



## PROACTIVE RELEASE COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Penny Simmonds	<b>Portfolio</b>	Environment
<b>Name of package</b>	Annual update on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand 2025	<b>Date to be published</b>	7 November 2025

### List of documents that have been proactively released

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
29 October 2025	Annual update on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand 2025	Ministry for the Environment

**Information redacted**      **NO**

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with the Ministry for the Environment's policy on proactive release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.



## Annual update on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand 2025

**Date submitted:** 29/10/2025

**Security level:** Policy and Privacy

**MfE priority:** Not urgent

### Actions sought from Ministers

<i>Name and position</i>	<i>Action sought</i>	<i>Response by</i>
To Hon Penny SIMMONDS Minister for the Environment	<b>Note</b> the following briefing	10/11/2025

### Actions for Minister's office staff

**Return** the signed briefing to the Ministry for the Environment ([advice@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:advice@mfe.govt.nz)).

### Appendices and attachments

Nil

### Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Cell phone</i>	<i>First contact</i>
Principal Author	Livia Hollins		
Responsible Manager	Sarah Kenward	027 288 9374	✓
General Manager	Glenn Wigley	027 491 7806	

### Minister's comments

# Annual update on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand 2025

## Key messages

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1. Key statistics relating to the adverse effects from retail fireworks use in the calendar year 2024 include:
  - i A total of 603,239 kgs of fireworks were imported in 2024 (around a 5% increase when compared with the 575,544 kgs of fireworks imported in 2023)
  - ii One hundred and sixty-six fires were reported to be caused by fireworks in 2024 (an increase of around 56% on the previous year, with 106 such reported incidents)
  - iii A total of 1,627 service calls to the New Zealand Police (NZ Police) relating to fireworks (around a 3.5% increase on the year prior)
  - iv A total of 286 new claims to Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) for fireworks-related injuries in 2024 (a decrease of 55 fireworks-related injury claims compared to 2023).
2. The data for this annual update shows an increasing trend in the quantity of fireworks imported, along with fireworks-related fires, and fireworks-related calls to the Police. ACC reported that fireworks-related injuries were lower in 2024 than in 2023, but the cost of these injuries was higher in 2024.

## Recommendations

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We recommend that you:

- a. **note** that our annual update shows an increase in fireworks imports, along with an increase in fireworks related incidences attended by Fire and Emergency NZ, fireworks related calls to the Police, as well as costs covered by ACC in relation to fireworks related injuries.
- b. **agree** that this briefing will be released proactively on the Ministry for the Environment's website within 30 business days.

Yes | No

## Signatures

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Glenn Wigley  
General Manager – Waste and HSNO Policy  
**Waste and Resource Efficiency**

**Date** 29 October 2025

Hon Penny SIMMONDS  
**Minister for the Environment**

**Date**

# Annual update on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand 2025

## Purpose

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3. The purpose of this briefing is to provide an annual update on the use of retail fireworks and adverse effects resulting from their use in New Zealand. This includes statistics on fireworks-related fires, injury claims and unlawful behaviour for the calendar year 2024.

## Background

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4. This advice is not a statutory requirement. However, as part of its monitoring of the Hazardous Substances (Fireworks) Regulations 2004, the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) provides the Minister for the Environment with an annual update on retail fireworks to coincide with the retail fireworks public sale period (2-5 November).
5. In 2007, the Hazardous Substances (Fireworks) Regulations 2001 (the Fireworks Regulations) were amended to:
  - i raise the legal age of purchase from 14 to 18 years
  - ii reduce the retail sales period for fireworks to four days each year (between 2 and 5 November)
  - iii permit the sale of sparklers only as part of larger retail packs and limited to a maximum of 50 sparklers per pack, and
  - iv reduce the explosive content (and consequent noise levels) of retail fireworks.
6. On 1 December 2017, the NZ Police became responsible for the enforcement of the restrictions and prohibitions relating to the retail sale of fireworks under the Fireworks Regulations.
7. The total gross weight of fireworks imported into New Zealand for retail and public display purposes during the 2024 calendar year was approximately 603,239 kg. This is 27,695 kg more than the previous year when a total of 575,544 kg was imported, almost a 5% increase since 2023.
8. Retail fireworks accounted for 9 out of 83 (10.8%) explosive import certificates in 2024. Retail fireworks permits accounted for around 63.4% of the total import weight in 2024. Retail fireworks accounted for 100% of certificates for fireworks issued in 2024. These figures exclude novelty fireworks such as party poppers and Christmas crackers, as they do not require an import certificate.

