



Media Release

Friday 14 December 2018

Don't be fooled by the wet weather – prepare for the fire season now

With summer approaching, Selwyn residents can expect hot, dry days and an increasing risk of fire in the months ahead.

Selwyn District Council and Fire and Emergency New Zealand are urging residents to be aware of fire dangers, in spite of recent rain, as conditions can change rapidly during hotter conditions.

Fire and Emergency Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officer Al Hutt says it's very likely there will be fires in the district over the summer period, as we've experienced in previous years.

"Now is the perfect time to start preparing for the coming fire season. There are some really simple things you can do now to reduce the risk of fire at your property," Mr Hutt says.

"When you're working on your property or in the garden, keep machinery well maintained to reduce potential sparks, and mow lawns in cooler conditions.

"You should also assess the risk of fire to your property and get rid of any shrubs, long grass or trees near your home which could burn easily. Having an escape plan for your family and pets is also vital," he says.

The Fire and Emergency website (www.fireandemergency.nz) has important information about how to reduce fire risk. To report long grass or any other fire hazard, people can fill out an online Fire and Emergency form via www.fireandemergency.nz/at-home/overgrown-sections

Burning on rural properties

Mr Hutt says if people intend to burn anything during the summer period, they must first find out whether they need to obtain a permit through Fire and Emergency.

Residents can visit Fire and Emergency's Check It's Alright website (www.checkitsalright.nz) for information on permits and fire rules in their area and to apply to Fire and Emergency for a burning permit. Even if the burning complies with

the Environment Canterbury Air Plan measures, people must still check the fire season status and whether they need a permit.

The Council is supporting Fire and Emergency to provide the public with information to stay safe during the summer fire season and provide some resources during fire incidents.

Selwyn District Council Emergency Management Officer Ryan O'Rourke says every summer, Selwyn residents are affected by wildfires and this year will be no exception.

"Our emergency management volunteers and staff will be involved in supporting the response to these fires this summer. There will also be some information on the Council's Facebook page for local fire information throughout summer as required," he says.

Residents are encouraged to sign up to Selwyn Gets Ready to receive emergency warnings and police messages to their email address as well as urgent messages which are sent straight to their phone for free. Those who sign up will only receive messages relevant to the area where they live. People can easily sign up at: www.selwyn.getsready.net. For more information, contact getsready@selwyn.govt.nz or phone (03) 347 2800.

Following the merger of rural and urban fire services on 1 July 2017, Fire and Emergency New Zealand is now responsible for rural firefighting, including the issuing of permits.