



Media Release

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Be prepared for springtime wind storms

September brings the start of Spring. With warmer days and more sunshine, comes the risk of strong nor'west winds.

“Strong winds can occur at any time of the year but are especially common in springtime. Selwyn residents need to be prepared to cope with these,” says Selwyn District Council Emergency Management Officer Ryan O'Rourke.

Last September Selwyn experienced its worst wind storm in nearly four decades, with winds gusting over 150 kilometres an hour in parts of the district. The winds caused power outages to 28,000 homes in Selwyn and Christchurch. Power outages lasted over a week in some areas of Selwyn, and the wind caused extensive damage to trees and property.

Mr O'Rourke says that a first step to be prepared is for people to ensure they check weather forecasts regularly so that they know if strong wind is forecast and can then take steps to prepare their family.

“I would also encourage people to join the Selwyn Gets Ready website as it helps communities take care of each other in an emergency,” he says.

The website is a database which provides local community response teams with information on who may need help in an emergency and what resources and skills are available in the community. To join, visit www.selwyn.getsready.net.

Orion has been reminding Canterbury property owners of the importance of trimming trees near power lines.

“A power outage caused by a tree may affect many people, including those with health issues. Tree owners need to keep their trees trimmed and well away from power lines especially given the likelihood of strong winds at this time of year,” says Stephen Godfrey, Orion's Energy Projects Manager.

For advice on who can safely cut down or trim trees phone Orion on 0800 363 9898.

If strong winds are forecast there are a number of sensible steps you can take to help protect your home and prepare your family:

- Prepare your property for high winds. Bring outdoor furniture, rubbish bins or cans and anything else that can be picked up by the wind into a garage, shed or indoors
- When the wind becomes strong stay indoors, and close window and doors
- Power outages are common during and after high winds and you may not be able to drive immediately after the storm so check that you are ready for this. Check that you have bottled water, non-perishable food, a can opener, a first aid kit, a torch and any

essential medical supplies your family will need at hand. You may also wish to fill bathtubs and sinks with water for flushing the toilet

- Have a supply of torches and extra batteries handy. Do not use candles (as they are a fire risk) or kerosene lamps, which require ventilation and are not designed for indoor use
- Check the Council website for information and advice, www.selwyn.govt.nz. If the power goes out listen to Radio NZ for weather information and updates
- Stay off the roads when a wind storm is forecast – driving is dangerous due to fallen trees, power lines and other hazards. Also remember that after the wind has died down trees, power lines or debris may be strewn across roads so you will need to be very careful. Driving at night after a major wind storm is unsafe and should be avoided as there could be hazards on the road which you will not be able to see clearly
- Do not touch any downed power lines as they may be live. Report these to Orion on 0800 363 9898.

Selwyn District Council can be contacted on 03 347 2800 or 03 318 8338 if assistance is required. Any power outages should be reported to Orion on 0800 363 9898.

Ends

For media enquiries please contact:

Allanah Jarman
Selwyn District Council
Phone 03 347 2807
Allanah.jarman@selwyn.govt.nz