



UPDATED: Key information for farmers affected by weather event

The severe weather across Otago that began Thursday 23 October 2025, caused widespread infrastructure damage and disruptions to farming operations. Many farms are continuing to deal with power supply issues. As recovery efforts continue after the weather event, there are several important things to keep in mind.

■ Regulatory expectations

- Even during and after emergency events, **environmental rules and good management practices still apply** wherever possible.
- If compliance is temporarily **not possible due to damage or safety concerns**, contact Otago Regional Council (ORC) as soon as practicable to discuss your situation. ORC is best contacted on compliance@orc.govt.nz and **0800 474 082**.

■ Stream clearing

- If you need to clear any material from a waterway that has accumulated from the storm event (excluding alluvium) to maintain its flood carrying capacity, this may be covered by Permitted Activity Rule 13.5.1.2 of the Regional Plan: Water.
- Please contact ORC if you have questions regarding the rules. If you have any concerns with achieving compliance, please contact us to discuss your plans.
- This rule, as well as other rules that may be relevant, can be found online: orc.govt.nz/waterplan

■ Stock access to waterways

- Broken or damaged fences may temporarily allow stock access to rivers or streams.
- Stock may require access to rivers for drinking water supply in some circumstances until regular water supply becomes available.

- Exclude stock from rivers and streams as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.
- Please plan for how stock access rivers in a way that minimises risk to instream values and downstream water supply. Contact ORC in circumstances where stock are accessing rivers and streams.

■ Outdoor burning

- Avoid burning during the current civil defence emergency. There is still widespread damage to power lines and infrastructure, and limited resources to respond to incidents.
- When the current situation eases and restrictions are lifted, please follow the ORC outdoor burning rules: orc.govt.nz/airplan

There are likely to be a number of other environmental concerns during the clean up, such as managing dead stock or green waste. Where possible, please use good management and follow the regulations. Where this is not possible, please contact us.

Council recognises the exceptional circumstances and will take a pragmatic, risk-based approach to compliance during recovery. Early communication helps us provide advice, record impacts, and support recovery efforts effectively.

ORC has postponed all proactive dairy farm inspections while the Clutha District remains in a state of emergency. Inspections may resume earlier in areas that were not affected by the event. The upcoming dairy workshop in Tapanui has also been postponed.

This is a difficult situation. Our staff can be contacted on compliance@orc.govt.nz and 0800 474 0827.