

Outdoor burning: know the rules for your property

Environment Canterbury's outdoor burning measures are based on property size, not on whether you're in a rural or urban area.

Can I burn outdoors?

- ✓ Properties ***over*** 2 ha
- ✗ Properties ***under*** 2 ha

Gotta light? Do it right.

Environment Canterbury
Regional Council
Kaunihera Taiao ki Waitaha

Outdoor burning is restricted in Canterbury to reduce pollution and prevent smoke from affecting neighbours. The Canterbury Air Regional Plan allows some outdoor burning, but we encourage alternatives such as composting, mulching, collection services or taking waste to a transfer station.

Can I burn outdoors?

The Canterbury Air Regional Plan's outdoor burning measures are based on property size, rather than location.

If you live rurally and your property is over two hectares, you can burn dry vegetation and organic waste, paper, untreated wood and cardboard.

Under two hectares?

You are not permitted to burn.

For vegetation and organic waste, the moisture content of any material being burnt must not be greater than 25 per cent. A moisture meter device for testing can be purchased from a hardware store.

Burning of permitted material should only occur where it does not cause a nuisance to your neighbours and when general fire restrictions and weather conditions allow. Check out our outdoor burning rules at **ecan.govt.nz/outdoorburning**



Conditions you must meet:

- The burn must be more than 100 meters upwind and more than 50 metres in any other direction from neighbours.
- The smoke must not blow towards a township.
- The dry material being burnt is from your property and/or only one of your neighbour's properties.
- Smoke must not cause a nuisance beyond your property boundary.
- A smoke management plan must be completed if the burn will last 3 or more days (see the template at **ecan.govt.nz/smokeplan**).
- A smoke management plan must be completed for any crop residue burning (see page 6 for more information).
- If a liquid fire accelerant is used, it must not exceed 10 litres.
- The burning must not be within 100 metres of a national grid power line or substation (unless you have permission from the power line or substation owner).

Clean Air Zone burning timeframes

Clean Air Zones relate to areas in Canterbury where air pollution is often high, and there's different burning rules. Check if you are in a Clean Air Zone at ecan.govt.nz/outdoorburning

- If you're in the Christchurch, Kaiapoi or Timaru Clean Air Zones, burning may only take place between 1 September and 30 April.
- In Clean Air Zones, outdoor burning is prohibited during the winter months of June, July, and August. Burning is also prohibited across all Clean Air Zones during May, except in the Geraldine, Ashburton, Waimate, and Rangiora Clean Air Zones, where burning is allowed between 8am and 4pm.

Section 7 of the Canterbury Air Regional Plan further details the rules and regulations for burning. Find it on our website at **ecan.govt.nz/air-plan**

What materials are prohibited?

No matter how large your property is or where you live, some things shouldn't be burnt, as they generate thick, black smoke, and release toxic chemicals into the air. To prevent this and to protect human heath, never burn:

- Bale wrap or other plastics
- Chemicals, including agrichemicals
- Containers that have stored hazardous materials (e.g. ag plastics)
- Tyres
- Household rubbish
- Wet material and organics
- Painted or treated wood
- Rubber
- Wire coated with any material
- Material containing asbestos
- Paint and other surface coating materials
- Pharmaceuticals
- Electronic equipment
- Used and waste oil
- Tar and bitumen
- Metals
- Batteries.

For a full list of materials prohibited for burning, please see rule 7.7 in the Canterbury Air Regional Plan (**ecan.govt.nz/air-plan**).



- **Paper**
- **Cardboard**
- **Dry vegetation**
- **Untreated wood**

Tips to get an efficient burn

- Choose the right weather – cloudy days are best for burning. They usually have light winds that disperse the smoke.
- Small piles are better than one large one – they burn faster with less smoke.
- Remove as much dirt as possible before piling debris as stumps filled with dirt will cause a lot of smoke.
- Make sure air can flow under the pile. It will burn hotter with less smoke. Remove any soot or ash that is upsetting airflow.
- Finish burning before night-time - cool temperatures make smoke sink and evening breezes take it to low-lying areas, creating a hazard and a nuisance.
- After your outdoor burn, ensure the fire is completely extinguished. Don't assume the fire is out, even if only ash remains. Rake or spread out the ashes and douse them with water.

What do I do with the farm waste I can't burn?

Good waste management practices are essential to running healthy, safe and productive farming businesses.

- Bale wrap and some other farm waste can be recycled through Agrecovery (**agrecovery.co.nz**) or Plasback (**plasback.co.nz**).
- Burning treated timber releases toxins into the air and contaminates the soil with heavy metals. To safely dispose of treated timber, take it to a transfer station for disposal at an approved landfill.

You can also take your on-farm waste to a local refuse or transfer station. Check out your local council website for details and locations.

For more information on rural waste management, visit **ecan.govt.nz/rural-waste**



Crop residue or stubble burns

Crop residue (stubble) burning refers to the burning of straw stubble or crop residue that remains after wheat and other grains have been harvested. It is normally undertaken in late summer/early autumn.

While stubble burning is a permitted activity in Canterbury as a land management tool, it requires different checks and plans to other outdoor burn types.

If you're burning crop stubble, make sure you let your neighbours know your plans. It's also important to consider how the wider community might be impacted, especially if the wind direction changes. Putting out 'controlled burn' signs go a long way toward reassuring passers-by and avoiding unnecessary and expensive incident response and FENZ call-outs.

If the land you're burning on has a slope of more than 20 degrees and/or is more than 600 metres above sea level, you must follow hill and high country burning rules.

Find out more at **ecan.govt.nz/outdoorburning**

Before burning, ensure you're following these five "must-dos" for a safe, efficient and nuisance-free burn:

1. **Check it's alright to light:** Visit **checkitsalright.nz** and use the three-step tool to find out if you can light your fire, what the fire risk is, and what you should do to stay safe.
2. **Complete a smoke management plan:** This is a legal requirement detailing the type of material being burnt, the weather forecast and who may be affected. Smoke management plans are required for any crop residue burning and for any outdoor burns that last for three or more days. They must be shown to Environment Canterbury on request. A template is available at **ecan.govt.nz/outdoorburning**
3. **Understand the Canterbury Air Regional Plan (CARP):** The CARP lays out the rules and regulations for burning. It's especially important to understand section 7 of the plan.
4. **Read the guide on stubble burning at fireandemergency.nz** Fire and Emergency New Zealand's guide gives advice on things such as firebreaks, weather, the right way to light, and insurance. Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) also has information and links at **far.org.nz/resources/planning-for-stubble-burning**
5. **Know your buffer zones:** Anyone wanting to carry out crop residue burning inside Ashburton or Timaru buffer zones require resource consent. Find out if you're in a crop residue buffer zone at **ecan.govt.nz/outdoorburning** or call **0800 329 276** to check if this applies to you. If you are outside this zone, you'll still need to fill out a smoke management plan before you burn.

The aerial images show properties that lie inside the buffer zones.



Ashburton



Timaru

ERP13324/26

For more information on the outdoor, stubble burning and burning in hill and high country, visit our outdoor burning section at **ecan.govt.nz/outdoorburning** or call our Advisory Services Team on **0800 329 276**.

Gotta light? Do it right.

Environment Canterbury
Regional Council
Kaunihera Taiao ki Waitaha