

# Camping and campfires

Camping is a Kiwi tradition and campfires are a big part of enjoying the outdoors. Follow the guidance below to ensure your fire is safe and doesn't pose a threat to people, properties and the environment.

## Before you light your fire

**Check the fire season** - Visit [checkitsalright.nz](http://checkitsalright.nz) to find out the current fire season for the area where you plan to camp. You will be prompted to apply for a fire permit if one is required. Campfires are not allowed in a **prohibited** fire season. You must have a permit to light campfires in a **restricted** fire season. When your fire is lit



**Open** fire season

Fires are allowed, but **must be safe**



**Restricted** fire season

Fires may be allowed **with a permit**



**Prohibited** fire season

**No fires** allowed.

**Check** with the land manager or property owner, e.g. regional council, Department of Conservation, private land or forest owners for any rules about using campfires and cooking areas where you're camping. For example, the Department of Conservation and some regional councils provide fireplaces in their forest park campsites, and require that campers use these.

**Signs** - Check for any signs about campsite rules for campfires and cooking areas at your campsite.

**Weather** - Check the latest weather and wind speed and direction. Only light your fire when there is little or no wind forecast.

**Safety zone** - Avoid areas near your tent, structures, vehicles, shrubs and trees, and be aware of low-hanging branches overhead. Clear combustible fuel including unused firewood to at least three metres on all sides, and circle your campfire site with rocks.

**Keep it small** - A campfire is less likely to escape control if it is kept small. A large fire may cast hot embers long distances. Add firewood in small amounts as existing material is consumed.

**Extinguish** - Have some way to put out any unplanned fires within five metres of your campfire. Pre-fill containers of water from a river or stream, or use a tool, like a portable shovel, to mix dirt or sand into the fire.

**Don't light your campfire** if you have any doubts that it is safe.

## When your fire is lit

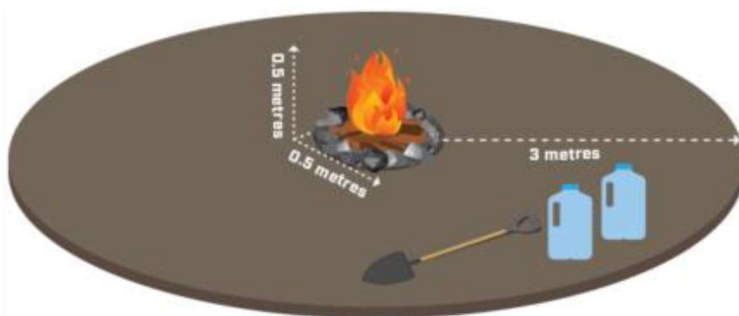
**Fuel** - Only burn clean, dry untreated wood. Never burn rubbish, plastic, rubber or treated wood. These produce toxic fumes which are harmful to your health and the environment.

**Fire control** - Make sure your campfire is less than 0.5m high and 0.5m wide. Load small amounts of wood at a time — don't let it get too big and unmanageable.

**Supervise** - Never leave a campfire unattended. When leaving your fire, take the time to properly extinguish your campfire.

**Weather** - If a change in the wind direction or speed makes your fire unsafe — put it out.

**Be responsible** - You're responsible for controlling any fire you light. You need to be able to take charge if there's an emergency and should not be impaired.



## After your fire

**Extinguish** - Use plenty of water to extinguish all the embers of your campfire. Keep a shovel handy to stir the contents of the fire pit until it's cold to the touch. If your camp is not near a water source, use dirt to extinguish the embers and mix until cool.

**Don't** bury your fire as it could continue to smoulder and reignite.

**Dial 111 immediately in an emergency. Anything that could cause loss of life, serious injury or loss of property is a fire emergency.**

## Related content

Visit these pages for more information on:

- [Fire permits](#)
- [Fire types](#)
- [Outdoor gas cookers](#)
- [Parks, forests and rural land](#)
- [Wildfires](#)