

Outdoor Burning

Good practice guide

Smoke and odour from outdoor fires can harm people's health and cause a nuisance. Fires can also affect property and the environment.

Whether you're planning to light a drum incinerator, burn vegetation or carry out a large land clearance burn, this guide will help you follow good burning practices to avoid pollution – and complaints from your neighbours. Late autumn and winter, when residents and businesses want to burn piles of leaves, branches and horticultural vegetation, are particularly bad times for pollution from outdoor burning. During these seasons the calm, clear, and cold days don't allow smoke to rise and disperse.

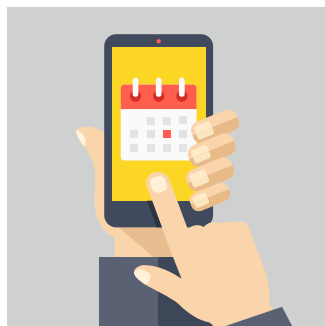


Know the rules before you burn

The Tasman District Council has air quality rules to minimise the negative effects of smoke, smell and air pollution. The Tasman Resource Management Plan (TRMP) includes specific rules for Fire Ban Areas and Fire Sensitive Areas and general rules for all other areas. Depending on the type of fire you're planning, you may need a resource consent before you can start. You can view the TRMP online at www.tasman.govt.nz/link/trmp or read a summary of the rules in our guide, Tasman Resource Management Plan Summary Guide 13.

Fire permits

Fire restrictions are imposed by Fire and Emergency New Zealand for public safety reasons, and may be in force at any time of the year in the Tasman district. You may need to obtain a fire permit from Fire and Emergency New Zealand before lighting outdoor fires, in addition to any Council requirements. To check the current fire season and apply for a permit (if necessary), go to www.checkitsalright.nz or contact Fire and Emergency New Zealand on 03 544 2441.



Good practice for burning

Plan your fire

- Contact the Council, especially for large burns or where a series of burns are planned
- Get advice on managing fires safely from Fire and Emergency New Zealand at www.checkitsalright.nz
- Notify your neighbours – discuss your plans for burning with your neighbours to help reduce potential conflicts
- Limit the frequency and number of fires as much as possible

Locate the fire carefully

- At least 50m from the road
- At least 100m from any house on a neighbouring property; although in some situations it may be better to burn closer to the upwind boundary

Consider the season

- In summer, burn in the coolest part of the day
- In autumn and winter, burn on dry days with gentle to moderate wind speeds. Do not burn on calm and clear days with cold temperatures as the smoke will not rise and disperse. In these situations smoke can hang about for up to three days
- If you must burn in late autumn and winter, only burn between 10.30am and 4.00pm. Do not add any more vegetation to the fire after 3.00pm



Check weather conditions before AND during your burn

- Check the forecast and wind speed and direction at www.metservice.co.nz or www.tasman.govt.nz/link/weather-stations
- In summer and spring, light fires in gentle wind speeds of less than 10 km/h
- In autumn and winter, light fires in gentle to moderate wind speeds between 10km and 25km as lighter winds are unlikely to clear the smoke, leading to air pollution
- Ash produced by fires is more likely to be blown about if winds are strong and will travel further in higher wind conditions
- Be aware that the wind may change direction from morning to afternoon. Afternoon sea breezes are common in coastal locations, particularly in early summer



Preparing and managing a fire

Do: ✓

- Stack vegetation and untreated wood loosely
- Keep the fire attended at all times
- Monitor where your smoke is going – it may be travelling towards sensitive areas
- Keep the fire burning hot by:
 - Ensuring good air flow can get to the centre of the fire at all times
 - Consider the use of air blowers for larger fires to maintain good air flow
 - If burning diseased horticultural waste that is not fully seasoned, start with dry wood and add as required to keep the fire temperature high
- Postpone lighting your fire if there is already smoke in the air from other fires
- Have water on hand and be prepared to put the fire out if conditions change or you discover you are causing a nuisance

Don't: ✗

- Allow a fire to smoulder and create smoke
- Burn vegetation in large dense piles
- Add soil to piles
- Leave a fire to smoulder overnight (instead, restart fires the next day if you need to)
- Burn in very windy conditions
- Burn in calm conditions during late autumn and winter
- Have a weekly burn of garden waste

What not to burn

Burning these materials will create toxic smoke that is hazardous to human health.

- Treated timber, particle or fibre board
- Rubber products including tyres
- Batteries
- Bitumen-containing materials
- Used or waste oil
- Materials associated with the recovery of metals from insulated electrical cables
- Materials and metals that are components of motor vehicles or mechanical or electrical equipment
- Asbestos or radioactive material
- Domestic or industrial rubbish
- Plastic or plastic products
- Recycling or your local transfer station is the best way to dispose of these materials. Plastic agricultural containers can be taken to your nearest AgRecovery Centre www.agrecovery.co.nz and balewrap and silage sheeting can be recycled through Plasback www.plasback.co.nz.

What to burn

- Only burn well-dried material that can't be composted, recycled or used as firewood
- All vegetation must be allowed to dry so it burns vigorously without causing much smoke. Optimal time for drying will depend on the type of vegetation being burnt. Some vegetation, such as macrocarpa tree branches, will create dense, choking smoke unless it has been dried for at least six months

Where there's smoke, there's trouble

- If your fire is causing dense or widespread smoke for lengthy periods, it will be a nuisance to your neighbours and will likely come to the attention of a Council officer.
- If your fire is found to be causing significant smoke or ash problems beyond your property, you are likely to be in breach of the TRMP rules and subject to enforcement action. This may be in the form of an infringement fine or an abatement notice. You may also be directed to extinguish your fire immediately.
- It is your responsibility to make sure you manage your fire to avoid causing offensive or objectionable smoke, odour or ash.