



OIAD-458

Section 9(2)(a)

Dear Section 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 6 November 2022 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Following on from the release of the 2019/2020 annual updates on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand (now available at <https://environment.govt.nz/oia-releases/fireworks/>), please provide copies of these annual updates (or any successor, replacement or equivalent reports under a different title if these "annual updates" are no longer provided under the same title) for 2021 and 2022 as well as any relevant memos or reports referenced therein or annexed thereto.

In response to your request, the Ministry has identified two documents in scope of your request. Both documents are being released to you in full:

- *Annual update on retail fireworks in New Zealand 2021*
- *Annual update on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand 2022*

Please note the Ministry does not hold any additional memos or reports in scope of your request.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

Glenn Wigley
Director - Policy and Regulatory



Annual update on retail fireworks in New Zealand 2021

Date Submitted:	3/11/2021	Tracking #: BRF-684	
Security Level	Policy and Privacy In-Confidence	MfE Priority:	Not Urgent

	Action sought:	Response by:
Hon David Parker, Minister for the Environment	Note that most statistics relating to the adverse effects of retail fireworks use declined in 2020.	

Actions for Minister's Office Staff	Return the signed briefing to MfE.
Number of appendices and attachments 1	Titles of appendices and attachments: 1. Number of fires where the cause, heat source or object ignited was fireworks (Full Year and November)

Key contacts

Position	Name	Cell phone	1st contact
Principal Author	Andy Morgan	027 328 9032	✓
Responsible Manager	Tim Bennetts	027 505 5931	
Director	Glenn Wigley	027 491 7806	

Annual update on retail fireworks in New Zealand 2021

Key Messages

1. Statistics relating to the adverse effects from retail fireworks use in 2020 were:
 - a. 429,815 kg of imported fireworks, a 40% decrease on 2019
 - b. 125 fires, an 85% decrease on 2019
 - c. 155 new ACC claims, a 26% decrease on 2019
 - d. 838 calls to the NZ Police between 2 and 18 November.
2. Most statistics relating to the adverse effects of retail fireworks use declined in 2020. However, the number of fireworks-related calls received by the NZ Police and offences for 'Setting off Fireworks in a Public Place' increased in 2020. Additionally, the number of injuries caused by the discharge of fireworks increased by three from 2018 to 2019.
3. In 2020 there were four ministerial letters received by your office (or forwarded to your office by a colleague) on the topic of fireworks. This was a decrease from the 10 ministerial letters received by your office in 2019.
4. In May of this year, The Warehouse decided to stop selling retail fireworks in its stores. The Warehouse's announcement follows the decision of Countdown supermarkets in 2019 to end its sale of fireworks due to changes in customer sentiment.

Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- a. **Note** that most statistics relating to the adverse effects of retail fireworks use declined in 2020 compared to the previous calendar year.
- b. **Agree** that this briefing and appendices will be released proactively on the Ministry for the Environment's website within the next eight weeks.

Yes/No

Signature

Glenn Wigley Director - Policy and Regulatory Waste and Resource Efficiency Date	
Hon David Parker Minister for the Environment Date	

Purpose

1. The purpose of this annual briefing is to provide an update on the use of retail fireworks and adverse effects resulting from this use in New Zealand. This includes statistics on fireworks-related fires, injuries and unlawful behaviour.

Context

2. Each year the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) provides the Minister for the Environment with a briefing on retail fireworks coinciding with the time when retail fireworks go on sale to the public (2-5 November).
3. In 2007 the Hazardous Substances (Fireworks) Regulations 2001 (the Fireworks Regulations) were amended to:
 - raise the legal age of purchase from 14 to 18 years
 - reduce the retail sales period for fireworks to four days each year (between 2 and 5 November)
 - permit the sale of sparklers only as part of larger retail packs, and limited to a maximum of 50 sparklers per pack
 - reduce the explosive content (and consequent noise levels) of retail fireworks.
4. 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.
5. The total gross weight of fireworks imported into New Zealand during the 2020 calendar year for both retail and public display purposes was 429,815 kg. This was 295,285 kg less than the previous year, a 40% decrease. These figures exclude novelty fireworks such as party poppers and Christmas crackers, as they do not require an import certificate.

