



Media Release
Thursday 19 January 2017

Help reduce the fire risk in Selwyn

Selwyn District Council is advising people to take action to prevent fires starting over the coming weeks as strong winds and excess vegetation raise the fire risk in the district.

“Fire activity has been lower than usual over the holiday break as conditions were cool for the time of year,” says Principal Rural Fire Officer Douglas Marshall.

“However we are now experiencing hotter weather and more windy conditions. Combined with the amount of vegetation in our district as a result of a wet spring, this creates conditions where fires can spread quickly if they are not prevented.”

A number of recent fires have started as a result of electric fences coming into contact with vegetation during windy conditions.

“Property owners can reduce the risk of these types of fires starting by either switching off electric fences - especially in strong winds - or trimming vegetation near fences,” says Mr Marshall.

A restricted fire season is in place in the rural area of Selwyn district. Under the restrictions the only types of outdoor fires allowed are barbeques, drum fires, crop stubble fires and fires where a permit has been issued by the Council.

Crop stubble fires may be more common in coming weeks. There are a number of safety guidelines which must be observed with these fires:

- people must be careful to avoid lighting fires when strong or moderate winds are occurring or are forecast
- all crop stubble fires may only be lit during daylight and must be out by dark
- the fire must be supervised at all times
- a fire break of at least 10 metres in place is required around the fire
- suitable equipment must also be available to extinguish a fire
- neighbouring property owners should be advised before burning occurs.

“In hot weather fires can also start as a result of machinery such as lawn mowers being operated. We would recommend choosing a cooler day to operate machinery and having a water source on hand to extinguish a fire if needed,” Mr Marshall adds.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

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