



Media Release

Tuesday 14 February 2017

## **PORT HILLS/TAI TAPU FIRES: UPDATE 6.30pm**

Rural Fire and NZ Police held a briefing at 4pm today at which it was confirmed that a fatal helicopter crash had occurred involving one of the helicopter crew involved in fighting these fires.

Principal Rural Fire Officer Douglas Marshall says the incident was a tragedy. "Those involved in fighting fire on the ground and in the air make a huge contribution to keeping our community safe, often at considerable risk, and our thoughts are with the family, the helicopter company and the other pilots working on this operation."

The current situation with the fires are that the Marley Hill Fire remains contained, although ground crews are monitoring activity along the Summit Road.

Significant effort put into the Early Valley fire today has resulted in it being effectively contained, although there are some spots of fire burning downhill from the ridgeline above Governors Bay and Allandale. The New Zealand Fire Service is undertaking active structure protection in this area. Helicopters will continue to operate until nightfall tonight and from first light tomorrow.

No further structures have been lost beyond those reported earlier.

The area of both fires combined is currently estimated at approximately 580 hectares.

Overnight, three ground crews will patrol the Early Valley fire and a fourth crew will patrol the Summit Road area. These crews are also available for immediate response.

Road closure information:

- New: Kennedys Bush Road is closed from the roundabout with Rock Hill Drive. This includes the southbound cycle track
- New: Worsleys Track from Worlseys Road is closed
- Dyers Pass Road is closed between Hackthorne Road to Governors Bay Road. Use the Lyttelton Tunnel or Gebbies Pass as the alternate route
- Summit Road is closed between Gebbies Pass and Rapaki Track
- Update: Old Tai Tapu Road is closed between Osterholts Road and Early Valley Road
- Early Valley Road is closed
- Holmes Road & Holmeswood Rise - Residents are allowed access to their homes. Not open to through traffic

Please stay well away from the area and off the roads so that emergency services personnel can do their job and keep people safe.

Check the Transport For Christchurch website [www.tfc.govt.nz](http://www.tfc.govt.nz) for further updates from approximately 7am.

No further updates are expected until around 9am tomorrow.

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