard work and dedication throughout the years. I am looking forward to the new season with the implementation of the FireWeb App making everyone’s life just that little bit easier.

I wish all my staff a good and safe season ahead, as well as all our “brothers and sisters-in-arms” in Aviation, Ground Operations, Forestry Support, and High Altitude Teams.



Western Cape participants gain valuable skills



Working on Fire Western Cape sent more than 80 participants for various training, which included new recruits and refresher training courses. A total of 25 recruits underwent their first advanced firefighting

training in April 2022. Ten brushcutter operators also went for refresher training and 10 HAT participants were trained as drivers. More than 30 HAT participants also went for their rope access refresher training.

During the winter fire season, the province plans to send more participants - Crew leaders, First Aiders, and SHE Reps - for refresher training.



Fire Awareness Campaigns

The Working on Fire Programme Fire Awareness Department introduced the provincial fire awareness campaigns in 2014 and the purpose of these annual fire awareness campaigns is to have a combined effort to raise awareness about the risk of wildfires and to empower all communities at risk of wildfires to take responsibility for their risk.

The fire awareness campaigns are conducted a month or two before the launch of each provincial Fire Season - to prepare and raise awareness about the forthcoming fire season, reduce the risk and impacts of wildfires in identified communities and to foster collaborations.

Build-up campaigns

Each region in a province hosts a week's programme of activities - adult-based FireSafe workshops, school fire awareness, door-to-door fire awareness education, Radio FireSafe talks, Online Fire Awareness education through Social Media platforms, and fuel load reduction activities (Invasive alien plants clearing, Fire breaks, Community clean-ups).

All role-players in the community come together to ensure all the necessary firefighting resources are available, collaborate on fire awareness education, and spread fire safety tips.

Communities that already suffered losses need to focus on rehabilitation measures and actions must be taken to reduce further damage to land, like soil erosion. Promote tree planting to restore the land, and get rid of invasive alien plants.



HOD Community Fire Awareness:
Zanele Nxumalo.

In community fire management, preparedness activities are crucial which include planning, prevention, detection, information sharing, and education. These activities must be everybody's responsibility in the community. Promote community dialogue when it comes to fire prevention. Unwanted Wildfires can be prevented, Be FireSafe and Act responsibly.

Adapting through the COVID-19 pandemic

During the years 2019 and 2020, the Department had to adapt to online platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We conducted online Fire Awareness Campaigns before and during the fire seasons through social media platforms in the form of provincial webinars, Facebook live streaming during the webinars, online FireSafe workshops, Radio FireSafe Talks, and posting fire safety tips and key messages through various social media platforms.



Targeting Early Childhood Development centres



The WOF Gauteng Abe Bailey team doing school fire awareness at the Little Trinity ECD in Khutsong.

The Working on Fire Gauteng Abe Bailey team intensifies efforts in presenting fire awareness to Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) to ensure fire safety messages are delivered to the learners and educators before the start of the winter fire season.

The crew leader, Nokuthula Kantsi, said most of the ECDs are next to squatter camps, which is a concern from a fire safety point of view.

“Every year people die in fire incidents and children are victims of these fires, therefore, it is vital to educate them at an early age to avoid fire risks because our objective is to save lives.”

The ECD educators appreciated the efforts of the WOF team and all are in agreement that children needed to know the fire safety tips at a very young age because it is life-saving.

“We present fire awareness education because we love what we do and these messages we share are vital and constructive to the development of the children,” said Kantsi.



Educating a child is educating a village



The WOF Eastern Cape St Francis team leads the province in conducting fire awareness campaigns.

The Working on Fire Eastern Cape St Francis Bay team conducted more than 31 fire awareness campaigns in schools and communities during the 2021/2022 financial year.

According to the crew leader, Thobela Hloyi, his team has been working hard to deliver the message about the safe and responsible use of fires in and around homes or properties.

“We have visited schools and communities around St Francis and during these door-to-door campaigns, we educated the community members about fire risks and what to do to prevent unwanted fires.”

“We taught them to avoid overloading of plugs and to ensure they do not leave burning stoves

and candles unattended,” Hloyi said. During the school visits, the team educated learners on various topics like climate change's role in fires, the impact of fires, causes of fires, the stop, drop and roll procedure, wetlands and fires. These topics assist a lot to make sure learners understand a lot about fires, how to prevent them, and what should be done in case of fires.

“Educating learners is one of the best ways of educating the whole village, as learners always take these messages and implement them in their homes,” explained Hloyi

St Francis team is the leading team within the province with a high number of awareness campaigns conducted in the previous financial year.



