

POLICY



Date adopted: 16/04/2019
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Policy title: RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS
Directorate: COMMUNITY SERVICES
Branch: CITY STANDARDS AND ANIMAL CARE
Policy objective:

To meet Council's General Biosecurity Obligation; maintain the amenity and public safety of roads, reserves, parks (including Council sporting fields), footpaths and nature strips throughout the city; to promote residents' safety on private property and to actively aid the National Eradication Program to achieve success in control of this invasive pest.

Policy scope:

This policy applies to all Council staff and contractors. Significant opportunities exist for staff working outdoors as well as mowing, landscaping and earthmoving contractors to apply this policy.

This policy seeks to specify procedures to be adopted by Council which will guide staff and contractors to take appropriate actions to locate and report Red Imported Fire Ants to Biosecurity Queensland (BQ), to minimise the public safety risks and aid the national eradication program to achieve success in control of this invasive pest.

Definitions:

TERM	DEFINITION
General Biosecurity Obligation	A statutory obligation under the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> to minimise biosecurity risks and report pests of specific categories.
Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA)	RIFA (<i>Solenopsis invicta</i>) are native to the South American countries of Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina, discovered in South East Qld in 2001.

Policy statement:

1. Biosecurity Queensland actions
 - (a) The management and control of RIFA is the responsibility BQ under the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program. Council ensures that staff working outside are trained in detection and field identification of RIFA. Training is supplied by BQ. Onsite observation of RIFA and their nest mounds can be provided by the Graffiti and Pest Services program (GPS).
 - (b) Council is provided by BQ, a monthly list of confirmed notifications of RIFA detections.
 - (c) Council promotes ongoing and repeated surveillance and subsequent chemical treatment of RIFA by BQ.

2. Actively report RIFA nest locations
 - (a) Council supports the success of the eradication program and will encourage reporting of RIFA nest locations to BQ, provide reasonable assistance when requested by BQ and at times offer advice to BQ from field staff or customer observations.
 - (b) If Council receives an enquiry about RIFA the customer should be referred to BQ. If the customer requests or insists on identification confirmation undertaken by Council staff prior to reporting, a request is forwarded to the GPS program to inspect the suspect ants for identification and report to BQ.
 - (c) All staff are expected, amongst other duties, to maintain reasonable surveillance for RIFA on roads, reserves, parks (including Council sporting fields), footpaths, nature strips and Council land throughout the city. Suspect nest locations are to be reported to BQ.
 - (d) Council and its contractors will actively avoid disrupting RIFA nests or BQ's RIFA control program. Roadside mowing will not be halted unless infestations are so concentrated to be reasonably impractical to avoid nests. Mowing contractors are required to avoid nests by a 1 metre radius.
 - (e) City Standards and Animal Care; Parks and Health, Environment and Waste branches will include BQ's RIFA educational and promotional information to the public in collaboration with BQ.
 - (f) Council also promotes the provision of public awareness by BQ and through Council's own social and print media platforms, of the proliferation of RIFA in affected areas.
3. Precautionary actions of Council
 - (a) Branches of Council utilising soil, gravel, mulch, hay and other high risk material will hold a biosecurity instrument permit for storage of that material. All potted plants and high risk material supplied to Council will be supplied with certification under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.
 - (b) Branches of Council utilising soil, gravel, mulch and high risk material will meet the obligations set by BQ's movement controls posted on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website.
 - (c) Public warning of heavy infestation in a park will be provided through placement of temporary signs to promote public awareness and to reduce the safety risk.
4. Contractors to take appropriate actions to locate and report RIFA

All contractors are expected to maintain surveillance for RIFA on roads, reserves, parks, footpaths, nature strips and Council land throughout the city. Suspect nest locations are to be reported to BQ and advice of that report supplied to the contract manager within Council.
5. Authorised chemical treatment by Council

An authority by the State for local government to treat a RIFA nest would be accepted in an emergency situation. An emergency situation is where a RIFA nest is detected on Council controlled land while there is not sufficient time for Biosecurity Queensland to attend for treatment, and there is a high risk to persons being at the location for a Council event.

Council's policy position is that it is Biosecurity Queensland's responsibility to deliver the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program.

Where authority is provided by the State to Council to treat a RIFA nest in an emergency situation, Council's position is that Biosecurity Queensland should provide cost recovery accordingly.

Related policies/legislation/other documents:

DOC ID	DOCUMENT	DOCUMENT NAME
12370423	Biosecurity Plan	City of Logan RIFA Biosecurity Plan 2018-2022