



MEDIA RELEASE

Ruapehu District Council

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RUAPEHU ADDS FLEXIBILITY TO RURAL FIRE STATUS

Ruapehu's rural fire status notification is being revamped to provide greater flexibility and allow a more 'workable' solution that reflects the large size of the Ruapehu District.

Ruapehu District Council (RDC) Principal Rural Fire Officer, Noel Mingins, said that the old system that gave the whole of the Ruapehu District a single fire status of either 'open', 'restricted', or 'prohibited' was far too inflexible for a District as big as Ruapehu.

"In previous years we have had the situation where one part of the District has been dry enough to be 'prohibited' and not allowing any fires whatsoever, while another part has been wetter and could have had a 'restricted' status allowing permitted fires," he said.

"In this situation the whole of the District is declared 'prohibited' which can have a significant impact on rural sector planning and productivity."

Mr Mingins said that the new system has divided Ruapehu into four quadrants with the borders running along state highways or District roads

"The quadrants are; **northwest** bound by SH4 and the Kaitieke Rd and Oio Rd, **northeast** bound by SH4 and SH47, **southwest** bound by Kaitieke Rd and Oio Rd and SH4, and **southeast** bound by SH47 and SH4."

"By having roads as the border between quadrants it is very simple for a property owner to know what quadrant their property is in and to ascertain what the rural fire status for their quadrant/property is at any given time."

Mr Mingins added that the use of quadrants provides a lot more flexibility in managing the rural fire status across the large size of the District.

"Council hopes that the rural community finds increased value in this new approach," he said.

"Currently all four quadrants have an 'open' fire status which means that a fire permit is not required when lighting a fire outside."

"Although Ruapehu now has an Open fire status people should note that the exception is the DOC estate which is always under a restricted fire status and as such a permit is always required for any fires on DOC land or on any land within a 1km radius adjoining the DOC estate."

“Anyone lighting a fire in the open should continue to take extreme care.”

Mr Mingins said that in the New Year the RDC website (www.ruapehudc.govt.nz) will be upgraded to display the quadrants colour coded depending on whether they have an ‘open’, ‘restricted’, or ‘prohibited’ fire status.

“In the meantime information on Ruapehu’s current rural fire status along with other useful fire information such as permit applications and safety tips when lighting open air fires can be obtained from your nearest council office or downloaded from Council’s website.”

If you have any questions on the Ruapehu’s new rural fire status notification method please call RDC Principal Rural Fire Officer, Noel Mingins, via your nearest Council office.

DAVID HAMMOND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CJH : PRW

Ruapehu’s new rural fire status divides the District into four quadrants which will each have their fire status set by local conditions in that quadrant rather than a rural fire status being set for the whole of the District. Council hopes that the rural community will find value with the increased flexibility offered by this approach.