Advice

6. The use of retail fireworks in New Zealand causes a number of adverse effects, including fires, property damage, injuries, public disturbances, and injuries and distress to animals.
7. Retail fireworks do provide a number of benefits to the public through the enjoyment of these fireworks by individuals and groups of people. However, the Ministry does not have a comprehensive understanding of the value of these benefits.
8. Despite the amendment of the fireworks regulations in 2007, the Ministry notes that there is continued negative public sentiment towards the public use of retail fireworks. This is evidenced by the number of petitions in recent years that have received significant support, regular ministerial letters expressing concern, and support for a ban on retail fireworks by councillors of local authorities.
9. The Ministry notes that two large retailers, Countdown supermarkets and The Warehouse, have decided to stop selling retail fireworks in their stores. These decisions were made due to shifting customer sentiment towards retail fireworks. It is likely that shifting community sentiment to public fireworks use will see the number of retail fireworks sold continue to decline over time.

10. The Ministry is currently progressing work on a hazardous substance infringement scheme which is likely to include infringement notices for minor fireworks offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks. The Ministry will recommend the introduction of infringement notices for minor fireworks offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks.

Effects of retail fireworks use

11. This section discusses effects from the use of retail fireworks in New Zealand, both positive and negative. 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

12. 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.
13. 2020 saw a total of 125 fires where retail fireworks were the cause. This was 106 less than the previous year, an 85% decrease. Figure 1 shows the number of fires where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2020.
14. Figure 2 shows the number of fires adjusted on a per capita basis where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2020. The full call-log dataset provided by FENZ is included in Appendix 1.
15. In regards to climate change, FENZ have noted 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 a large number of extreme fire danger days.

