



Cleaning machinery after working with materials that may carry fire ants

To prevent the spread of one of the world's most invasive pests, businesses using machinery in fire ant biosecurity zones must clean their equipment before it is moved off-site.

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. Check out the fire ant biosecurity zones at daf.qld.gov.au/fireants

Risk mitigation activities include cleaning your machinery, slashers and other equipment before leaving a site within a fire ant biosecurity zone to remove high risk carrier materials.

What are high risk materials?

Materials that are considered ideal habitat for fire ants are called high-risk carriers as they are likely to contain and carry fire ants. They include:

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

What do I need to do?

Check before cleaning machinery

Before cleaning, it is important to check all machinery and other equipment closely to ensure it is not infested with fire ants.

If you think you have found fire ants, you must report the sighting to the program on **13 25 23** or via daf.qld.gov.au/fireants, and take all reasonable and practical steps to minimise the spread of the pest.

Cleaning methods

Completely remove physical evidence of high risk materials from your machinery and equipment by:

- scraping or blowing
- brushing down
- washing down or steam cleaning, or
- air-blasting using an air compressor.



Where to check for fire ants

While not exhaustive, this table lists typical places high risk materials could be found on machinery and equipment.

Machinery, slasher and equipment	Component(s) to be checked
Backhoe	buckets and backhoe attachment
Bobcat	buckets, belly-plate/other attachments
Bulldozer	rippers, blade, track frame, belly plate
Cargo container	interior, exterior, locking mechanisms
Excavator	track frame, underside of slew ring, buckets
Drott	track frame, rippers, belly plate
Grader	rippers, mould board
Motor scraper	overflow area on rear of scraper
Tractor and slasher	top of slasher; skids
Trucks	soil build-up in bins, chassis rails

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.

