



Media Release

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Open Fire Season Status Change

Principal Rural Fire Officer Wilson Brown says that as rain is forecast over the next 10 days, Selwyn is changing its fire season status from 6am on Monday 13 January to an open fire season.

“When an open fire season is in place people need to make sure if they light a fire that they have a water source on hand to put it out, avoid lighting fires in high winds, stay with the fire at all times and have a 10 metre fire break for crop fires,” says Selwyn Principal Rural Fire Officer Wilson Brown.

In an open fire season outdoor fires can be lit without a fire permit, but best practice fire safety guidelines should always be observed to reduce the chances of a fire spreading.

Guidelines for safe burning are available online at www.selwyn.govt.nz/fire.

The open fire season applies to the rural areas in the plains in Selwyn. Different rules regarding fires apply in the High Country and Hill areas of Selwyn District. In these areas a restricted fire season is operating and a fire permit is required.

Environment Canterbury rules also prohibit burning in residential areas. Under these rules burning within a residential or living zoned area or burning within 100 metres of a residential zone or sensitive area (like a school or hospital) is not allowed. Gas fired barbeques and Hangis/ Umus are allowed.

With fire restrictions being changed, Mr Brown says that it will become more common for people to see fires burning. “Fire services are often called out to attend rural fires that are being supervised and managed appropriately,” he says.

“It’s expensive to attend false call outs so we encourage people to consider whether a fire is an emergency before they dial 111. If there are people on site supervising the fire, a fire break and water on hand it is probably a controlled operation – however if there is no one present people should report this by dialing 111.”

Fire restrictions may be re-introduced if weather conditions become dry over the summer. Any future changes to fire restrictions will be posted online at www.selwyn.govt.nz.

Ends

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