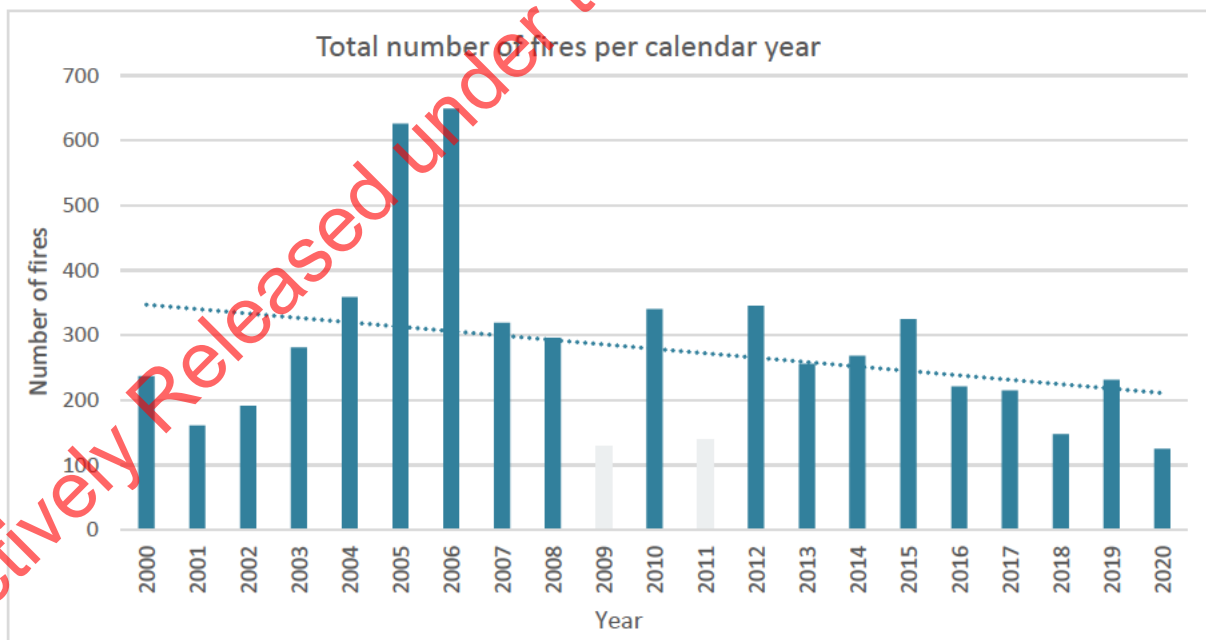


Figure 1: Total number of fires where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2020. Please note, industrial action took place in 2009 and 2011/2012 resulting in lower number of call-outs.

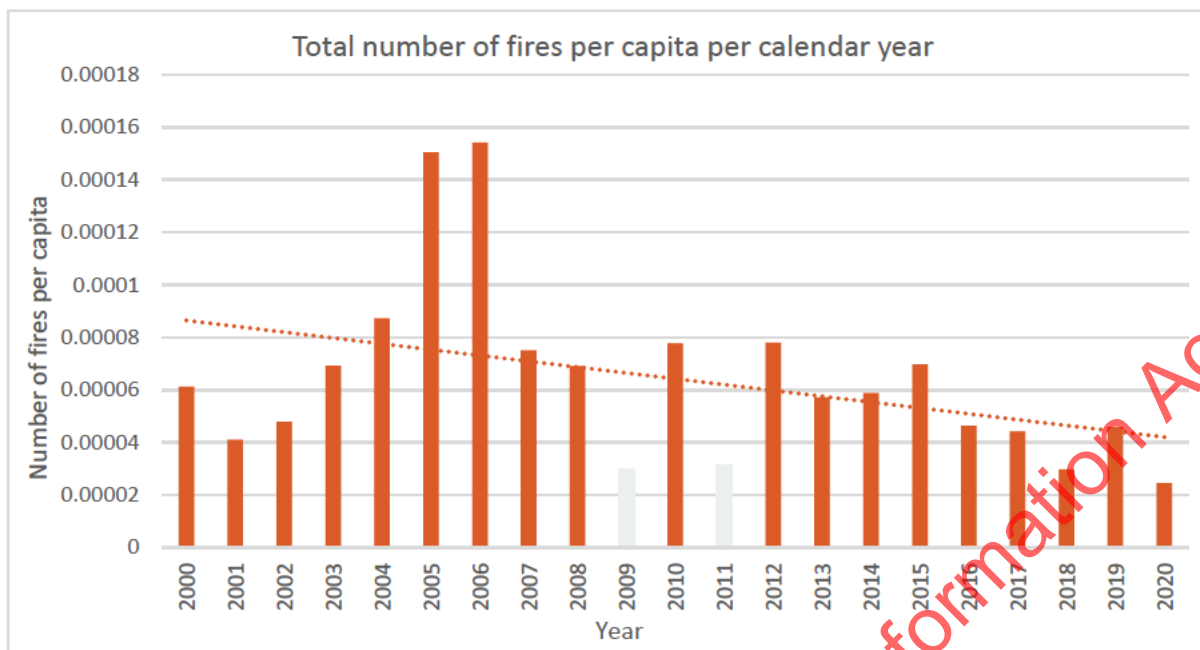


Figure 2: Total number of fires per capita where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2020. Please note, industrial action took place in 2009 and 2011/2012 resulting in lower number of call-outs.

University of Otago Injury Prevention Research Unit – Fireworks-related injuries

16. The Injury Prevention Research Unit at the University of Otago collects statistics from the Ministry of Health relating to non-fatal hospital admissions for injuries caused by the 'discharge of fireworks'.
17. In 2019 there were ten injuries caused by the discharge of fireworks recorded. This was an increase of three on the previous calendar year. Data on the number of injuries caused by the discharge of fireworks in 2020 are not yet available as Otago University has not yet received data from the Ministry of Health.
18. Figure 3 shows the number of injuries due to fireworks between 2003 and 2019. Figure 4 shows number of injuries due to fireworks adjusted on a per capita basis between 2003 and 2019.
19. No data regarding fatalities has been collected by this unit since 2016 and there were no fatalities found up until 2016.

