



Update for residents affected by the Pigeon Valley Fire Newsletter #4 Tuesday, 12 February

This newsletter provides an update on the management of the Pigeon Valley fire as well as information that you might find helpful following the evacuation from your home. This is also a way of communicating directly to evacuated residents.

State of Civil Defence Emergency extended

The State of Civil Defence Emergency has been extended for a further week. This will enable the emergency efforts to continue to be well resourced with support from all agencies and central government.

Fire update

Fire and Emergency New Zealand crews had a good night last night with favourable weather conditions. Today they are focussing their efforts on identifying and tackling hotspots, and are likely to remain for some weeks, within the fire area.

Today we have around 70 firefighters 9 helicopters and 13 heavy machines (excavators and dozers) Please remember there is a total fire ban in place throughout the region.

Temporary restricted access for residents

Thanks to the residents who abided by the guidelines as we allowed temporary access to all evacuated areas for two hours this morning. We will attempt to make further opportunities available as long as it remains safe to do so.

Thanks for your cooperation. Road closures remain unchanged since yesterday.

Conditional re-entry

Work continues today to assess the possibility of conditional re-entry to the remaining evacuated areas. The planning and assessment of this is a complex process.

Factors that need to be considered and balanced include:

- Current weather forecast
- Fire Behaviour
- Availability of emergency personnel
- The condition of infrastructure within the fire damaged areas
- Geotechnical risks due to fire damage
- Damage around driveways affecting access to properties

The time it would take to evacuate the area versus the predicted speed the fire could spread is also a crucial consideration.

This afternoon our specialist teams have started the risk assessment checks for each property – and there are about 200 properties to look at individually, so this will take some time.

More details will be available as soon as more research has been done. We appreciate people are extremely keen to get home but the situation is ever-changing and safety must come first.

Animal welfare

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is the lead agency for animal welfare in emergencies.



In the valley areas where there is restricted access, MPI has animal welfare staff at each cordon during the access periods. Any residents who have visited their properties and have animal welfare concerns, please approach the MPI staff at those cordons, and make them aware of your issues.

Where needed and where we could, our officers and vets went back to properties to assess concerns for those residents and arrange resources, ie water, extra feed and assisted with the movement of stock to alternative grazing.

Federated Farmers feed line are distributing feed that has been donated. Anyone affected by fires and needing feed for animals can register for this help: Phone 0800 327 646 option 2. Availability is dependent on donations. Priority will be given to farms who rely on farm income for their living and have been affected by fire.

Call MPI on **0800 008 333** (option 4) to log any animal welfare concerns. We're following up on animal welfare jobs logged across the valleys, and making good progress getting back to owners who needed to be contacted. If you have phoned and have not had your issue resolved or been contacted, do call again.

Community meetings

Community meeting - Wednesday 13 Feb 7.00pm at the Hope Community Church. We are mindful not everyone will be able to attend so we will be live-streaming the meeting on Facebook to watch live or later.

Weather forecast

Outlook for Wednesday is for fine and clear weather with wind - Southwest 10-25km/hr slowly easing during the morning. Northeast 15-25km/hr for a time in the afternoon.

No rain is forecast. Temperature - 17-19C rising to a maximum of 25-27C.

Humidity - 70-80% lowering to 50-60% for a time during the day.

Health advice

Wakefield Health Centre and Wakefield Pharmacy update

- Normal services will resume for registered patients at the Wakefield Health Centre from Wednesday 13 February. The health centre contacts remain the same.
- Patients who already have appointments will be contacted by the practice team
- Wakefield Pharmacy is now open to the public in Wakefield.

2. Free GP visits and pharmacy prescriptions: The usual fees for GP visits and pharmacy prescriptions will be waived for fire-related appointments

3. Health navigators: For help getting healthcare, Nelson Bays Primary Health health navigators are available to help connect you to health services

· Call 0800 627 401



· Email healthsupport@nbph.org.nz

4. Drinking water contamination information

If you are on a Tasman District Council (TDC) reticulated water supply, and are returning to evacuated areas, the Wakefield, Redwoods and Hope/Brightwater reticulated water supplies are all currently operational.

If you are on a roof water tank supply, any ash and debris that may have been deposited on your roof from the fire should be removed, and the first flush of water following the next rainfall should not be collected. Reconnection of the tank should only occur after the roof area has been checked and cleared.

