



Western Bay of Plenty
District Council

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU!

PLEASE remember – if you have a problem or query about anything to do with Council and its service, our customer service team is ready and waiting to deal with it.

CUSTOMER SERVICE • 571 8008

Rural fire costs can hit home hard

RECENT publicity about individuals being liable for the cost of damage caused by escaping fires in rural areas has prompted a reminder to all rural property owners from the Tauranga Moana Rural Fire Authority.

Early this month the television programme Fair Go highlighted the plight of a person who had to pay thousands of dollars in firefighting costs for a rural fire caused by sparks from his lawn mower. Tauranga Moana Rural Fire Authority Chief Barry Low says the cost of fighting fires will be charged to the person who lit the fire.

"There's no ifs, buts or maybes. If proven - the person who lit the fire is responsible for the cost of any damage – whether the fire was accidental or as a result of an intentional burn-off," says Barry.

The Fair Go incident drives home the importance of taking responsibility for safety whenever a fire is being lit or where there is potential for a fire to occur.

The highest cost recovered from an individual property owner by the Tauranga Moana Rural Fire Authority in the past five years was \$10,000 – for a rubbish fire fanned out of control in high winds. Nationally, individuals found responsible for causing rural fires have faced costs in excess of \$500,000.

Rural fire authorities call on their local Fire Service as the first response for all structural or vegetation fires.

The Fire Service gives its first hour free of charge but thereafter all costs are charged to the Rural Fire Authority which then must recover costs from the person found

responsible for the fire. These costs include manpower, helicopter time if necessary (\$3000 per hour), deployment of fire tankers and damage to neighbouring property.

Key safety tips to remember if you plan to undertake a controlled burn:

- Get a fire permit from Council (no cost)
- Observe the weather conditions
- Don't light a fire in high winds
- Don't light a fire near structures or vegetation
- Have a small fire extinguisher handy
- Make sure you have adequate insurance cover for forest and rural fire

As an additional safety reminder Council will be issuing a National Rural Fire Authority brochure with every fire permit, detailing fire safety issues for rural living. A fire permit is required during the restricted fire season which in the Western Bay of Plenty runs annually from 1 October - 31 April. However a permit does not absolve the holder of any responsibilities under the Rural Fire Act.

For advice on vegetation fire safety contact the Rural Fire Authority by calling Council on 571 8008.



RURAL Fire Authority
Chief Barry Low.

WESTERN BAY DISTRICT NOTICEBOARD

Flash signs make school zones safer

FLASHING lights warning motorists of a school zone have been installed outside two Western Bay schools and have been welcomed by staff and parents.

As a result of requests from Council and the schools, the New Zealand Transport Agency installed the lights at Kaimai School on State Highway 29 and Pyes Pa School on State Highway 36. Council has received further requests from other schools for the lights.

However Council roading manager Alex Finn says only schools on high-risk roads such as state highways would be considered because the lights are a costly \$30,000 a set.

"It would be great if we could install these signs at all schools but they are expensive and vulnerable to vandalism. Council would need to rank the level of danger to the school children and find a source of funding," says Alex. "Council has a number of conflicting demands and safety issues to consider across the District."



FLASHING lights make school zones on busy roads safer for children.

PLEASE PARK ON SAME SIDE AS SCHOOL BUS

WESTERN BAY residents on some rural roads are concerned that the safety of school children is being put at risk at school bus stops on rural roads.

Council invests considerable money in ensuring the safety of children around their schools – particularly in view of the fact that many of our schools are situated on very busy roads. The installation of flashing lights at Kaimai and Pyes Pa Schools is one example, as are the ongoing school safety and education projects initiated by the NZ Transport Agency, Western Bay District and Tauranga City councils' Joint Road Safety Committee. However the safety of children embarking and disembarking from school buses is one area where Council needs the help of parents.

Council endeavours to prepare ample room for school bus stops in the rural areas but some residents are worried about parents parking on the opposite side of the road to where the bus stops for the children to disembark.

Council's roading contractor Inroads has pinpointed the bus stop on Taumata Road as one example where this is occurring. Parents are parking across the road from the bus stop, putting children at risk should they dart out from behind the bus to cross the road to where mum or dad is parked.

Please park on the same side of the road as the bus.

Ice black spots HELP US FIND THEM!

BLACK ICE is an invisible hazard that has caught out many drivers on Western Bay roads this winter and Council wants residents to help our engineers locate where it strikes.

Black ice occurs in severe frost at certain road locations, particularly on corners and where there is shading by trees or embankments.

Western Bay of Plenty District Council roading manager Alex Finn is asking residents to report local areas where black ice is a regular occurrence so that Council can find solutions.

Remedies such as improving the road surface or the removal of trees could help.

"It is a difficult hazard to overcome – but if we know specific locations where black ice regularly occurs we can certainly assess those sites to see if we can find suitable solutions," says Alex. "Now that winter is over, residents may wish to report crashes so that we can identify sites where problems occur on a regular basis. It is always a good idea to report crashes to us as it helps us prioritise our funds for minor safety improvement projects".

The Western Bay District Council can only afford a yearly allocation less than \$1million dollars towards minor safety projects, but more than \$70million of works have been listed on the database.

Warning signage is one option, says Alex, but too often local residents tend to become used to the signs. It is more important to check for heavy frost on the side of the road and drive to the conditions.

If you can help with identifying black ice locations please contact Council's customer service staff. Forms are available to assist in reporting details of crashes.

YOUR DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

MAYOR • Ross Paterson (548 0478)

WAIHI BEACH WARD • Ross Goudie (07 863 6151)

KATIKATI WARD • Sam Dunlop (549 2856)

• Michael Williams (549 4425)

KAIMAI WARD • Norm Bruning (548 0617) • Jo Gravit

(552 6063) • Margaret Murray-Benge (543 0317)

• Don Thwaites (552 5103)

TE PUKE WARD • Maureen Burgess (533 1425)

• Michael Jones (573 9790) • Paul Thomas (573 9170)

MAKETU WARD • Kevin Marsh (533 3877)

• Susan Matthews (533 1108)

If you would like further information
please contact the customer service team

07 571 8008

EMAIL • customerservice@westernbay.govt.nz

Or you may prefer to contact your local Council Library and Service Centre

HEAD OFFICE • Barks Corner, Greerton, Tauranga (open Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm) phone 571 8008.

KATIKATI • 36 Main Road (Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm), phone 549 0119.

TE PUKE • 130 Jellicoe Street (Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm), phone 573 9862.

WAIHI BEACH • Community Centre (Tuesday and Friday 8.30am - 5.00pm), phone 863 4573.

OMOKOROA • McDonnell Street (Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm), phone 548 2643.

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