

Cultural Fires

Hāngī, umu and lovo are all cultural fires used for cooking. Cultural fires do not require a permit if you follow these rules:

Your fire area must be less than two square metres.

Don't light your fire within three metres of any part of a building, hedge, shelter belt or any other combustible material.

In case your fire gets out of control, you must have a suitable way to extinguish it within five metres of your cultural fire, such as a water hose, mechanical digger, or water sprayer.



You will require a permit during a restricted fire season if your fire exceeds two square meters in size.

Follow the rules below to ensure your fire doesn't pose a risk to people and properties.

Before you light your fire

Check the fire season - Visit checkitsalright.nz to find out the current fire season for the area where you plan to light the fire. Check council websites for air quality rules, smoke nuisance guidelines and whether this activity is permitted on any public land including beaches. Cultural fires are not permitted on Public Conservation Lands.



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.

Weather - Check the latest weather and wind speed and direction. Don't light your fire if strong wind is forecast.

Smoke - Make sure smoke from the fire will not be a nuisance to your neighbours or affect visibility for road or air traffic.

Neighbours – Let your neighbours know the date and time of your cooking fire to avoid unnecessary emergency calls to Fire and Emergency.

Safety zone - Make sure your cooking fire is more than three metres away from buildings, hedges, shelter belts or anything that can burn. 'Damp down' a 3-metre area under and around the fire to prevent your fire from spreading.

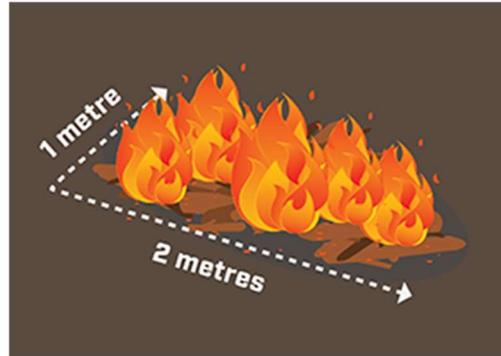
Extinguish - Have a way to put out your bonfire when you are finished, if it gets out-of-control, or if any embers or burning material escapes. This could include a hose, water sprayer, a shovel and dirt or a mechanical digger. These must be within easy reach.

Don't light your fire 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 total fire area is **less than two square metres**. Start your fire with paper and small, dry wood or fire starters. Never use petrol or kerosene to start your fire. These release highly flammable vapours that can explode.



When the rocks are white hot (after 3–5 hours), move any embers and burnt wood onto non-flammable material, e.g. sheets of roofing iron. Carefully move the hot rocks to the hāngī, umu or lovo when it's time to cook.

Supervise - Ensure someone stays with the cooking fire until it's put out. Have a 'no go zone' to keep children and pets safe.

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

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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 - Pour water on any leftover ashes, embers, or burnt wood when you have finished your fire.

Dispose - Put ashes, embers or burnt wood in a metal container and leave them to cool for at least five days or pour water over them. Stir them and check they are cold before you properly dispose of them.

Storage - Allow the hot rocks to cool completely before storing them.

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

Learn more about how to stay safe on the Fire and Emergency New Zealand website.

- [Fire Types](#)
- [Urban home fire safety checklist](#)
- [Rural home fire safety checklist](#)
- Fire seasons and permits: visit checkitsalright.nz