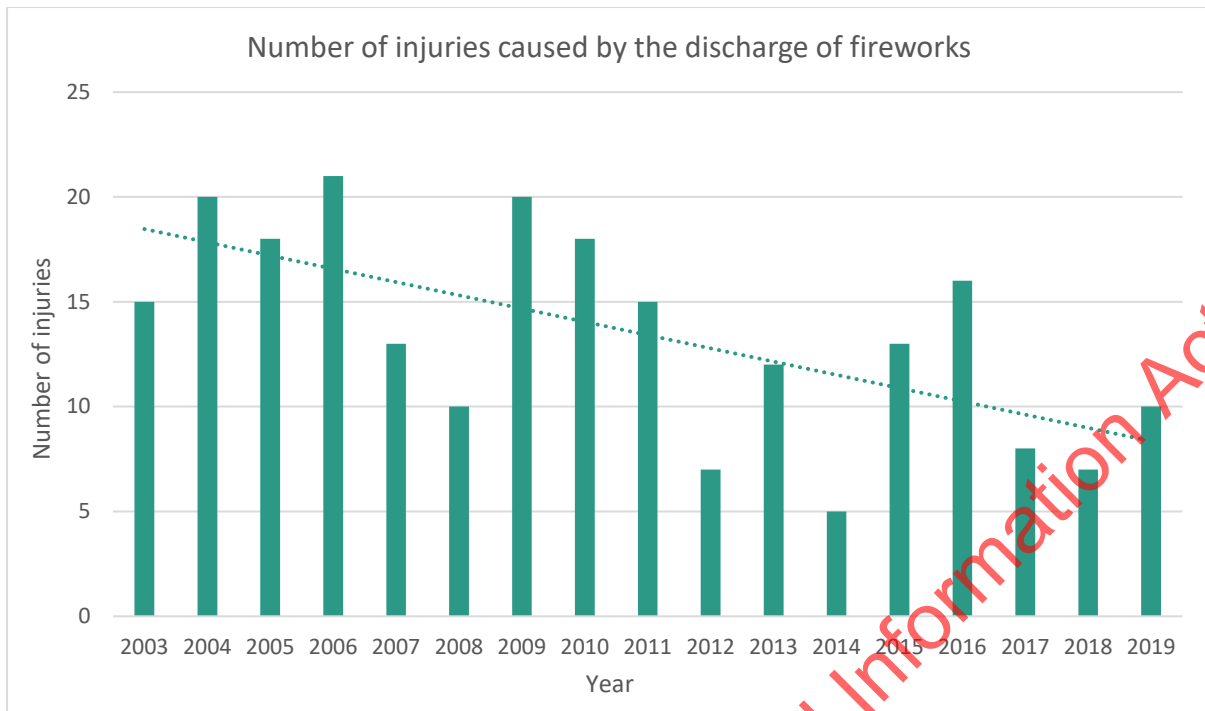


Figure 3: number of injuries due to the discharge of fireworks between 2003 and 2019.