Sensitising communities on fire dangers

The Western Cape has the Summer Fire Season which begins in December and ends in April. However, Working on Fire Western Cape continuously sensitises the community at large to fire risks because the winter season comes with a rise in structural fires.

Residents of an informal settlement in Langa, Cape Town were left homeless after a fire had destroyed their homes and in a bid to ensure that this does not happen again, the WOF Fire Awareness department and teams visit fire-prone communities and schools spreading messages about fire safety.

During the 2021/2022 Summer Fire Season, more than 1 100 community members from 34 communities across the province were taught how to protect their homes from fires. A total



The WOF Western Cape Riversdale team doing fire awareness education at one of the schools in their area.

of 532 learners were reached in schools and were taught about fire safety measures.

This fire awareness education aims to mitigate the risk of fires which in most cases is a result of human negligence.



Aligning with the school curriculum



Fire awareness Training Officer Khulani Zulu workshoping learners from Qoza High School on how to be FireSafe.

The Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal Fire Awareness department initiated a FireSafe School Project to work closely with schools to ensure they are Fire Safe.

Fire Awareness Training Officer, Khulani Zulu, visited Qoza High School and conducted a workshop for the learners, who will be part of the FireSafe School Committee, on how to use the Fire Danger Index (FDI) board and the logsheet.

“We are proud to announce the project has begun and is going well in three schools. Learners will fill out a daily activity book where they will put information such as the FDI reading in the morning, midday, and afternoon. They will also colour code it according to the FDI colours.” said Zulu.

Zulu has successfully established three School FireSafe Committees and he will continue to workshop another three to equip learners to be Fire Safe at schools.

Once the summer fire season is over, WOF Western Cape teams continue to visit schools and communities in fire-prone areas because heating mechanisms will be used due to the winter season.



Kishugu providing specialised training throughout the years

The Yellow Card Training Camps began in 2013 with Kishugu Training Academy Instructors, who are former WOF firefighters, training all the WOF firefighters in their respective provinces.

“There are specific compulsory assessments that firefighters participate in and these take three days to complete,” said Thando Sambokwe, Kishugu Academy Campus Manager.

What training takes place within these camps?

The training consists of the following activities:



DAY 01

- Teams arrive/briefing.
- Setting up camps.
- Equipment inspection exercises.
- Drilling competition.
- Physical training lecture.
- Provincial management activities.

DAY 02

- Fitness assessments.
- A fire lecture.
- Theoretical test.
- Firewall assessment.
- 10 km Route March.

DAY 03

- Parade practice.
- Final documentation.
- Pass out parade.
- Demobilisation.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic affected training and the camps had to be conducted under strict rules and regulations. The usual camp where certain teams converged was made away and teams took turns on a rotational basis to be assessed and trained.

Well wishes from Kishugu Academy

“I wish Working on Fire all the best during the upcoming season and firefighters must never forget the 10 standard fire orders. Let us hold hands be a team and work hard together. We can achieve anything,” Sambokwe said.



Unpacking Yellow Card Training Camp exercises

The Yellow Card Training Camps ensure firefighters are theoretically and practically trained and assessed before the fire season.

These camps simulate actual fire-active situations, and their primary objective is to ensure that all firefighters are competent on the fire line.

During this camp, each team member will review all the fireline safety and survival training procedures and participate in different exercises.



Understanding the firewall exercise



WOF firefighters participate in the firewall exercise at the Yellow Card Training Camp.

Katlego Molapo, a crew leader type 2 for the Working on Fire Gauteng Roodeplaat team, shared a more in-depth understanding of the firewall activity in the Yellow Card Training Camps.

- The firewall exercise has two main objectives:
- To allow firefighters to pass through an active fire front simulating the procedure of passing through a fire in an entrapment situation.

- To allow firefighters to practice the use of knapsacks and beaters during an active fire.
- Molapo acknowledged the exercise is frightening due to the smoke and flames and one must be mentally and physically fit for it.

The crew leader has participated in the annual Yellow Card Training Camp for the past decade. “If you are not fit you cannot survive the firewall exercise because firefighters should not suffer fatigue on the fireline.”



The Route March!



Teams carry their gear and all their firefighting equipment and are given two hours to complete the route march.

Working on Fire’s annual Yellow Card Training Camps end with the 10-kilometre Route March. This is an activity that assesses the endurance, strength, teamwork, and leadership skills of the participants because they can be expected to walk for long hours combating fire on the fire line.

Teams carry their gear and all their firefighting equipment and are given two hours to complete this march. They are collectively assessed as a team so the WOF value of teamwork comes into effect.