## Analysis and advice

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9. The use of retail fireworks in New Zealand causes a number of adverse effects, including fires, property damage, injuries, public disturbances and distress to animals.
10. Retail fireworks do provide a number of benefits to the public through their enjoyment by individuals and groups of people.
11. The Ministry notes that two large retailers, Woolworths (formally Countdown) supermarkets and The Warehouse, decided to stop selling retail fireworks in their stores in 2019 and 2020, respectively. These decisions were made due to shifting customer sentiment towards retail fireworks.

### Effects of retail fireworks use

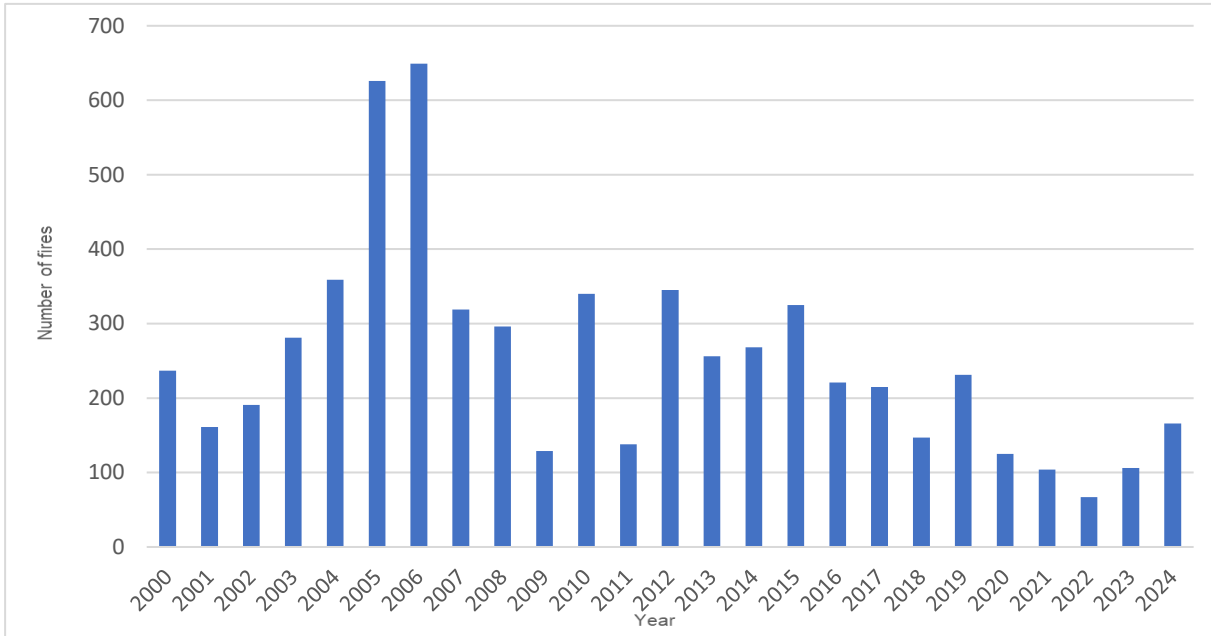
12. This section discusses effects from the use of retail fireworks in New Zealand. This includes fireworks-related fires, injuries and unlawful behaviour and a brief discussion of the possible benefits from retail fireworks use.

