

Fire and Emergency impose fireworks ban for Southland

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Fire and Emergency New Zealand has singled out two high-risk areas in Southland for a fireworks ban. (File photo)

With windy weather on the way this week, Fire and Emergency New Zealand is urging Southlanders to think twice before setting off fireworks.

It has also banned the use of fireworks at Sand Point Reserve and Fosbender Park, from the northern boundary of Fosbender Park in a line west to Oreti Beach out to the mean high tide mark, and the Awarua Bay area, including Awarua Bay Rd, all land within the Tiwai Peninsula (excluding the smelter) and any gravel pits within the area until November 20.

“People should be mindful of the conditions and aware of how quickly a fire goes off,” a spokesperson said.

People should think not just about how quickly a fire could start, but how quickly it could spread, they said.

While Fire and Emergency had no reports of fireworks-related incidents on Guy Fawkes night, they’d be keeping a watchful eye for the coming weekend, the spokesperson said.

Southland district manager Julian Tohiariki said the areas were singled out for a ban as they were popular spots for people to let off fireworks and had vegetation types that could easily start a fire.

“Although things have been extremely wet in Southland things are starting to dry,” Tohiariki said.

“The weather forecast for Thursday and Friday is for temperatures in the 20s with possible strong winds.”

The ban has been imposed under Section 52 of the Fire and Emergency Act, which allows Fire and Emergency to restrict activities that may start or cause the spread of fire.

Last month, the [Department of Conservation revealed that a 980-hectare fire at Awarua in 2022 caused carbon losses of 104,000 tonnes while the cost of fighting the blaze was in the region of \\$800,000.](#)

The fire was believed to have been started by humans.

Tohiariki urged Southlanders to use www.checkitsalright.nz or monitor weather conditions before lighting fireworks and to take safety precautions if they did light them.

- The Southland Times