WOF teams work in velds and forests, with some sites inaccessible by transportation, so participants are required to walk to these sites, in mountainous terrain to conduct fire suppression operations.



The line construction

One of the assessments during the Yellow Card Training Camps is the line construction, also known as a firebreak.

The firebreak is a gap in vegetation or other flammable material, which acts as a fence to reduce or completely stop the progress of the wildfire and to provide an area of reduced fuel load which will halt the intensity of the wildfire.

The firebreak should be two (2) metres wide, which will amount to a total of four (4) metres, both inside and outside the yard, to allow combatting a fire more effectively and also serve as a barrier from which a backburn can be initiated.

It is recommended that every landowner conduct firebreaks before the commencement of the fire season to reduce the risks of unwanted wildfires.



Working on Fire Limpopo participants conducting firebreaks during the Yellow Card Training Camp.



YELLOW CARD TRAINING CAMP



Two camps for Mpumalanga

More than 450 veld and forest firefighters, made up of 24 teams, from Working on Fire Mpumalanga attend two Yellow Card Training Camps for the last leg of the winter fire season preparations.

Teams in the Highveld region, namely Piet Retief, Wakkerstroom, Volksrust, Ermelo, Breyten, Badplaas, Warburton, Balfour, Mayflower, Belfast, and Loskop take part in a Camp in Ermelo. Teams in the Lowveld region, namely Dullstroom, Nelspruit, Barberton, Lydenburg, Lefpa, Nkomazi, Wilgeboom, Salique, Injaka, Graskop, Mlambongwane and Waterval Boven take part in a camp at Kishugu Training Academy. In Secunda, the Sasol team complete their training at their base, the Sasol Fuel plant. The two Lowveld and



The first group of firefighters attend their pass-out parade in the Highveld Yellow Card Training Camp. (Photo by: Wayne van der Walt).

Highveld camps ran concurrently with teams taking turns at the camps, in adherence to the COVID-19 regulations. In this year's Highveld camp, the Department of Health visited the teams at the end of each rotation to administer the COVID-19 vaccination.



Assessing the readiness



WOF Limpopo participants gearing up for the winter fire season through the Yellow Card Training Camp.

Over 400 Working on Fire Limpopo participants, stationed at 25 bases, completed their annual Yellow Card Training Camps in preparation for the winter fire season.

The camps take place in April with teams taking turns in attending in adherence to the COVID-19 rules and regulations.

The preparations come in handy for the teams, due to climate change and the rich fuel after the province experienced heavy rainfall. Johannes Modimola, Crew leader Type I from Marakele, thanked the Working on Fire Programme and the Kishugu Training Academy for continuously investing their efforts in making sure they receive training that will enable them to face the winter fire season.



Ensuring participants are mentally and physically fit



WOF North West participants participate in the route march during the Yellow Card Assessment Camp.

Working on Fire North West's Yellow Card Assessment Camp is held at the Pilanesberg Bosele Camp, in Rustenburg, with a total of 363 participants from 17 teams.

The teams take turns at the camp, which is divided into four (4) groups, with four (4) teams per group.

The camp is facilitated by four (4) Kishugu



Gauteng resources are ready



Working on Fire Gauteng participants at the Yellow Card Training Camp.

The Yellow Card Training Camp for Working on Fire Gauteng was held at Agricultural Research Council's Youth Centre in Roodeplaat in March this year.

A total of 15 teams of 296 participants participated in this annual winter fire season preparation programme and Ground Operations Manager, Khomotso Moagi, said 245 of them successfully obtained their yellow cards.

This, she said, is a green light for the WOF participants to attend fire call-outs during the winter fire season. "There are also resources in

the form of five strike units, five truck buses, and one fire truck to combat the veld fires in the province.'

General Manager, Stephen Boyes, said the province obtained a 100 percent pass rate during the assessment camp. This, he said, impressed all management and meant the full strength of teams during the season. Boyes urged participants to observe and uphold occupational health and safety at all times.

"The safety of our participants is our number one priority."



Free State expecting a busy winter fire season

More than 563 Working on Fire Free State veld and forest firefighters received their yellow cards after completing their annual assessments, in preparation for the upcoming winter fire season.

The Yellow Card Training Camp was held at the Golden Gate Nature Reserve, where all 25 WOF teams were assessed. The province had to assess the teams in smaller groups in line with the COVID-19 rules and regulations and the teams

took turns attending the Camp with a maximum of four teams being assessed at the same time.

