

## PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Please read this important public health advice for landowners burning cyclone waste.

### Smoke from burning wood

The smoke from wood burning is made up of gases, water vapour, and fine particles (also called particulate matter or PM2.5).

These fine particles can get into your eyes and respiratory system, causing burning/ itchy eyes, a runny nose and may increase asthmatic symptoms or trigger an asthma attack.

Most healthy people can tolerate small amounts of smoke exposure, but smoke may affect vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, those who smoke cigarettes, and those with underlying heart or lung disease more seriously.

People who do not need to be around the fire should stay inside and remain at least 100m away at all times. Reduce the amount of time that any one person is exposed to smoke by sharing fire tending duties and try to tend to the fire from an upwind direction.



### Follow the advice of Fire and Emergency New Zealand:

Any fire, but particularly an open-space burn-off, is very unpredictable. Wind shifts and sudden increases in wind speed are particular dangers to be aware of and plan for. It is very important to avoid smoke drifting over residential areas and homes.

To reduce the risk to yourself and your community make sure you follow the advice from Fire and Emergency New Zealand on clearing debris with a burn pile:

<https://www.checkitsalright.nz/reduce-your-risk/cyclone-gabrielle-burn>

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### When burning cyclone waste, hazardous waste or treated timber:

- Where possible, it's important to separate out materials that are hazardous when burnt.
- The smoke from burning hazardous materials (plastics, rubber, treated timbers) can cause long-term health problems. Exposure over long periods of time to smoke generated from burning hazardous materials can increase the risk of serious health problems such as heart disease, and serious cancers such as lung cancer.
- The toxic chemicals released during burning include nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) and polycyclic organic matter (POMs).
- Burning plastic and treated wood also releases heavy metals and toxic chemicals, such as arsenic, dioxins, chromium and copper.
- Seek specialist advice from an Occupational Hygienist if you are burning a pile with high concentrations of mixed waste, see: <https://register.hasanz.org.nz/search/>

### Protect yourself with the right clothing.

#### It is recommended you wear:

- Enclosed sturdy footwear, eye protection and a long-sleeved shirt and pants.
- Natural materials such as wool or cotton; synthetic materials can melt.
- A P2/N95 mask is encouraged, especially for those who are at greatest risk of effects from smoke such as people with asthma, lung or heart disease, or smokers. [See Respiratory Protective Equipment](#) (RPE) | WorkSafe for more guidance.
- Shower and wash your clothes separately after completing the burn.

If the fire is not dangerous but smoke, ash, dust or odour is drifting over your property or causing a hazard, please contact the Hawke's Bay Regional Council Pollution Hotline 0800 108 838.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

[PH\\_Emergency\\_Notifications@hbdhb.govt.nz](mailto:PH_Emergency_Notifications@hbdhb.govt.nz)