#### *Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) – Fires caused by retail fireworks*

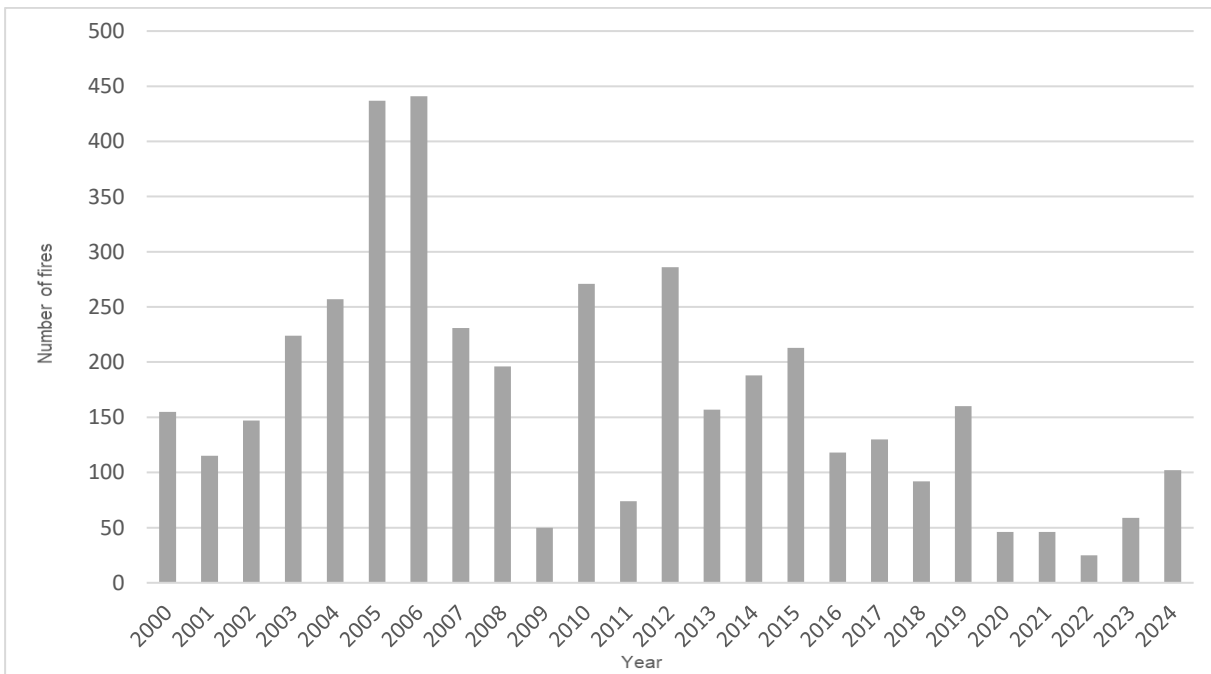
13. FENZ collects data on the number of fires caused by fireworks each year and during the month of November. These numbers are based on 111 call-log data and represent the total number of fires that resulted in a call-out.
14. There were 166 fires in 2024 where the cause, heat source or object ignited was fireworks, including structure, vegetation and other fires. This is an increase of around 56% on the previous year, with 106 such reported incidents.
15. During the month of November 2024, FENZ recorded a total of 102 fires caused by fireworks – around 61% of the yearly total, which is an increase from the around 55% of the yearly total in 2023.
16. As shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 the annual statistics show a continuing general decline over the longer term in firework related incidents attended by FENZ both per annum and per November of each calendar year over the past years, but an increase in the past two years.
17. FENZ noted in previous years that the general trend is for an increasing number of days of extreme fire danger per annum and the extension of extreme fire danger into areas which historically haven't seen many extreme fire danger days [BRF-3929 refers].
18. This year FENZ has shared information in relation to fire dangers and seasonal trends. Recent years have been characterised by a high number of La Niña events, which have resulted in wetter conditions and a decrease in fire weather severity in eastern areas of the country that typically experience higher summer fire dangers; conversely, western areas that usually experience lower fire dangers have seen an increase in fire weather severity due to more frequent warmer, drier conditions. The number of extreme fire danger days per annum across the country as a whole has therefore likely decreased over the past 4-5 years, including for 2024.
19. The Statistics New Zealand Wildfire Risk indicator, based on 2024 National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) analysis found that between 1997 and 2023

“the number of very high or extreme fire danger days per year likely or very likely increased at 13 of 28 sites in New Zealand”, and “likely or very likely decreased at 8 sites”. Due to differences in the way fuel types were treated in the previous (2020) analysis, it is not possible to comment on whether any specific sites have shown significant changes in frequency of extreme fire danger days between analyses.

