

SAFETY ALERT

To:	Gold Coast staff and students	Issued: 1/5//2025
		Alert #: 8
Subject:	Fire ants	
Purpose:	To advise staff on the hazard	

SAFETY ISSUES

Fire ants are a significant pest that have the potential to impact health, the environment, and the economy. With fire ants being detected in South East Queensland, it is timely to remind our SCU community to be aware and report any sightings.

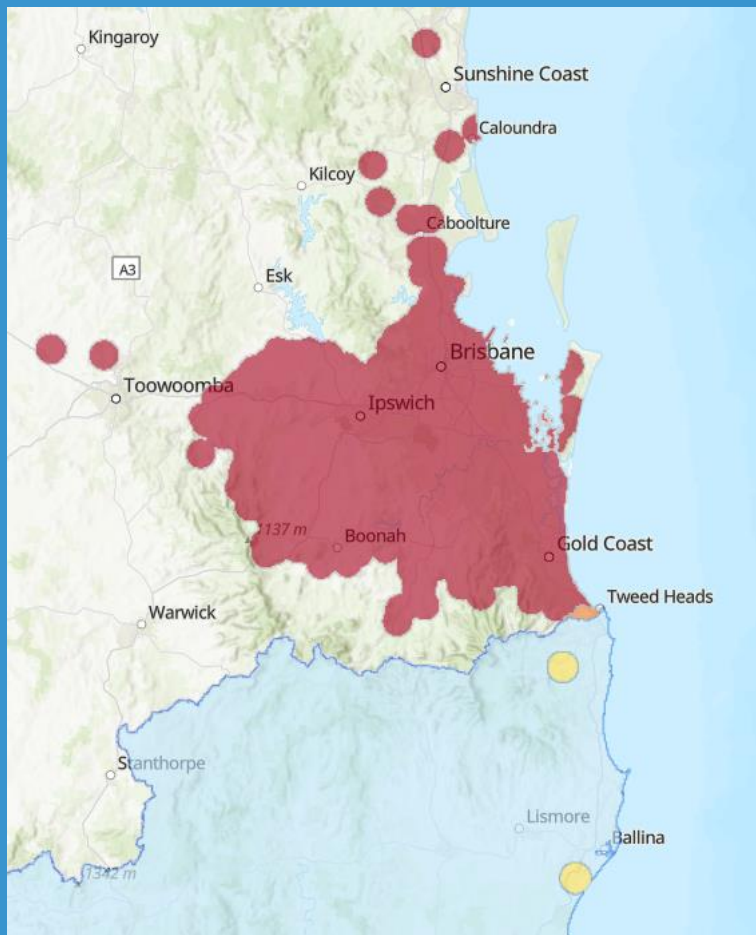
WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL RISK

Fire ants are aggressive and have a severe, burning, extremely painful sting. Each ant can deliver many stings, causing the sensation that the body is on fire, and the painful burning sensation can last up to an hour. Small white pustules may form within 48 hours of being stung, and they can become itchy and infected. If a fire ant nest is disturbed, humans are at risk of tens or hundreds of stings within seconds from swarming ants.

Fire ants pose serious risks to human health, animals, the environment, agriculture, and infrastructure. Their aggressive stings can cause fatal injuries to animals, particularly those that graze or dig. Ecologically, they disrupt native species and biodiversity while they damage crops and irrigation systems in agriculture. Fire ants also infiltrate and destroy electrical infrastructure, increasing maintenance costs. Socially, infestations can render outdoor spaces unusable. Effective control requires regular monitoring, public awareness, biosecurity compliance, and professional treatment.



Sources: National Fire Ant Eradication Program and FireInvasive Species Council



Source: NSW DPI Map of infestations

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/bfs/insect-pests/rifa/maps-of-infestations-and-zones>

POSSIBLE CONTROL MEASURES TO PREVENT INCIDENTS

Each jurisdiction in Australia approaches fire treatment differently. For example, in NSW, treatment is strictly regulated under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015, and only authorised officers are permitted to apply treatments. Queensland's National Fire Ant Eradication Program uses a mixture of pest management and self-treatment methods.

ACTIONS

If you're stung by a fire ant:

- Seek medical attention if you are prone to allergic reactions or experience symptoms of anaphylaxis.
- Apply a cold compress or ice to the stings to relieve the swelling and pain.
- Small blisters may form on your skin. Leave the blisters intact and wash gently with soap and water.

The above guidance is general information; if you are in doubt, seek medical advice.

Call 000 if someone experiences severe symptoms (e.g., rapid onset of flushing, general hives, swelling of the face, eyes, or throat, chest pains, nausea, severe sweating, breathing difficulties, or faintness.)

If you see a fire ant on campus:

- Report the sighting to Security on 1800 72 4357, who will assist by calling 132 ANT (13 22 68).