

Is your property at risk from fire?

Fire safety tips for rural living





NEW ZEALAND
FIRE
SERVICE
Whakarātonga Iwi

**If we can't get to you,
we can't help you.**



Delays in an emergency can be devastating

If a fire breaks out, many rural property owners face an increased risk due to their remote location and the distance from the nearest fire brigade.

Even when we arrive, our response can be compromised by our fire appliances not being able to gain access onto driveways due to overhanging branches or narrow gates and fence lines. There are also issues with no clear pathways to water resources on properties.

Remember the 4x4 Rule

In an emergency it's critical our fire appliances and crews can get to you as soon as possible.

Access to driveways and water supplies

MUST have a width and height clearance of at least four metres.

If you ever have to call 111, always quote your RAPID number and ensure it is clearly displayed on your mailbox.



Rural properties are a higher fire risk



Although there are many benefits to living in the country, rural property owners face a higher risk of fire than city dwellers.

If a fire starts it may not be detected as quickly and emergency services take longer to respond because of greater travel distances.

This leaflet covers some of the basic things you can do to reduce your rural property's fire risk.

To protect your rural property from fire, we recommend:



installing smoke alarms and testing them regularly. For more information about smoke alarms visit www.fire.org.nz



designing an escape plan and practicing it. For more information visit www.fire.org.nz



keeping the grass green and mown or grazed around your home



creating a safety zone around your home of at least 10m by clearing any dead or dry material and replacing flammable plants and trees with low flammable species (for more information visit www.nrfa.org.nz)



making sure your property is clearly signposted with your RAPID rural property identification number



installing multipurpose dry powder extinguishers in your house and out buildings



keeping a garden hose connected and make sure it is long enough to reach around the house



ensuring your driveway has a minimum clearance of 4m wide, 4m high and adequate turning space for large vehicles



easy access to water supplies and making sure they are signposted



storing firewood and other flammable material away from your house



safe handling and storage of gas or liquid fuels



maintaining machinery and equipment in working order



disposing of ash safely in a metal container and using approved incinerators

Defensible space



Priority zone 1

Create a defensible area or safety zone. Convert to lawn and less fire-prone species. Remove flammable materials, waste and combustible debris.

Priority zone 2

Remove trees and scrub to allow the trees that remain to be evenly spaced so they're not touching.

Priority zone 3

Prune all large trees and remove all branches at least 2 metres from the ground. Thin sub-canopy trees, cut down dead or dying trees and remove overhanging branches that are close to powerlines.



It's your responsibility



Any fires you light, be it campfires, cooking fires, braziers, rubbish fires, controlled burns or prescribed burns, are your responsibility.

You could be liable for costs associated with an escaped fire in a rural area if proven to have caused it. Individuals found responsible for causing rural fires have faced costs in excess of \$500,000.

Make sure you have fire insurance – including Forest and Rural Fires Act fire suppression cover.

The buck stops with you!

Have you considered installing home sprinklers?



Home sprinklers will protect your family, home and contents from the threat of fire – 24 hours a day.

Sprinkler technology has come a long way in a short space of time. The cost of including home sprinklers into a new house or adding them as part of major renovations is probably a lot cheaper than you think.

Home sprinklers use the same domestic plumbing as your kitchen taps and can be installed by a qualified plumber in less than two days.

More importantly though, sprinklers provide the fastest possible means of extinguishing fires in rural homes.

For more information visit www.fire.org.nz



Fire seasons and permits



For information on fire danger, fire season status and requirements for fire permits contact your Rural Fire Authority (ie your district council, Department of Conservation or Rural Fire District office).

There are three fire seasons you should be aware of:

- Open Fire Season – a fire permit is not required to light a fire in the open air
- Restricted fire season – in this season a fire permit from your local Rural Fire Authority is required before you can light a fire in the open air
- Prohibited fire season – means a total fire ban is in place. Lighting fires in the open air is not permitted



For the current fire season and danger level and to apply for fire permits contact your local Rural Fire Authority. The telephone numbers are in your local White pages, or visit www.nrfa.org.nz

