

South Waikato District Council - Fire Season Information

Open Fire Season

A permit is not required to light a fire in the open air. You are, however, responsible for any consequences should the fire get out of control. All necessary precautions must be taken:

Fires should not be lit if weather conditions are very windy.

Fires must not be lit near buildings, neighbors' property, potentially flammable vegetation, materials or liquids.

Fires must not be lit after dark.

Someone must remain in attendance until fire is completely out.

Restricted Fire Season

A permit is required to light a fire in the open in rural areas. This generally excludes gas barbeques. A permit does not absolve anyone from responsibility for consequences should the fire get out of control. Permits will not be issued over the phone as the rural fire officer will need to inspect the site prior to issue. Notice of two working days is required for a permit to be issued. People traditionally reliant on burning green waste need to make alternative arrangements for disposal. Hangi, incinerators and barbeques may be used with a fire permit, as long as they are not lit at night and appropriate safeguards are taken to prevent the risk of re-ignition or spreading. Fires must be supervised at all times and equipment should be on hand to extinguish the fire if necessary.

Prohibited Fire Season

All fires are banned, even if a permit has been issued. No permits will be issued until notice is given that restrictions have been lifted.

The following activities may be considered on application during a prohibited fire season:

Gas operated barbeque

Hangi or umu

For health reasons, eg, animal disease

To obtain a permit

Phone 07 8850340 or come in to the South Waikato District Council offices in Tokoroa between 8am and 4pm.

Permits are issued by rural fire officers. Any permit may be subject to special conditions being imposed depending on the nature of the intended fire. Permits generally apply to the burning of land clearing operations, scrub and other vegetation, agricultural and industrial purposes such as welding and gas-cutting.

Permits to light fires within one kilometer of Department of Conservation reserves, must be obtained from the Department of Conservation. These areas are under *Restricted Fire Season* at all times of the year.

Contact the rural fire officer at the Department of Conservation in Tauranga and notify the Pumicelands Rural Fire Department on 07 8865800.

Rural Fire Safety and Prevention

Reduce risks

- Ensure trees are kept pruned and well away from homes and driveways
- Plant trees clear of power lines and keep gutters clear
- Keep the grass mown around your home
- Dispose of cigarettes carefully
- Plant less flammable native trees around your home

Be prepared

- Have a family plan for escaping from your home
- Install smoke alarms for early detection
- Have a hose attached to your water tap
- Rural homes know your RAPID number and ensure that it can be seen clearly from the road
- Report any suspicious activities

Be safe

- Dial 111 for fire
- Ensure the house is evacuated
- Don't go back into a burning structure
- Stay away from vegetation fire

The Cost of Fighting Fires

The cost of fighting fires on rural land can be passed onto the landowner or the person who caused the fire.

Under the Rural Fires Act 1977 it is possible to recover the firefighting costs of fires

Council policy is to recover costs wherever possible, each case is considered on its merits

Fire suppression insurance is available to recreational groups and families who wish to cover themselves in the event of an accidental fire being started in an urban or rural area.

The cost of fighting fires in rural areas is passed on to the individuals responsible. This has been known to range from \$10,000 to \$250,000.