



Media Release

Tuesday 11 March 2014

## **Fire restrictions ease in Ellesmere, Malvern and Springs wards**

An open fire season will be declared in the rural areas of Ellesmere Ward, Springs Ward and Malvern Ward (with the exception of the hill and high country areas which are permanently in a restricted fire season) in Selwyn District from 7am on Thursday 13 March.

A restricted fire season remains in place in the Selwyn Central ward. In the rural areas of the Selwyn Central ward area only crop residue, fires in enclosed drums, gas fuelled barbecues and other fires if a fire permit has been issued are permitted, provided safe burning guidelines issued by the Council are followed.

Principal Rural Fire Officer Wilson Brown says that the changes to fire restrictions have been introduced based on fire indices showing that the recent rain has lowered the fire risk in the Ellesmere, Springs and Malvern wards and an open fire season can be introduced in these areas.

“Conditions in the Selwyn Central ward are dryer than the other areas and as this creates a higher fire risk a restricted fire season will remain in place in this ward,” he says.

Last year, the Council amended its Fire Plan to allow fire restrictions to be introduced or changed by ward if this was appropriate.

In rural areas where an open fire season applies 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. These guidelines include having a water source on hand to put it out, avoiding lighting fires in high winds, staying with the fire at all times and have a 10 metre fire break for crop fires.

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.  
Barbeques and hangis are allowed.

Guidelines for safe burning are available online at [www.selwyn.govt.nz/fire](http://www.selwyn.govt.nz/fire). Maps showing ward boundaries are also available online at [www.selwyn.govt.nz/elections](http://www.selwyn.govt.nz/elections).

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