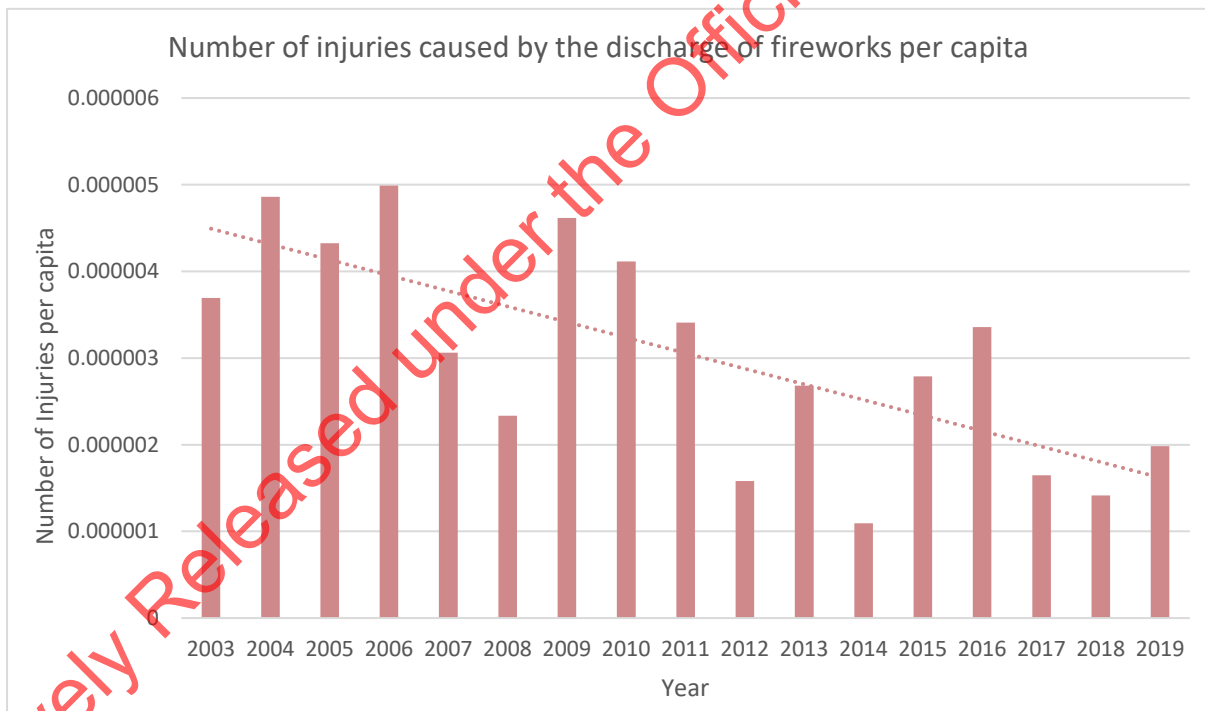


Figure 4: Number of injuries due to the discharge of fireworks per capita between 2003 and 2019.

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

20. ACC collects data about fireworks-related injuries through information provided by claimants on the incidents in question. There were 155 new claims for fireworks-related injuries in 2020. This was 55 less than the previous year, a 26% decrease. Like the previous year, the top three most common primary diagnoses for fireworks-related injuries were burns, soft tissue injury, and laceration/puncture/sting.

21. The active cost of claims to ACC, excluding GST, for fireworks-related injuries for 2020 are currently \$277,409. The active claim costs for fireworks-related injuries sustained in 2018 and 2019 are currently \$307,265 and \$325,819, respectively.
22. The data ACC collates is based on a free text search and may not cover all possible variations on the term 'fireworks'. As such, this data should be considered representative and not a definitive measure of all fireworks-related claims received by ACC.

New Zealand Police – Unlawful behaviour

23. The NZ Police received 331 fireworks-related service calls between 2 and 5 November 2020. A further 507 calls were received between 6 and 18 November 2020, bringing the total to 838.
24. The 2020 numbers for the 2-18 November period were an increase on the previous year. In 2019, NZ Police received 440 fireworks-related calls between 2 and 5 November and a further 337 calls between 6 and 18 November, for a total of 777 calls.
25. In 2020, the top four categories for fireworks-related calls were:
 - Breach of the peace and disorder (combined 52.15%)
 - Information from public (17.06%)
 - Suspicious activity (5.97%)
 - Property damage (4.30%)
26. While the majority of fireworks-related service calls occur during November, service calls occur throughout the year. Data is also collected on the number of fireworks-related offences that come under the Summary Offences Act 1981.
27. In the 2020 calendar year, there were 27 recorded occurrences of the offence 'Setting off Fireworks in a Public Place'. In the month of November 2020, 13 occurrences were recorded. The number of occurrences in 2020 were an increase on 2019, during which six occurrences were recorded in the 2019 calendar year and two occurrences during the month of November 2019.
28. As a result of these offence occurrences there were a number of proceedings against offenders. In 2020, there were 11 proceedings against offenders for 'Setting off Fireworks in a Public Place' and three of these proceedings occurred in the month of November. This was an increase on 2019, during which four proceedings against offenders occurred in 2019 and three in November 2019.