**Figure 1: Total number of fires where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2024.<sup>1</sup>**



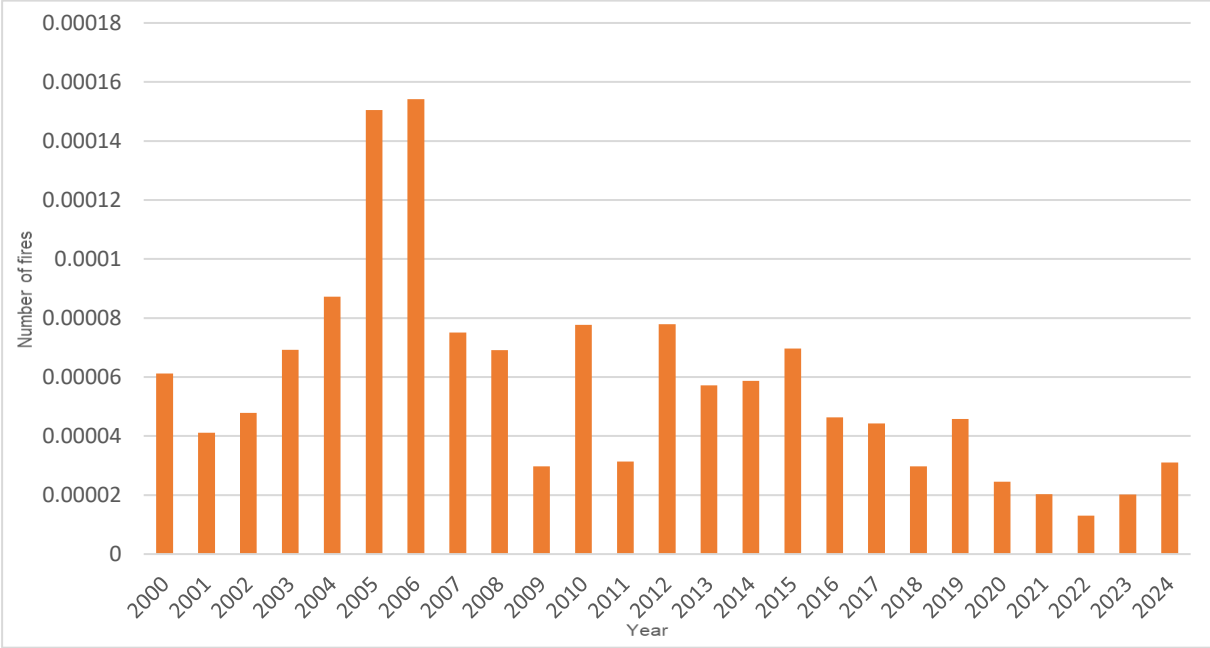
**Figure 2: Total number of fires where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2024 during November.<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Industrial action took place in 2009 and 2011/2012 resulting in a lower number of callouts.

<sup>2</sup> Industrial action took place in 2009 and 2011/2012 resulting in a lower number of callouts.

**Figure 3: Total number of fires per capita where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2024.<sup>3</sup>**



**Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) – Fireworks-related injury claims**

- 20. ACC reports that there were 286 new claims for fireworks-related injuries in 2024, a decrease of 55 fireworks-related injuries since last year. The top three most common primary diagnoses are consistent with previous years: burns, laceration/puncture/sting, and soft tissue injuries.
- 21. The cost of active claims for fireworks-related injuries in 2024 was \$880,504., an increase on costs in 2023 of \$764,177 in relation to 357 active claims.
- 22. As noted in last year’s briefing, ACC updated its definition of fireworks related injuries in 2022, with data in this briefing as well as the 2024 and 2023 briefings therefore not comparable with data provided in the briefings prior to 2022 [BRF-2412 refers].

**New Zealand Police (NZ Police) – Unlawful behaviour**

- 23. NZ Police received 1,627 fireworks-related service calls in and around the fireworks sale period for 2024. A total of 396 calls were received between 2 and 5 November 2024, and a further 341 calls were received between 6 and 18 November 2024.
- 24. For comparison, in 2023 NZ Police received 1,572 fireworks-related calls. Of those calls, 464 were received between 2 and 5 November and a further 294 calls between 6 and 18 November.
- 25. The 2024 numbers are an increase of nearly 7% on calls received between 2 and 5 November with a 10% increase in calls received between 6 and 18 November.
- 26. In 2024, the top four categories for fireworks-related calls were:

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<sup>3</sup> Please note, industrial action took place in 2009 and 2011/2012 resulting in a lower number of callouts.

- i Breach of the peace (36.88%)
  - ii Information from public (21.45%)
  - iii Suspicious activity (8.36%)
  - iv Property damage (5.84%).
27. While most fireworks-related service calls occur during November, service calls occur throughout the year.
28. Data is also collected on the number of fireworks-related offences that come under the Summary Offences Act 1981.
29. In the 2024 calendar year, there were 40 reported occurrences of the offence ‘Setting off Fireworks in a Public Place’. This is a decrease relative to 2023, in which there were 66 occurrences.
30. In November 2024 there were 18 reported occurrences of the offence ‘Setting off Fireworks in a Public Place’. This is a decrease relative to reports in November 2023 and 2022, where there were 29 reported occurrences of the offence ‘Setting off Fireworks in a Public Place’, and 43 occurrences in 2022.
31. November occurrences accounted for 45% of the yearly total in 2024, a slight increase from 44% in 2023.
32. In the case of Call Outs, numbers are derived from a text search for “fireworks” or “fire works” in the absence of structured information.

