



Biosecurity legislation and fire ant management

To prevent the spread of one of the world's most invasive pests, fire ant biosecurity zones have been established under the *Biosecurity Act 2014 (Qld)*.

Fighting fire ants

The National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (program) is responsible for managing fire ant eradication in Australia.

The program's [10-year Eradication Plan](#) began in 2017 to commence eradication of the fire ant infestation in South East Queensland. By using a staged, rolling treatment program from west to east, it aims to rid Australia of this invasive pest in partnership with the Queensland community. The program is funded by all Australian states and territories, and the Commonwealth Government.

The *Biosecurity Act 2014 (Act)* aims to improve Queensland's biosecurity preparedness and response capabilities by managing biosecurity risks and the significant impacts animal and plant diseases and pests could have on our economy, agricultural and other industries, environment and lifestyle.

Fire ants are a category 1 restricted matter under the *Act*. It is a requirement under the *Act* to report suspect fire ants to the program within 24 hours.

What's a biosecurity zone?

There are two [fire ant biosecurity zones](#) established under the *Act* to help control the movement of materials that may carry fire ants. If you are operating or residing in these zones then you are required to undertake risk mitigation activities to prevent the human-assisted spread of fire ants. Not complying with requirements can result in penalties. Find out more about biosecurity zones at daf.qld.gov.au/fireants

Does the legislation apply to everyone?

Under the *Act*, all Queenslanders have a [general biosecurity obligation \(GBO\)](#) to manage biosecurity risks and threats that are under their control, they know about or they are expected to know about. There are particular requirements for some commercial operations e.g. turf farming and soil movement activities such as excavation.

What do I need to do?

If you are involved in the movement or storage of high risk materials that may carry fire ants, you must:

- follow movement controls relevant to the materials you move
- understand what fire ants look like and what materials they can be moved in
- be aware if you are living or working close to or within a fire ant biosecurity zone
- conduct inspections of material for any fire ant activity prior to moving it
- report suspect ants to the program by calling 13 25 23 or completing the online form at daf.qld.gov.au/fireants
- ensure all staff, contractors and sub-contractors are aware of and following the movement controls
- check that materials coming to your site or property are being moved lawfully. Ask your supplier for a copy of a current [biosecurity instrument permit \(BIP\)](#) or what risk mitigation measures have been undertaken
- clean machinery and equipment used when working with high risk materials, before moving the equipment off site.
- treat for fire ants to reduce the risk of spread.

Visit daf.qld.gov.au/fireants for more information about storing and moving high risk materials



What are high risk materials?

Materials that are considered ideal habitats for fire ants are considered high risk as they are likely to carry fire ants (i.e. be fire ant carriers). There are restrictions on the storage and movement of these materials within fire ant biosecurity zones. Fire ant carriers include:

- soil, including fill, clay, scrapings, and any material removed from the ground at a site where earthworks are being carried out
- mulch and animal manure
- baled hay or straw
- potted plants
- turf, mining and quarry products, and compost.

What is a biosecurity instrument permit?

You may apply to the program for a permit authorising you or your organisation to perform an activity. You can request a **BIP** by calling **13 25 23** or online at daf.qld.gov.au/fireants

Each BIP application is assessed on its own merits and applications may be refused if the movement poses an unacceptable risk of spreading fire ants.

Movement controls

The two **biosecurity zones** are in place to restrict the movement of materials that could spread fire ants. The Biosecurity Regulation 2016 outlines how high risk materials must be managed, including treatment, storage and movement. The table below outlines some of these requirements. For further information on requirements for specific materials see daf.qld.gov.au/fireants.

If you are unable to comply with these conditions then a **BIP** must be obtained before moving the material from one location to another. Specific provisions are not provided for all situations and there is flexibility to find better ways of managing risks.

Soil is one of the highest risks for spreading fire ants and as such there are restrictions to soil movement within fire ant biosecurity zones. There is also a Soil Movement Guideline — established under the *Act* — to specifically manage soil movements.

Fire ant biosecurity zones movement controls		
Fire ant carrier	Fire ant biosecurity zone 1	Fire ant biosecurity zone 2
Soil (includes: fill, clay, scrapings, and any material removed from the ground at a site where earthworks are being carried out).	Soil originating from a place within zone 1 can be moved to a place within zone 1 or zone 2. Measures outlined in the Soil Movement Guideline should be followed.	Soil originating from a place within zone 2 can be moved within zone 2 only. Measures outlined in the Soil Movement Guideline should be followed.
	Soil can be moved from its original place in zone 1 directly to a waste facility within either zone 1 or zone 2.	Movement to a place within zone 1 requires a BIP before movement takes place. Soil can be moved from its original place in zone 2 directly to a waste facility in zone 2. Movement to a waste facility within zone 1 requires a BIP .
All movements of soil to outside of the fire ant biosecurity zones requires a BIP.		
Baled hay or straw Potted plants Turf Animal manure Mulch Other carriers (includes: mining/quarry products or by-products).	To move these fire ant carriers from a place within zone 1 or zone 2 you must either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow movement and storage procedures as outlined in the Biosecurity Regulation 2016. Easy to follow steps are available online at daf.qld.gov.au/fireants; or • move the material directly to a waste facility, zone restrictions apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Material originating within zone 1 can be moved to a waste facility within zone 1 or 2. ○ Material originating within zone 2 can be moved to a waste facility within zone 2 only; or • move the material within 24 hours of it being at the original place. <p>If you are unable to fulfil the above conditions then you must request a BIP from the program by calling 13 25 23 or online at daf.qld.gov.au/fireants.</p>	

Failure to comply with movement controls

National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program inspectors conduct random compliance checks to ensure businesses and individuals comply with the procedures outlined in the Biosecurity Regulation 2016 and/or a [BIP](#) when moving or storing high risk material.

Penalties for non-compliance apply under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.

What if fire ants are found on my property or work site?

Land owners have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of fire ants and are encouraged to treat fire ants on their property.

The program will work closely with you to ensure your treatment of your property is sufficient to contain this highly invasive pest.

A biosecurity order or movement control order may be issued to restrict the movement of fire ant carriers from the site in certain circumstances.

Fire ants are a category one restricted matter under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and all Queenslanders must report suspect fire ants to the program within 24 hours of finding them, or potentially face fines.

More information

The program conducts free training sessions about the identification of the super pest and high risk material management. Book at ants.daf.qld.gov.au

Visit daf.qld.gov.au/fireants or contact the program on **13 25 23** for further information.