Benefits of retail fireworks

29. Retail fireworks provide benefits to the public through the enjoyment of these fireworks by individuals and groups of people. Based on its 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 estimated the benefits provided to the public by retail fireworks could be valued at \$30 million.
30. Beyond these estimates there is a lack of data on the benefits that retail fireworks provide to the New Zealand public.

Public opposition to retail fireworks

31. In 2020 there were four ministerial letters received by your office (or forwarded to your office by a colleague) on the topic of fireworks. This is a decrease from the 10 ministerial letters received by your office in 2019. There may be more letters than this received by electorate MPs that the Ministry does not have knowledge of.
32. In May of this year, The Warehouse decided to stop selling retail fireworks in its stores. This decision was based on survey data that The Warehouse collected. In particular, their data showed that more than half of The Warehouse's customers said they preferred to attend public fireworks displays and 28 per cent did not participate in fireworks at all.
33. Customer feedback also showed that Guy Fawkes had become less of an occasion and there were concerns about people letting fireworks off at home. The largest of these concerns were related to the safety of animals and effects on the environment.
34. The Warehouse's announcement follows the decision of Countdown supermarkets in 2019 to end its sale of fireworks due to changes in customer sentiment. It is likely that the reduction of major retailers selling fireworks will reduce the number of adverse effects from retail fireworks over time.
35. In October 2020, Wellington Council councillor Fleur Fitzsimons proposed a two kilometre fireworks exclusion zone near Wellington Zoo in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of animals in the zoo. In addition, Rongotai MP Paul Eagle supported the proposal for a fireworks exclusion zone around the Wellington Zoo.

Current work

36. The Ministry is currently developing an infringement scheme for hazardous substances which is likely to include infringements for minor offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks.
37. The absence of an infringement notice for minor offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks means that the NZ Police are limited to issuing a warning or prosecuting through the courts. This lack of an intermediary enforcement measure represents a gap in the current enforcement system for retail fireworks.
38. The introduction of infringement notices for minor offences could potentially disincentivise the illegal sale of fireworks but would not directly affect the misuse of fireworks by members of the public.
39. The Ministry will recommend the introduction of infringement notices for minor offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks as the lack of infringement notices impedes the ability for the NZ Police to appropriately enforce the Fireworks Regulations.
40. The Ministry is not currently working on progressing a ban on the sale of retail fireworks to the public.