#### *Benefits of retail fireworks*

33. Retail fireworks provide benefits to the public through the enjoyment of these fireworks by individuals and groups of people. Based on 2020 estimates of the proportion of New Zealanders that buy fireworks, and the average amount spent per person, the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has previously estimated the benefits provided to the public by retail fireworks could be valued at \$30 million.
34. Beyond these estimates there is a lack of data on the benefits that retail fireworks provide to the New Zealand public.

### **Fireworks-related ministerial/departmental correspondence**

35. We responded to 13 Ministerial fireworks-related correspondences in the calendar year 2024<sup>4</sup>, along with a further four departmental correspondences (CORDs).<sup>5</sup> This is an increase on the three letters received in 2023 and 2022, as well as the one letter received in 2021, and the four letters received in 2020. We also received one Official Information Act request in relation to fireworks [OIAD-1383 refers].

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<sup>4</sup> CORM-2010, CORM-2314, CORM-2037, CORM-3168, CORM-2119, CORM-3293, CORM-3229, CORM-2780, CORM-2126, CORM-3191, CORM-3375, CORM-3278, CORM-3179.

<sup>5</sup> CORD-339, CORD-332, CORD-340, CORD-334.

36. The majority of the fireworks-related ministerial/departmental correspondences listed above expressed concerns about health and safety, particularly around animals, and many requested a ban on the sale of fireworks to the general public. Five pieces of correspondence requested a loosening of restrictions on fireworks.
37. There may be more letters than this received by electorate MPs that the Ministry does not have knowledge of.
38. The Ministry is not currently working on a ban on the sale of retail fireworks to the public.

## **Infringements regime for hazardous substances**

39. The Commissioner of Police is responsible, under HSNO, for enforcement of the regulations with respect to the retail sale of fireworks. The enforcement options currently available, however, are limited to issuing a warning, issuing a compliance order, or prosecuting through the courts. This lack of an intermediate enforcement measure represents a gap in the current enforcement system for retail fireworks.
40. The Ministry and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) have been developing an infringement scheme for hazardous substances. This scheme would enable hazardous substance enforcement officers to issue on-the-spot fines for hazardous substance offences, where they were previously unable to.
41. Our work on the infringements scheme for hazardous substances, which has already been publicly consulted on, is currently paused due to other priorities.

## **Petitions and positions of relevant entities**

42. Various petitions referring to the sale and use of fireworks are listed on the New Zealand Parliament Petitions webpage.<sup>6</sup> The Petitions committee have requested the Ministry attend an oral hearing on three petitions calling for a ban on fireworks on Thursday 6 November 2025, 3.15pm – 4.50pm.
43. On 11 September 2025, you met with representatives from New Zealand Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and Helping You Help Animals (HUHA) at the request of a concerned member of the public to hear their concerns about the use and sale of fireworks in New Zealand. Those in attendance shared their organisations' views on the use of fireworks in New Zealand.
44. Assistant Police Commissioner Mike Johnson advised that Police supported a review of the framework, noting increases in the use of fireworks in antisocial behaviour, including attacks against Police. He also said enforcement of fireworks-related events took Police away from other core duties.
45. FENZ Assistant National Commander Nick Pyatt advised that FENZ opposed the public sale of fireworks due to risks to communities and FENZ staff.

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<sup>6</sup> <<https://petitions.parliament.nz/?Keyword=fireworks>>.

46. The SPCA advocates for a ban on the private sale and use of fireworks due to the distress and harm they cause to animals but supports the use of fireworks in controlled and notified public displays.
47. HUHA's official position is that fireworks should be banned at both private and public events as they cause fear, injury and death to animals, pose fire and safety risks to communities and pollute the environment.
48. You advised that reviewing the fireworks regulations was not on the Government's agenda at this time. Further, you pointed to the outcome of the three petitions currently with the Petitions Committee to provide useful information for the Government to consider, likely post-election next year.

## **Te Tiriti analysis**

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49. No Tiriti issues are associated with the contents of this briefing.

## **Other considerations**

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### **Consultation and engagement**

50. The Ministry engaged with the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ), the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the New Zealand Police to receive the datasets forming the base of this document.

### **Risks and mitigations**

51. No risks are associated with the contents of this briefing.

### **Legal issues**

52. No legal issues are associated with the contents of this briefing.

### **Financial, regulatory and legislative implications**

53. No financial, regulatory, or legislative implications are associated with the contents of this briefing.

## **Next steps**

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54. Consistent with previous years, it is suggested that this briefing be released proactively on the Ministry for the Environment's website within 30 business days.