

**Outdoor burning causes air pollution – a major problem in some parts of the Waikato region. It can damage our health and result in unpleasant smells, tainted roof water supplies, blemished crops, and soiled washing and surfaces.**

## Smoke harms us

Smoke from outdoor burning contains fine particles (PM<sub>10</sub>) and dioxins that can make us sick and even cause premature death.

## Fine particles (PM10)

Fine particles (PM<sub>10</sub>) can get into our lungs and cause difficulty breathing, respiratory illnesses, asthma attacks and heart disease. Reducing the amount of PM<sub>10</sub> in the air increases our life expectancy\*. Up to 23 per cent of PM<sub>10</sub> in our region's towns comes from outdoor burning at certain times of the year.

## Dioxins

A large proportion of the dioxins in the air are created by outdoor burning. Dioxins accumulate in our bodies and can cause cancer, liver damage and birth defects. They can also affect our immune and reproductive systems. Dioxins in the air can also go on to enter our bodies through consumption of meat and dairy products.

*\*Average life expectancy increases approximately by one year for each 10 micrograms per cubic metre improvement in annual average PM<sub>10</sub>.*

**Stockpile of damp rubbish waiting to be burnt, containing several prohibited items.**



## Better burning

If burning solid waste is your only option, you should reduce smoke and burn safely and considerately.

- Burn as far from your property boundary as possible.
- Check that the wind is predicted to be away from built up areas for the duration of the fire.
- Postpone the lighting of your fire if there's already smoke from other fires in the air.
- Make smaller fires.
- Ensure the fuel is dry and loosely stacked.
- Ensure the fire does not smoulder.
- Avoid burning in the late afternoon/evening (breezier daytime conditions help to disperse the smoke).
- Be prepared to put the fire out if conditions change or you discover that you are causing a nuisance.



**Tyre burning is prohibited both regionally and nationally because of the associated toxic discharges.**



# Let's talk Outdoor burning

Understanding its effects  
and the law

To find out more about the environmental incidents we can and can't deal with, visit [waikatoregion.govt.nz/report-environmental-incident](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/report-environmental-incident). And, to report an incident, call 0800 800 402.

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[waikatoregion.govt.nz](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz)

## The law

### What you can't burn

Outdoor burning of the materials listed below is prohibited in the Waikato region.

Material	Example/s
1. Halogenated organic chemicals	Fluorescent light fittings and electrical equipment containing Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCBs), pesticides such as Dieldrin or Pentachlorophenol (PCP) and solvents such as Trichloroethane (PEC)
2. Materials containing heavy metals	Batteries, treated timber and other substances containing metals such as lead, zinc, arsenic, chromium, cadmium, copper, mercury and thorium
3. Pitch, paint and paint residues and surface coatings	Painted corrugated iron, paint containers, coated metals
4. Asbestos	Old linoleum, some roofing material, and insulation material
5. Pathological waste (excluding animal carcasses on production land)	Waste from medical labs, hospitals, veterinary clinics and doctors surgeries
6. Agrichemicals and agrichemical containers containing residues	Waste agrichemicals, chemical containers that have not been triple-rinsed
7. Polyvinylchloride (PVC) plastic and plastics containing halogenated material	Any plastic identified with the number '3' in the recycling triangle on the container
8. Copper-chrome-arsenic treated timber or timber treated with organochlorine	Timber that has been treated to be highly resistant to rot (such as H3 and H4, which refers to the grade of treatment)
9. Rubber and tyres	Old tyres, and other material containing rubber
10. Waste oil and other waste petroleum products including sludge	Petrol engine oil, diesel engine oil, gear and transmission oils, metalworking oils, hydraulic oil
11. Sludge from industrial processes	Biosolids, electroplating liquor, spent solvent, contaminated soil and contaminated construction material
12. Hazardous materials from contaminated sites and buildings	Covered in numbers 2, 3, 4, 7, 9 and 10 of this table
13. Materials associated with the recovery of metals from cables	Insulated electrical cables
14. Components of motor vehicles	Upholstery, plastic, tyres, rubber and waste oil
15. Tar and bitumen	Road seal burning
16. Any material within a municipal waste disposal premises	Solid waste from domestic and industrial premises, including a range hazardous substances, waste at landfills or refuse transfer stations

Breaches of the outdoor burning rules can result in enforcement action being taken by Waikato Regional Council. These actions can include infringement notices of up to \$1000. More serious breaches can result in prosecution under the Resource Management Act (RMA). A prosecution may result in a conviction and a court imposed penalty. Maximum penalties available under the RMA are fines of up to \$300,000 and two years imprisonment for an individual or a fine of up to \$600,000 for a company.

### What you can burn

Any domestic open burning or incineration activity must comply with the conditions of Permitted Activity Rule 6.1.13.1 – Open burning and incineration. In general, this means that you can only burn:

- paper
- cardboard
- food waste
- animal carcasses
- untreated wood and vegetation
- halogen-free plastics (plastics that contain halogens usually have a number '3' in the container's recycling triangle).

The material being burnt must not include sulphur, nor should it contain fluorine, chlorine, phosphorus or nitrogen that has been chemically combined by human manufacturing.

Burning waste from other properties or within a landfill site or waste transfer station is also prohibited.

Your activity must not affect people, plants or animals outside of your property boundary. This means that you must not cause odour problems, health or safety risks or damage to other people's property. You must manage any discharges that will carry in the air, such as smells, smoke, dust or light material.

Your city/district council may have additional rules for outdoor burning in its District Plan. In summer, it is often banned or requires a fire permit. **Enquires about permits should be directed to Fire and Emergency New Zealand.**