



GESF fire management plan and response Q&As

11 February 2025

Q: What plans or actions does ENGIE have in place to minimise the fire risks and to respond to any fire on the property?

A: ENGIE have developed three specific management plans to address the risk of fire impacting the Goorambat East Solar Farm project near Benalla in northern Victoria:

- An overarching Emergency Management Plan that outlines the company's obligations to prevent, prepare and respond to any emergencies that may impact the site, such as fires.
- A Fire Management Plan, which was approved by the Victoria Country Fire Authority (CFA) prior to the commencement of the project, that includes procedures for dealing with fire on site and the water required to be kept on site for that specific purpose.
- A Risk Management Plan that has identified hazards and the strategies to be applied to lower the risks, for example grass cutting and the removal of vegetation within the 10-meter fire break.
- All three plans have been developed in accordance with CFA guidelines and are reviewed regularly and updated as required.

In addition to this, ENGIE has taken and continues to take numerous actions to reduce the risk of a fire on the site and comply with the fire management plan, including:

- All site personnel have completed the CFA's online Bushfire Safety for Workers course.
- Fire Breaks are in the process of being developed across the site and vegetation is being maintained to reduce the overall potential fire fuel load.
- Any external fires are consistently monitored onsite to ensure preparedness in the event of any external fire risk.
- Regular interactions with the local CFA which include – holding a kick off meeting with CFA and several site visits by local CFA personnel.
- All approved site vehicles carry 9 litre water fire extinguishers, in addition to normal vehicle requirements.
- During high-risk fire periods all hot works will only be completed under specific permits to work.
- On total fire ban days, no hot works will be conducted onsite.

Q: I'm worried about a fire starting on the Goorambat East Solar Farm that the CFA won't be able to respond to, which could damage my property, what have you done to stop this happening?

A: ENGIE has been in regular contact with the local CFA branch and CFA staff have visited the Goorambat East Solar Farm site numerous times to discuss how the risk of fire can be minimised and how any response might occur.



To this end, ENGIE has developed three plans in accordance with CFA guidelines – a Fire Management Plan, Risk Management Plan and Emergency Management Plan – and all three are reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Q: What if a fire starts on my property, jumps the fence line, and damages the GESF, will I be held financially liable for the damage?

A: ENGIE has its own insurance policy in place to provide coverage in the unlikely event that solar farm equipment is damaged by fire during both the construction and operational phase of the project.

ENGIE understands that neighbouring landowners can be concerned about potential damage that they may cause to the Goorambat East Solar Farm, however, the essential element for consideration is that for an adjoining landowner to have liability for fires that have spread from their property to the solar farm, it must be demonstrated that the landowner was negligent and such negligence caused the damage.

Q: Is the fire risk on all ENGIE assets or project sites managed in the same way? Are they all covered by the same plans and are the same actions taken?

A: All ENGIE renewable energy and battery projects do have overarching Emergency Management Plans.

Some of the operational sites have requirements split into three documents as above - an overarching Emergency Management Plan, a Fire Management Plan and a Risk Management Plan – while some cover the same fundamentals in a single document, as each state has varied requirements.

All future ENGIE projects will have same obligations and expectations as those for the GESF, but format and style may need to be state or permit specific.



NB - ENGIE GESF Insurance statement

What are the insurance implications for my nearby property of having a solar farm next door?

ENGIE has its own insurance policy in place to provide coverage in the unlikely event that solar farm equipment is damaged by fire during both the construction and operational phase of the project.

In addition, there are 3 specific management plans which have been developed to address fire:

- Risk Management Plan that has identified hazards and the strategies to be applied to lower the risks (e.g. grass cutting and removal of vegetation within the 10-meter fire break).
- Fire Management Plan that includes procedures for dealing with fire on site and the water required to be kept on site for that specific purpose.
- Emergency Management Plan which outlines the company's obligations to prevent, prepare and respond to emergencies, such as fires, that may impact the site.

All three plans have been developed in accordance with CFA guidelines and are reviewed regularly and updated as required.

ENGIE understands that adjoining landowners can be concerned about potential damage that they may cause to the solar farm, however, the important element for consideration is that for an adjoining landowner to have liability for fires that have spread from their property to the solar farm, it must be demonstrated that the landowner was negligent and such negligence caused the damage.

Neighbouring landowners may also be concerned about insurance premiums rising as a result of the solar farm being close by, however the Insurance Council of Australia have confirmed that rising costs of cover were not related to renewables projects and that they are a result of '...escalating costs of natural disasters, the increasing value of homes and vehicles making them more expensive to replace, and inflation pushing up building and vehicle repair costs'.

The Insurance Council of Australia have also confirmed that they are "... not aware of any instances where Insurance Council members have been unable to provide insurance or have increased premiums as a result of a farm (or a neighbouring property) hosting energy infrastructure."

Statement current as of 3rd July 2024

The insurance Council of Australia have also stated as of May 24 "*the Insurance Council is not aware of any instances where Insurance Council members have been unable to provide insurance or have increased premiums as a result of a farm (or a neighbouring property) hosting energy infrastructure.*"



Insurance costs rising

The Insurance Council of Australia said the rising cost of cover had nothing to do with renewables.

"Premiums are rising because of the escalating costs of natural disasters, the increasing value of homes and vehicles making them more expensive to replace, and inflation pushing up building and vehicle repair costs," the council said in a statement provided to the ABC.

"Solar farms are not currently impacting or influencing the price of insurance."

As per article on 12th June [Farmer fears potential public liability insurance risks living next door to Neoen's Culcairn solar farm - ABC News](#)