WOF Free State General Manager, Antoinette Jini, said the province is expecting a busy winter fire season. "The amount of rain the province has received has doubled the fuel load and our teams will have to work twice as hard to ensure all landowners are ready for the upcoming fire season."



WOF Free State firefighters taking part in the annual Yellow Card Training Camp in preparation for the upcoming fire season.

Training Academy Instructors, who put the participants through their paces while adhering to COVID-19 rules and regulations.

"I am very proud of the teams because they did very well during this year's assessment. Almost all participants present completed and passed their evaluation fitness test and this shows that our teams

are mentally and physically fit and ready for the upcoming winter fire season", said Eric Makube, Ground Operations Manager.

Participants are issued Yellow Cards as proof they are ready, refreshed, and prepared to go to the fireline during the winter fire seasons.



SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS



Msukaligwa Fire and Rescue adds another WOF team to its roster

This year Msukaligwa Local Municipality had the honor to accommodate this year's Yellow Card Training Camp at the AJ Swanepoel Stadium, Ermelo from 4 to 10 April 2022. During the planning, the Msukaligwa Fire Department and the Working on Fire Programme took a hand to ensure this year's training was one of the bests camps ever run in Ermelo.

To ensure we achieve our obligation, in partnership with Working on Fire, this whole planning and training were forming part of the ongoing partnership between the municipality and WOF to foster the camaraderie between the firefighters (municipal and WOF).

As a Base Partner to WOF teams, the annual training is really important to ensure our wildland firefighters practice all aspects with specific reference to preventing and combating wildland fires. As a fire department, we support this training which is essential before every fire season begins. This year marks also a progressive move with the adding of the Warburton team to the current partnership, bringing the total teams within the municipality to three. The teams are strategically placed as follows: Ermelo, Breyten, and Lothair.

These three teams will be deployed throughout the municipal area to assist the community with fire prevention and the combating of wildland fires.



Msukaligwa Fire and Rescue Chief Fire Officer, Jaco Johnstone with Highveld Ground Operations Manager, Walter Khoza and Highveld Regional Manager, Eudance Thethe during the Yellow Card Training Camp.

Another major drive in addition to managing the grasslands in the municipal area through prescribed burning, in partnership with Working on Fire, the Msukaligwa Fire Service can assure the community the municipality will be ready to respond with enough resources should fires occur.

Our Working on Fire teams are not only a valuable resource to our fire department but also help with the veld fire management.

In the past, we looked into implementing prescribed burning but were unable to do it on our own, so we reached out to Working on Fire.

The partnership allowed us to use more sustainable and effective veld management techniques, while also providing the firefighters with good training opportunities.”

This partnership, therefore, has evolved into a partnership of trust and commitment to ensure we keep our community safe.

Msukaligwa Fire Department and Working on Fire will continue this partnership, which has proven to be benefitting our community at large.

I think this year underscored the value of this partnership, that when it comes to fire, we are all in this together.



Potchefstroom Fire Protection Association sends well-wishes



Potchefstroom Fire Protection Association General Manager, Dr. Kobus Roux.

Good luck to all the firefighters for this coming winter fire season.

I congratulate all firefighters who passed and received their Yellow Cards at the Yellow Card Training Camp that was recently concluded within the province.

I wish you all a safe winter fire season and thank you for the wonderful and successful partnership that has been sustainable and fruitful throughout the years.



Floods contribute to heavy fuel load



Mkhonzeleni Sangweni is the Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal Eshowe team Base Manager and the Fire Chief of the Umlalazi Fire and Rescue.

During the summer period of 2021 and the first three months of 2022, the region of uMlalazi Municipality experienced heavy rains, which led to flooding.

This is a sign we will experience more veld and runaway fires because there will be a lot of fuel load. As a municipality, we plan to invest more in public awareness and to start early on slashing and doing fire belts as one of the safety measures to minimise fire risks during the season.

Umlalazi Municipality would like to urge all its residents and the entire South African community to respect the fire and not start unnecessary fires. When you do start a fire, please ensure you follow all safety protocols and procedures.



Stellenbosch Municipality shows appreciation



Station Commander of the Stellenbosch Municipality Fire and Rescue, Zane Malan.

The Stellenbosch Municipality has a very good relationship with the Working on Fire Programme, especially when we require their firefighting skills.

For many years, we have been working together and we know they are always there to help, more so when we experience fires in our mountains.

We are grateful for their aerial firefighting support that fights fires in areas that are not easily accessible to our ground resources.

We look forward to a stronger partnership and a fruitful relationship as we all share a vision to save lives and protect the environment.