

Tips when lighting fires in the open air



Fuel: Plan to light stumps and heavy fuels after the end of summer because they can burn and smoulder for weeks (burn after the dry season when Fire Dangers are low.).

Permits: Always obey permit conditions

Fire Breaks: Clear at least 3 metres around the area to be burnt to stop the fire escaping. Larger fires require wider fire breaks – seek advice.

Notification: Notify neighbours and the Rural Fire Authority on the day you are undertaking large burns to avoid confusion that your burn is a wildfire requiring a 111 response.

Environmental: Check with your Regional Council for any smoke emission or other Resource Management Act constraints before burning. Do not burn plastics, rubber or toxins.

Smoke: Ensure smoke from your burn does not create a nuisance or smoke hazard to others.

Weather: Before lighting up check the long range weather forecast (48 hour) and ensure light winds are forecast. Windy conditions spell trouble and weather conditions can quickly change.

Supervision: Fires often escape when no one is present. It is a legal requirement to supervise and patrol your fire until it is completely out.

Be Prepared: Fires do escape! Have fire fighting equipment and a good water supply handy.

Who said it wouldn't escape?



Don't let managed fires escape. You may be liable for the costs of fire fighting and any loss to property affected from your fire.



Get advice from your Rural Fire Authority prior to lighting a fire in the open air.

Rural Fire Authority contact details:

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Lighting Fires and Permit Issue



Fire seasons and fire permits



When do I need a fire permit?



You will need a permit to light a fire in the open air during a restricted fire season. Failure to obtain a permit is an offence against the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977.

There are **three fire seasons** you should be aware of:



Open – no fire permit is needed to light a fire in the open air



Restricted – a fire permit is required to light a fire in the open air



Prohibited – means a ban on the lighting of any fires in the open air

You should check what fire season is operating if you are travelling through or visiting a rural area. Changes to fire seasons are notified by radio announcements and/or newspaper advertisements or information is available directly from the relevant Rural Fire Authority.

When Restricted or Prohibited fire seasons are in place the relevant Rural Fire Authority will also erect signs within the affected area notifying you of this.

A permit does not absolve you of responsibility!!



Escaped fires have cost individuals responsible for lighting them more than \$250,000 in fire fighting costs. Make sure you carry the appropriate insurance including Forest and Rural Fires Act fire suppression cover.

If you wish to light a fire in a rural area – know the current fire danger and the fire season in your area by contacting your local Rural Fire Authority.

Rural Fire Authorities are:

- The Department of Conservation
- NZ Defence Force
- Rural Fire Districts
- Local Councils.

Your Rural Fire Authority will:

- Inform you of the current fire danger and fire season
- Inspect proposed burn sites
- Assist you to prepare a prescribed burn plan for significant controlled burn offs.

Urban fire districts – if you wish to light a fire in an urban fire district (in town) contact your local council to find out what rules apply.

*It is your responsibility!!
(campfires, cooking fires,
braziers, rubbish fires,
controlled burns, prescribed burns
are all fires in the open air)*

FACT:

Annually, over 20% of all wildfires in New Zealand are caused by escapes from managed fires.



Photo courtesy of The Marlborough Express



Photo courtesy of Scion