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# Port Hills Fire – February 2017 Welfare Information

# Port Hills fires

The fires that started on Early Valley Road and Marley's Hill on Monday 13 February have caused significant hardship for a number of residents and also affected the wider Christchurch Community.

The following is to provide you with information on the community's and the Council's response to the fire and ongoing support.

## Looking after yourself

Going through a disaster takes a toll on all of us and coping is not always easy. Good mental health helps us carry on and deal with all that life throws at us.

During fires, and other scary or surprising events, our brains react chemically – releasing adrenaline.

This response is our natural alarm system – our body telling us to be alert and ready for action. It's there to help us, but afterwards we can feel shaky, queasy or on-edge, and it can make it hard for us to concentrate. It can also result in strong emotional responses, such as anger or crying.

This is normal and we can help ease these affects by doing some light physical activity, a small task and by focusing on some calm breathing for 10 seconds.

## Are you feeling stressed?

It is normal to feel anxious or stressed during abnormal events. Talking about how you feel to someone you trust can help.

Online tips can be found at:

[www.facebook.com/allrightnz](http://www.facebook.com/allrightnz)

Please scan QR code for more information.



The Canterbury Earthquake Support Line is also available for people to access: 0800 777 846. General practices are open for those who feel unwell or unable to cope.

## Health information

As a result of the Port Hills fire there is a lot of smoke in the air and there may continue to be so for some time. Canterbury District Health Board is reminding people to phone their GP team first if they experience any respiratory issues or concerns.

For families returning to homes after the fires it is important to know the smell of smoke in your properties presents no serious threat to health.

Smoke may irritate the eyes, nose, throat and airways. More serious symptoms include:

- runny or sore eyes
- cough
- dry or sore throat
- tightness of the chest
- sore nose
- difficulty breathing

People who experience these symptoms should contact their own GP team first.

Most people are very unlikely to have any long-term health effects however people with pre-existing respiratory (lung) illness or heart disease may experience an exacerbation or recurrence of their condition.

Cigarette smokers, the elderly, children and those with heart disease, asthma or other lung disease are at greatest risk of harm from smoke inhalation.

In an emergency always phone 111.

Practical things to try: Following the November 2016 earthquake sequence, All Right? developed these practical tips for coping with a disaster.



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PRACTICAL TIPS FOR  
COPING WITH A DISASTER

**Pace yourself and focus on the things that are most important to you. For example, relationships, family/whānau and your health.**

alright.org.nz



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PRACTICAL TIPS FOR  
COPING WITH A DISASTER

**Routines can help us deal with uncertainty and constant change, so try to maintain your daily or weekly routine (if you can). If you can't, create a temporary one, for example, dinner around the camp table at a particular time each day.**

alright.org.nz

## Welfare support

Christchurch City Council has an emergency welfare support team who are available to help residents access appropriate services if they require support. Contact the Council on 03 941 8999 or 021 059 6666.

## Building safety issues

If you have evacuated your property, it's important that you check all your essential services are working properly. Please check:

### Electricity

If you have any concerns about your electricity please call Orion on 0800 363 9898.

### Water

Your water should be clear and odour free. Pressure should be the same as it was before the fires at all fixtures. If not, please contact the Council.

### Storm water

Please check your gutters and downpipes are intact with no signs of ponding that you haven't previously experienced during rain events.

### Sewer

Please check your toilets, showers, basins, etc, flush and drain as expected with no foul smells.

### Buildings/structures

If you have any concerns about the safety of your building(s), or structures, following the fires please contact the Council on 03 941 8999 to discuss in the first instance.

Some properties may have experienced minor damage and discussions can quickly resolve whether any consents will be required for repairs or not.

## Financial

If the recent fires have had a serious impact on you or your family, you may be entitled to some form of assistance from Work and Income. To discuss your circumstances please call 0800 559 009.

Civil Defence payments are available, more information can be found here:

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

Please scan QR code for more information.



## Insurance

If you have suffered damage from the fire you should immediately contact your insurer, if you have not already done so.

## Animal welfare

If you have any stock that are injured as a result of the fire you should take them immediately to a vet for treatment.

For other animal control advice call 03 941 8999.

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PRACTICAL TIPS FOR  
COPING WITH A DISASTER

**Remember it is  
all right  
to reach out for  
extra support.  
You are not alone.**

allright.org.nz

**all right?**  
PRACTICAL TIPS FOR  
COPING WITH A DISASTER

**Take time to think about your  
energy levels. If you are feeling  
tired or stressed, consider ways you  
can recharge your batteries. Things  
like doing some exercise or listening to  
music can help pick you up – just think  
about what makes you feel good.**

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Christchurch City Council

Civic Offices, 53 Hereford Street, Christchurch 8013  
(03) 941 8999  
[www.ccc.govt.nz](http://www.ccc.govt.nz)