



Media release

Wednesday 7 January 2015

Prohibited Fire Season introduced

A prohibited fire season has been declared in Selwyn District, effective from 10am Wednesday 7 January 2015.

Under the restrictions no outdoor fires can be lit in the district. The burning of crop stubble is also not allowed. Gas barbeques with a high pressure water source at hand are allowed but not charcoal barbeques. Fires are also not permitted in Council reserves. During a prohibited fire season all fire permits previously issued by the Council are also cancelled.

The district's Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officer Douglas Marshall says that vegetation in Selwyn District is now very dry and a prohibited fire season has been introduced to help ensure that the risk of fires breaking out is minimised.

"Selwyn has been experiencing hot, dry weather along with strong winds and this provides ideal conditions for fires to spread quickly," he says.

Mr Marshall says that people need to be very vigilant in this weather to avoid any activities that could start a fire. "We would discourage people from mowing the lawn or operating machinery during the heat of the day as sparks can easily ignite in the heat, and instead carry out these activities when it is cooler. Letting off fireworks is also not allowed in the current conditions."

Mr Marshall says the Council will be reviewing the prohibited fire season status regularly and will lift restrictions as soon as it is considered safe to do so.

Reducing fire risk

You can help to reduce the fire risk, and make sure that fire services can quickly access your property to put out a fire if one does start, by:

- avoiding operating lawn mowers or other machinery during hot weather as sparks can easily ignite in these conditions, and waiting until the weather is cooler to mow lawns or operate machinery. If you do need to use machinery or a lawn mower, having a source of water nearby for fire firefighting is advisable as a precaution
- regularly checking and maintaining machinery and equipment so it is safe to operate
- disposing of ashes from an indoor fire safely in a metal container and use approved incinerators
- keeping a hose connected that can reach round the house
- storing firewood and other flammable materials away from the house
- keeping grass away from under hedges
- in rural areas keep a clear space between your house and buildings and vegetation like trees, shrubs and long grass to act as a fire break. Keep this space watered and green if possible or construct it from non- flammable material like paving stones.

- make sure your property number is easy to see and that it has a clear access way four metres wide and high so that fire services can easily access your property if needed

Certain types of plants are more flammable than others. To find out more about planting less flammable species and reducing fire risk on your property visit www.selwyn.govt.nz/fire and select the 'fire safety' link.

Fire danger is one reason why you might need to leave your home in a hurry. All homes should have a household emergency plan with information on how you would leave your home quickly. You should also have emergency supplies. For more information about household emergency plans and supplies visit www.getthru.govt.nz.

If you see a fire burning out of control, phone 111 immediately to report it.

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