

Restricted Fire Season Warning is now in force

Fire Permits must be obtained before any fire can be lit in the open air (excluding gas BBQs). Failing to obtain a permit may result in legal action and/or fines. Fire seasons are designed to control the number and type of ignitions at particularly hazardous times of the year.

Open Fire Season means no permit is required to light a fire in the open air. You are responsible for any consequences should the fire escape control.

Restricted Fire Season means a permit is required from the relevant fire authority to light a fire in the open air. These generally exclude gas BBQ's. You are responsible for any consequences should the fire escape control.

Prohibited Fire Season means a total ban and lighting of fires in the open air is not permitted. Any existing permits would be cancelled.

Rubbish Dumps

Lighting fires at the Owenga and Kaingaroa rubbish dumps are now prohibited. Lighting fires at Te One rubbish dump can only be done in the cage provided. The lighting of fires at the rubbish dumps other than in the Te One cage may result in legal action and/or fines.

Permits

Fire permits are an important legal process in fire management and crucial to any legal action initiated in the event a fire becomes out of control or permit conditions are not followed. However, a permit does not absolve you of responsibility; you are responsible for any consequences should the fire escape control.

- Fire permit applications are available at the Chatham Islands Council Office during normal office hours.
- There is no cost for a Fire Permit.

Anyone who lights a fire is always responsible for it whether they have a permit or not. However, failure to obtain a permit or proper authorisation is an offence under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 and could result in a conviction.

Who are the Rural Fire Authorities on the Chatham Islands?

The Chatham Islands Council are the Rural Fire Authority and have delegated to the Chatham Islands Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEM) the full powers and responsibilities of the Rural Fire Authority. The Authority shall protect the area of land designated rural.

The Department of Conservation is also a Fire Authority and responsible for all state areas it administers and within any fire safety margin attached to a State area.

Who are the warranted Fire Officers in charge of a Rural Fire Area?

For the Council Rural Fire Area the Warranted Principal Rural Fire Officer: Rana Solomon contact; 3050033 office hours 3050005 or 3050277 after hours.

For the DOC Fire area the Warranted Principal Rural Fire Officer: Ken Hunt contact 3050098 office hours 3050665 after hours.

In the absence of the Principal Rural Fire Officers a warranted Rural Fire Officer may act in their absence.

Who should you talk to about rural fire matters?

Principal Rural Fire Officers

Powers of Principal Fire Officers in accordance with the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977

- (a) If the fire constitutes a hazard to life or property, endeavour by all practical means to extinguish the fire and prevent the spread
- (b) Shall have the control and direction of any brigade present at the fire and of any persons who voluntarily place their services at his disposal and of any persons whose services he requires under the provisions hereinafter contained...
- (c) May enter upon any land, house, building, or premises and, if necessary, break open any outer or inner doors of any house or building....
- (d) May take or give directions for taking any apparatus required to be used at a fire into, through, or upon any land, house, building, or premises which he considers convenient for the purpose...
- (e) May take any measures which in the circumstances are reasonable and which appear to him to be necessary or expedient....

- (f) Subject to the overall requirements of the Controller under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, while a state of emergency exists under that Act, cause water to be shut off from any main, pipe etc.....
- (g) May cause any street, road, private road etc to be closed....
- (h) May shut off or disconnect, or order any person having control thereof to shut off or disconnect, the supply of electricity to any building which is on fire or which is in the vicinity of any fire
- (i) May order to withdraw, and (in the event of a failure or refusal to withdraw) remove or direct any Fire Officer or any member of any fire brigade present at the fire to remove, any persons who interfere by their presence or otherwise with the fire fighting operations or who are on or in any land, building, or premises then burning or threatened by fire,

- (j) May at the time of the fire or afterwards, pull down so damaged by fire as to be or to be likely to become dangerous to life or property, and any expense of any such operation shall be borne by the owner of the building, and shall be paid by him to the Fire Authority.

The person who is appointed as a deputy of a Principal Fire Officer under subsection (1) (a) of this section shall be Fire Officer and is competent in the circumstances to exercise the powers and perform the duties of a Principal Fire Officer

If you have any questions regarding the above please contact:
Rana Solomon (ERC, PRFO)
Emergency Management Office
Phone: 3050033