



## Get Firewise This Summer

Wherever you are this summer here are some simple tips from Fire and Emergency New Zealand to make sure you and your families stay firewise.

### Barbecues

- Keep looking when you are cooking.
- Don't drink and fry.
- Do not add flammable fluids to an already lit fire.
- Never barbecue indoors.
- Dispose of ashes safely. Put them in a metal bucket with a lid, then thoroughly douse with water. Ashes can stay hot enough to start a fire for up to five days.
- If you've got bubbles – you've got troubles! Before using a gas barbecue, check the connection between the gas tank and the fuel line isn't leaking. Do this by applying dishwashing liquid to the end of the hose where it connects to the gas cylinder. If it starts foaming it means you have a leak. Get it checked by a professional before using it.

### Caravans

- The risk of a small fire turning into something serious is far greater in a small space like a caravan.
- Install a photoelectric smoke alarm and test it regularly. Velcro the alarm to the ceiling so it can be removed when cooking.
- For light, use proper lighting units or torches. Never use candles, they're too dangerous.
- Make sure furniture and fittings are at least one metre from the heater. Fan heaters with a cut-off switch are the safest.
- Make sure you have a clear escape route.
- Have a fire extinguisher or fire blanket near the exit and make sure you know how to use it.

### Christmas Trees

Real Christmas trees require care. Treat it as you would a house plant by making sure it gets lots of water.

- Regular watering will prevent the tree from drying out and make it safer for tree lights or electrical tree decorations.
- The Christmas tree is best securely positioned in a cool place away from busy areas, stairs and doors – especially doors leading outside.
- Turn tree lights off before you go to sleep or when you go out.
- If your tree becomes dry and starts shedding needles you should remove it from the house. Don't take the risk!
- Dispose of your tree appropriately. Don't leave it beside the house or garage as it creates a source for a fire to start.



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### Boat Safety

A fire on-board a boat can have disastrous consequences. Planning for such an event will increase your chances of survival.

- Keep all routes leading from the accommodation area clear.
- Your firefighting equipment must be appropriate to the risks, maintained in good order and easy to access.
- An escape plan should consider fire occurring in any on-board location and should be practised regularly.
- Ensure batteries are properly secured in a location that does not permit the accumulation of hydrogen gas.
- Make sure all gas or liquid-fuelled heating, refrigeration or cooking appliances are properly secured to prevent them from overturning if there is a collision or the boat tips.
- Make sure a working photoelectric smoke alarm is fitted in the accommodation area.
- Refuel ashore, never aboard. Before taking on fuel:
  - Stop the engine.
  - Turn off all cooking, heating and lighting appliances. Extinguish all cigarettes, pipes and naked flames. Close all hatches, doors, and the like.
  - Monitor fuel level to avoid over filling.
- Ensure that no fuel can accumulate unseen within the boat, and mop up any spillage. Ventilate the boat before starting up the engine or using naked lights.
- Do not carry spare petrol unless essential. If required, store a limited supply of spare fuel in approved containers and keep them securely on the upper deck.
- When storing gas cylinders, ensure they are either secured on deck away from hatches so any escaping gas disperses, or placed in a properly designed and ventilated container above the water line.

### Keeping Your Property Safe

- Make sure you have a 'safe zone' around your property.
- Go to [www.escapeplanner.co.nz](http://www.escapeplanner.co.nz) to make an escape plan to get out of your home safely and agree a safe meeting place. Practise this regularly.
- Fire trucks need a lot of space to manoeuvre. Make sure there are no overgrown trees or other obstacles that may prevent access to your property.

To check the fire season in your area and to apply for a fire permit go to [www.checkitsalright.nz](http://www.checkitsalright.nz)

**Have a wonderful summer break and remember in an emergency, call 111!**