

# The rules

Air is one of our most valuable resources, and there are things we can do to protect it and ensure it remains as clean as possible. For that reason, ORC has an Air Plan which sets out the regulations for what we can do to maintain air quality.

The Air Plan stipulates that the only materials that can be burnt outdoors are untreated wood, paper, cardboard or vegetation. The plant material must not be green, so you can't burn material just cut from living plants. Any material burnt must be thoroughly dry. Wood must not be painted, varnished or treated, or contain glues or other plastics.

Any breach of these rules will be viewed seriously by ORC and could result in a minimum fine of \$300. In addition to the Air Plan, your city or district council's fire permit requirements apply but, in all cases, the most stringent regulation applies.

The areas affected by the Air Plan rules are those in Otago Air Zones 1 and 2. In effect, these rules mean outdoor burning in towns, cities and nearby small rural blocks is not allowed without a resource consent.

## Residential properties

Under the Air Plan, outdoor burning on most residential properties in Otago must be at least 50m from the property boundary and the smoke must not be a nuisance to other people.

## Non-residential properties

On non-residential properties, outdoor burning must be more than 100m from a dwelling on any other property and the smoke must not be a nuisance to other people.



## Frost fighting rules

Orchardists must never use disallowed frost fighting burners or burn prohibited materials to fight frosts. Burning oil in old-style frost pots produces one of the most noxious forms of air pollution, especially if waste oil is used.

For frost fighting orchardists are advised to use smokeless heaters, which have an exhaust pipe or stack.

Waste oil must never be used in frost fighting; only clean oils or fuels can be burned. Alternative tools such as overhead water sprinklers are also encouraged.



Smokeless heater - recommended



Disallowed old style oil burning frost pots.

## Don't burn these materials under any circumstances as they are prohibited by the Air Plan

- Rubber, including tyres, tubes and foam rubber
- Treated timber
- Waste oil or other petroleum products
- Plastics of any kind, including vinyl, nylon, and polystyrene, but you can burn polyethylene (used for silage wrap)
- Mineral fibres
- Wires or cables
- Food waste
- Disposable nappies
- Chemicals including garden sprays and agrichemicals
- Paints, varnishes or other surface coatings
- Motor vehicles or vehicle parts
- Any pathological material
- Sewage sludge, such as solids from septic tanks
- Material from contaminated sites or buildings
- Materials containing heavy metals

Recycling or your local waste service is the best way to dispose of these materials.

## Why can't these materials be burned?

All these prohibited items release toxic substances into the air. For example, dioxins are highly toxic chemicals which break down slowly and can remain in the environment, wildlife and people's bodies for a long time and can cause serious health effects such as cancer, birth defects and reproductive and developmental problems. Dioxins can travel great distances on air currents, affecting people and wildlife far from their point of release.

Because of the properties of harmful substances such as dioxins, releasing them into the air is burdening others and future generations with our pollution and its effects.

## Alternatives to burning

### Composting

Composting is a simple and effective way to reduce much of your garden waste. Information is available from ORC and your city or district council.

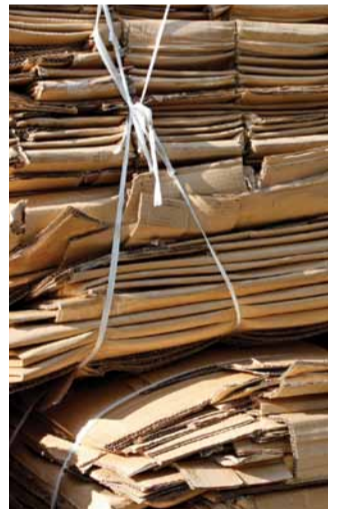


### Shredding or chipping prunings

Shredded prunings are good as garden mulch. There are garden and property maintenance businesses that will shred your prunings for you or you can hire or buy a machine to do this.

### Recycling

Recycle your newspapers, magazines, junk mail and cardboard. Use any kerbside collection for recycling provided by your city or district council. This should take care of glass bottles and jars, aluminium cans, steel cans and plastic bottles. You can also recycle almost anything at your official landfill.





# Introduction

Smoke from outdoor burning gets up your nose, in your eyes and in your clothes. It can be noxious and a nuisance to neighbours. It's the source of many complaints to the Otago Regional Council (ORC).  
Outdoor burning produces smoke that can drift and hang over valleys, especially in areas with an inversion layer such as the Clyde-Alexandra basin, Cromwell and Arrowtown. This smoke can increase harmful particles in the air which can aggravate respiratory illnesses.  
Autumn, winter and spring, when people want to burn piles of leaves, branches and vegetation are particularly bad times for pollution from outdoor burning. Spring air can be affected because of frost-fighting and any burning in summer can spoil the fun for people enjoying outdoor activities.

ORC defines outdoor burning as any burning in or on the ground, or in a container, taking place outside of a building. The outdoor burning rules apply to all forms of outdoor burning including:  
• all bonfires and rubbish fires  
• burning of standing vegetation  
• burning in any solid fuel burner, drum or incinerator  
• campfires  
• barbecues  
• hangi  
• braziers  
You can have a backyard barbecue, but the smoke must not be a nuisance to your neighbours. Always check with your city or district council. You will need a fire permit for any outdoor burning, such as a hangi, bonfire, campfire or incinerator.

## Outdoor burning in Otago

Information and rules on outdoor burning and frost fighting.



To report nuisance fires, phone the ORC pollution hotline on:

**0800 800 033**

### Contact details

For more information on the Air Plan visit [www.orc.govt.nz](http://www.orc.govt.nz) or contact us on 0800 474 082.

You can view the plan at our offices in Dunedin or Alexandra.



[www.orc.govt.nz](http://www.orc.govt.nz)

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