FIRE INCIDENTS STATISTICS		Fireworks Incidents - Full Year																						
Fires where Cause, Heat Source or Object Ignited were Fireworks:		Full Year Count																						
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Structure Fire		38	26	30	25	27	27	45	54	56	37	37	16	31	10	35	17	36	30	17	18	9	14	8
Vegetation Fire		98	57	161	103	127	208	260	461	463	230	225	103	268	114	281	206	216	268	179	173	122	187	90
Other Fire		56	34	42	33	37	46	54	111	130	52	34	10	41	14	29	33	16	27	25	24	16	30	27
Heat/Pressure		2																						
HAZMAT																								
Special Service Calls		1																						
Assist Public			1	2																				
Vehicle Accident																								
False Alarm		4	1	2																				
Total		199	119	237	161	191	281	359	626	649	349	296	129	340	138	345	256	268	325	221	215	147	231	125
Additional incidents where Fireworks mentioned in message logs (excludes above):																								
		Full Year Count																						
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Structure Fire		6	8	9	10	4	7	3	8	11	11	9	4	8	8	6	15	15	12	11	17	12	17	4
Vegetation Fire		7	9	21	17	14	16	9	23	23	45	63	19	42	11	28	43	43	71	39	73	44	67	23
Other Fire		9	20	28	20	21	45	61	68	69	108	97	32	65	34	58	125	81	117	75	78	69	62	11
Rescue						1	1				1	1	1	1				2	2	2	2	2	2	
Heat/Pressure		3		2		2	2	1	2	4	3	4	6	3	1	3	8	5	3	1	3			2
Medical		1	2				1				1	1	1	1	4	1	1	4	2	3	3	3	5	
HAZMAT						1			1		1			3		1	1				1			
Special Service Calls		1		4	3	1	5	2	2	4	1	4	2	1	3	4	8	8	9	6	11	6	4	1
Assist Public		1	3		2		1			1	1	1	1			2	3		2	3	5	5	7	
Vehicle Accident			3							1	2		2	2	4	3	5	8	8	8	20	10	16	
False Alarm		27	43	54	51	61	56	63	59	83	92	65	18	53	30	56	117	67	85	59	69	50	44	20
Not Recorded				1									125		77	13						1	1	
Total		51	90	118	106	102	134	139	163	196	266	244	210	178	172	175	326							

Fireworks Incidents - November																										
Fires where Cause, Heat Source or Object Ignited were Fireworks:																										
	November Count																									
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Structure Fire	20	21	16	20	19	18	29	34	29	26	24	4	19	6	29	12	19	16	12	14	6	8	5			
Vegetation Fire	68	21	117	78	97	175	192	334	323	165	146	42	216	63	236	129	153	177	93	103	78	136	33			
Other Fire	30	21	22	17	31	31	36	69	89	40	26	4	36	5	21	16	16	20	13	13	8	16	8			
Heat/Pressure	2																									
HAZMAT																										
Special Service Calls	1																									
Assist Public		0	0																							
Vehicle Accident																										
False Alarm	1	0	0																							
Total	122	63	155	115	147	224	257	437	441	231	196	50	271	74	286	157	188	213	118	130	92	160	46			
Additional incidents where Fireworks mentioned in message logs (excludes above):																										
	November Count																									
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Structure Fire	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	3	6	8	3	0	3	0	0	7	5	5	7	3	3	9	2			
Vegetation Fire	5	1	5	2	5	8	1	10	11	28	43	7	26	6	18	24	24	40	21	45	32	50	13			
Other Fire	3	8	14	10	12	21	26	36	34	76	74	7	39	12	34	69	51	73	49	34	39	30	9			
Rescue						0				1	1	0	0				0	0	1	0	1	0	0			
Heat/Pressure	2		0	0		1	0	1	3	1	1	1	2	0	1	2	3	1	1	1	1		1			
Medical	1	1				0				1	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	2	1	1	1			
HAZMAT					1			0		0			1		0	1					0					
Special Service Calls	1		2	2	0	2	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	2	1	1	3	3	0	0			
Assist Public	1	2		2		0			0	0	1				2	0		2	1	4	2	2				
Vehicle Accident	0								0	1		0	1		0	0	2	1	0	2	1	2				
False Alarm	22	21	25	14	37	21	30	25	33	43	34	5	29	6	36	32	39	38	16	29	23	19	14			
Not Recorded			0									105	59									0	0			
Total	33	35	48	31	57	54	57	77	90	160	157	126	101	86	91	136	128	162	97	123	105	113	39			
Grand Total	155	98	203	146	204	278	314	514	531	391	353	176	372	160	377	293	316	375	215	253	197	273	85			



Annual update on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand 2022

Date Submitted:	1/11/2022	Tracking #: BRF-2412	
Security Level	Policy and Privacy In-Confidence	MfE Priority:	Not urgent

	Action sought:	Response by:
Hon David Parker, Minister for the Environment	Note that most statistics relating to the adverse effects of retail fireworks declined slightly in 2021.	

