



Managing 'other' high risk materials in a fire ant biosecurity zone

To prevent the spread of one of the world's most invasive pests, risk mitigation controls must be used when managing high-risk carrier materials in fire ant biosecurity zones.

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

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 have a [general biosecurity obligation \(GBO\)](#) to:

- 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 or within a [fire ant biosecurity zone](#)
- conduct inspections of material for any fire ant activity prior to moving
- report suspect ants to the program by calling or completing the online form
- ensure all staff and sub-contractors are aware of and following the movement controls
- check that materials coming to your site are being moved lawfully. Ask your supplier for a copy of a current [biosecurity instrument permit \(BIP\)](#) or what risk mitigation measures have being 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.

What are 'other' 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). These include soil, turf, mulch and animal manure and 'other' materials. This fact sheet outlines requirements for 'other' fire ant carriers. These include:

- blended materials such as soil blends or processed soils (soils that undergo screening, crushing or blending with other materials, such as mulch)
- a product or by-product of mining or quarry works (e.g. gravels)



- a product or by-product of the processing of a plant, or something that comes from a plant (e.g. sawdust, compost).

What does this mean?

The Biosecurity Regulation 2016 (Regulation) outlines how 'other' fire ant carriers must be managed in fire ant biosecurity zones. You must follow the methods, as outlined in this document, unless the carriers are:

- moved directly to a waste facility (zone restrictions apply), or
- have been at the property for less than 24 hours.

Storing

If the fire ant carrier will remain on the property for more than 24 hours, you must use the following storage options:

- off-ground and covered, or
- on-ground and covered, either on:
 - concrete or bitumen (no cracks)
 - a barrier that cannot be penetrated by fire ants (e.g. 200 micron unperforated plastic sheeting)
 - compacted ground (other than sand) that has been treated with an appropriate chemical product before storage.

Chemical treatment must be applied around the perimeter of the on-ground storage area. This should be done by applying a 30 cm wide strip of insecticide containing 80 g/L bifenthrin. If the material is stored on compacted ground, the whole surface area must also be treated.

It is important to keep the treated area free of material that fire ants could use to form a bridge.

For an insecticide registered as a horizontal or perimeter barrier for fire ants, refer to Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) PER14317 (expires 31 December 2021). You can search for permits on the APVMA website at portal.apvma.gov.au/permits

Insecticides must be used in accordance with the conditions of the APVMA permit, the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) and in conjunction with the product's label.

Disturbing during storage

Anyone storing a fire ant carrier must either comply with the storage requirements above or disturb any stockpiles periodically to prevent fire ants becoming established within the stockpile. This means undertaking an activity to disturb the stockpile:

- every 21 days, and
- 24 hours prior to moving the material to another location.

Activities to 'disturb' this material include any combination of turning, screening, crushing, shredding, chipping or washing.

Moving

You may move carrier materials within, across and outside fire ant [biosecurity zones](#) if you:

- follow movement and storage methods outlined in this document or
- transport the material directly to a waste facility, with zone restrictions as follows:
 - 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.

If you are unable to fulfil these requirements then you must request a [biosecurity instrument permit \(BIP\)](#) from the program by calling **13 25 23** or via daf.qld.gov.au/fireants

Keeping a record

You should keep a written record of the steps you take to ensure the material is stored and moved correctly, including any chemical treatments applied and/or disturbance activity undertaken. These records should be kept for a minimum of two years.

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.