If material has been washed into the tank in sufficient quantities to affect smell, taste or appearance of rainwater, do not drink the water.

Rainwater in tanks that have not been affected by ash and debris, and has no taint or odour can still be used for normal purposes.

5. Mental health and mental wellbeing advice

Try to get a good sleep: There are good tips on this website:

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living/sleep/sleep-tips/>

Coping with stress and anxiety: Anxiety is very common during an emergency event such as an uncontrolled fire. This is a normal response to a very stressful situation. Talking to people and helping others can be both therapeutic and useful.

How to get help: If you need further mental health support for yourself or for others:

- call your general practice, after-hours GP practice or Healthline on 0800 611 116
- free-call or text 1737 to talk to a trained counsellor
- in an emergency, call 111

5. Please refer to the Nelson Marlborough Health website for advice about smoke exposure, helping children to cope and more.

<https://www.nmdhb.govt.nz/nmdhb-news-and-notice/pigeon-valley-forest-fire-update/>

Have you registered?

Whether you are asked to leave your home or you self-evacuate, it is really important that you register with Civil Defence.

You can either go to the Civil Defence Centre at the New Life Church, Wensley Road, Richmond or phone 03 543 8400.

Civil Defence can help you with accommodation and let you know what other assistance might be available. This includes:

- Civil Defence payments from Work and Income. You can also contact them on 0800 559 009 to discuss this.
- Assistance with animals – contact MPI on 0800 008 333 - option 4



- Free GP visits if you are finding things overwhelming.

Where to get help if you need it

Personal well-being: If you are finding things overwhelming please contact your GP who will help you access free, confidential help from with a certified counsellor or psychologist.

Insurance: When you return to your property take photos and call your insurance company to log a claim.

Water: If you are on a roof water supply and a lot of ash is falling on your roof, it might be best to disconnect the pipe to the tank, and only reconnect it after the next heavy rain (discarding the 'first flush'), to avoid getting ash in your water supply. www.tasman.govt.nz has information on water supply quality and testing.

Animal welfare: The Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) has advised that current smoke levels are not considered unsafe, however if you have a pet or livestock in distress, contact your usual veterinarian or the MPI Animal Welfare Emergency Response team on 0800 008 333 – option 4 or email: awem@mpi.govt.nz.

Rural Support Trust: for a free, confidential chat call 0800 787 254.

If you need help accessing a GP please contact Sally.Tohill@nbph.org.nz PH: 03-5437841
You can also call Healthline 24/7 on 0800 611 116

Financial Assistance,

Civil Defence payments through Work & Income - Call 0800 559 009

You and your family may be able to get a Civil Defence payment. Work and Income may be able to help cover the costs of urgent or unexpected costs (e.g. petrol, food, urgent living expenses, etc.) They are also able to provide help with accommodation costs when people are staying with friends or family.

Other help such as benefits and housing assistance may also be available. Contact Work & Income on 0800 559 009 if you would like help, aren't sure if you can get help, are struggling to support yourself or your family or would like more information.

More information on who and what help you can get is available on the Work and Income Civil Defence webpage : www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-zbenefits/civil-defence-payment.html

Contact details and where to find the most up to date information about the fires, evacuation and the emergency response:

- The Nelson Tasman Civil Defence website: www.nelsontasmancivildefence.co.nz/news
- The Nelson Tasman Civil Defence Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/nelsontasmancivildefenceandemergencymanagement>
- The NZTA traffic pages (for information about road closures): <http://www.journeys.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/regions/10>
- Brian FM is broadcasting Civil Defence information: 106.2 FM
- Parents are advised by the Ministry of Education to stay in touch with your child's school, via the school website or Facebook page. Please check for any changes to the normal routine and bus routes.



- The Ministry of Social Development can advise on financial support: 0800 559 009
- The Ministry of Primary Industries can advise on animal welfare concerns: 0800 008 333 (option 4)

Sharing this update

Civil Defence is here to help, if you think there are other topics we need to cover in this newsletter let us know.

Hard copies of this newsletter will be available at the Tasman District Council Customer Service Centre and at each end of the Wakefield cordon.

If you have family or friends that cannot access a computer, please share this information with them. Remember, it is ok to ask for help. If you need help and you're not sure who to ask, call Tasman District Council on 03 543 8400 (24 Hours).