



Media release

Monday 3 November 2014

Fire restrictions introduced in Selwyn

A restricted fire season will be introduced in Selwyn district from 12 noon on Wednesday 5 November.

“The fire risk in Selwyn has increased over the past two weeks as weather conditions have become drier so it is now appropriate to introduce a restricted fire season to reduce the fire danger,” says Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officer Douglas Marshall.

Under a restricted fire season, only gas barbeques, crop residue and rubbish fires inside contained drums are allowed in rural areas of Selwyn. There are a number of conditions which must be met before fires can be lit (see ‘What’s allowed in a restricted fire season’ below). Any other fires can only be lit if a permit has been obtained from Selwyn District Council.

“Although paddocks in the district look green, the soil and vegetation close to the soil is much drier than normally experienced at this time of year. We have also experienced many strong Northwest winds recently which further dry out the soil and vegetation. These winds also cause fires to spread quickly. With fire restrictions in place people must not light bonfires as part of their firework celebrations. We would encourage people to attend public fireworks displays instead,” says Mr Marshall.

Mr Marshall says that if people are thinking of lighting a fire, they should always check whether they can do so and what safety guidelines they must meet by visiting the Council website, www.selwyn.govt.nz/fire.

“Over summer people may see crop residue fires burning. Fire services are often called out to attend rural fires that are being supervised and managed appropriately,” he says.

“It’s expensive and time consuming for volunteer fire fighters 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.”

What’s allowed in a restricted fire season

In *residential areas* the only type of fire permitted throughout the year is a gas barbeque. Other fires need a resource consent from Environment Canterbury. In *rural areas* in Selwyn in a restricted fire season the following rules apply:

- Gas barbeques are allowed if a water source is nearby. In residential areas gas barbeques are the only type of outdoor fire allowed unless a resource consent has been granted from Environment Canterbury for the fire
- Fires inside properly constructed drums are allowed. Only vegetation, paper, cardboard and untreated wood can be burned and the fire must be during daylight hours and attended at all times. A water source must be nearby to extinguish the fire if needed and the fire may not be lit when strong winds are blowing or forecast
- The burning of crop residue is allowed but only during daylight hours and must be attended at all times. Fires may not be lit when strong winds are blowing or forecast, fire fighting equipment and an adequate water source must be nearby and a 10 metre firebreak must be cleared around the edge of the area to be burnt
- Fire may be lit if a specific permit has been issued by Selwyn District Council and the conditions of the permit are followed

What's not allowed:

- Any type of fire not listed as permitted above – note that bonfires are not permitted
- Fire cannot be lit on Council reserves - including Coes and Chamberlains Fords and Whitecliffs Reserve

In the *high country and hill areas* of Selwyn, a restricted fire season is permanently in place.

Ends

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