



# Environmental Health Information Sheet: Burning and Air Quality

## Introduction

Burning on your property to dispose of waste materials or for the purposes of outdoor cooking is common in New Zealand. However burning needs to be properly planned and managed to minimise health risks and avoid causing a nuisance to others in the community. There are also council bylaws which restrict where and when a fire can be lit, and provisions under the Health Act 1956 which prohibit smoke from becoming a health nuisance.

## Council Bylaws

The Ashburton District Council Bylaw 2008 Chapter 7 addresses Fires in the Open Air and states that;

- No person shall light any fire in the open air within an urban area at **ANY TIME** with the exception of burning of fuels in ethnic cooking fires, barbecues or braziers.
- No person shall light any fire in the open air including a barbecue, brazier, ethnic cooking fire, or an incinerator fire under the following conditions:
  - (a) Where the location, wind, or other conditions cause or are likely to cause the fire to become:
    - (i) A danger to any person or property; or
    - (ii) Out of control or spread beyond the limits of the premises on which it is lit; or
    - (iii) A smoke or ash nuisance to any person; or
    - (iv) A hazard to traffic
  - (b) Within three metres of any part of a building, tree, hedge, fence or other combustible material; or
  - (c) Without continuous supervision being maintained at all times.

## If you are in an area where burning is permitted what can you burn?

As a guide, the follow table lists items that are OK to burn and items that may cause health or environmental issues if burnt. Please ensure that you follow this guide and if you are unsure, you can call the Council's Environmental Services on 307 7700.

<b>OK TO BURN</b>	<b>DO NOT BURN</b>
Brown and Dry Garden Waste	Green Garden Waste
Paper	Plastics
Cardboard	Rubbers
Untreated wood	Treated or painted wood
Other combustible non-toxic items	Other substances you think may be toxic

## Fire Safety

Don't forget the following tips to ensure your fire stays under control:

- Always have water readily available either a running hose or filled buckets
- Do not start fires in strong winds or if strong winds are expected
- Ensure the area around the fire is cleared so there is no chance of spreading
- Before leaving the scene ensure the fire is fully out and *not* smouldering

And remember never to burn if there is a fire restriction in your area, or a total fire ban. Always check with the Council before making plans to have a fire.