Actions for Minister's Office Staff	Return the signed report to MfE.
Number of appendices and attachments	N/A
Nil	

Key contacts

Position	Name	Cell phone	1st contact
Principal Author	Jack Campbell		
Responsible Manager	Sarah Kenward	027 288 9374	✓
Director	Glenn Wigley	027 491 7806	

Annual update on the regulation of fireworks in New Zealand 2022

Key Messages

1. Statistics relating to the adverse effects from retail fireworks use in 2021 were:
 - a. 385,447 kg of fireworks imported, around a 10% reduction on the prior year
 - b. 104 fires caused by fireworks, around a 9% decrease on the prior year
 - c. 244 new claims to ACC for fireworks-related injuries. ACC advised it has changed the way it defines these injuries, so the number cannot accurately be compared with prior years
 - d. 633 calls to the NZ Police relating to fireworks, around a 24% reduction on the prior year.
2. While most statistics declined slightly, the rate of decline is lower than prior years.
3. There was an increase in summary offences for 'Setting off Fireworks in a Public Place', a continued trend from the prior year.

Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- a. **Note** that most statistics in 2021 relating to the adverse effects of retail fireworks use declined slightly compared to the prior year.
- b. **Agree** that this briefing will be released proactively on the Ministry for the Environment's website within the next eight weeks.

Yes/No

Signature

Glenn Wigley Director - Policy and Regulatory Waste and Resource Efficiency Date	
Hon David Parker Minister for the Environment Date	

Purpose

1. 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.

Context

2. Each year the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) provides the Minister for the Environment with a briefing on retail fireworks coinciding with the time when retail fireworks go on sale to the public (2-5 November).
3. In 2007 the Hazardous Substances (Fireworks) Regulations 2001 (the Fireworks Regulations) were amended to:
 - raise the legal age of purchase from 14 to 18 years
 - reduce the retail sales period for fireworks to four days each year (between 2 and 5 November)
 - permit the sale of sparklers only as part of larger retail packs, and limited to a maximum of 50 sparklers per pack
 - reduce the explosive content (and consequent noise levels) of retail fireworks.
4. 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.
5. The total gross weight of fireworks imported into New Zealand for retail and public display purposes during the 2021 calendar year was approximately 385,447 kg. This is 44,368 kg less than the previous year, or around a 10.3% reduction. Retail fireworks permits accounted for 95% of the total import weight in 2021. These figures exclude novelty fireworks such as party poppers and Christmas crackers, as they do not require an import certificate.

Advice

6. The use of retail fireworks in New Zealand causes a number of adverse effects, including fires, property damage, injuries, public disturbances, and injuries and distress to animals.
7. Retail fireworks do provide a number of benefits to the public through the enjoyment of these fireworks by individuals and groups of people. However, the Ministry does not have a comprehensive understanding of the value of these benefits.
8. Despite the amendment of the fireworks regulations in 2007, the Ministry notes that there is continued negative public sentiment towards the public use of retail fireworks. This is evidenced by the number of petitions in recent years that have received significant support, ministerial letters expressing concern, and support for a ban on retail fireworks by councillors of local authorities.
9. The Ministry notes that two large retailers, 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. It is likely that shifting community sentiment to public fireworks use will see the number of retail fireworks sold continue to decline over time.

10. The Ministry is currently progressing work on a hazardous substance infringement scheme which is likely to include infringement notices for minor offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks. The Ministry will recommend the introduction of infringement notices for these minor offences.

Effects of retail fireworks use

11. This section discusses effects from the use of retail fireworks in New Zealand, both positive and negative. 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

12. 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.
13. There were a total of 104 fires in 2021 where the cause, heat source or object ignited was fireworks. This is a reduction of 11 fires on the previous year, a decrease of around 9%. For comparison, there was a decrease of 85% between 2019 and 2020. During the month of November 2021, FENZ recorded a total of 46 fires caused by fireworks – around 44% of the yearly total.
14. Regarding climate change, FENZ have noted 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 a large number of extreme fire danger days.

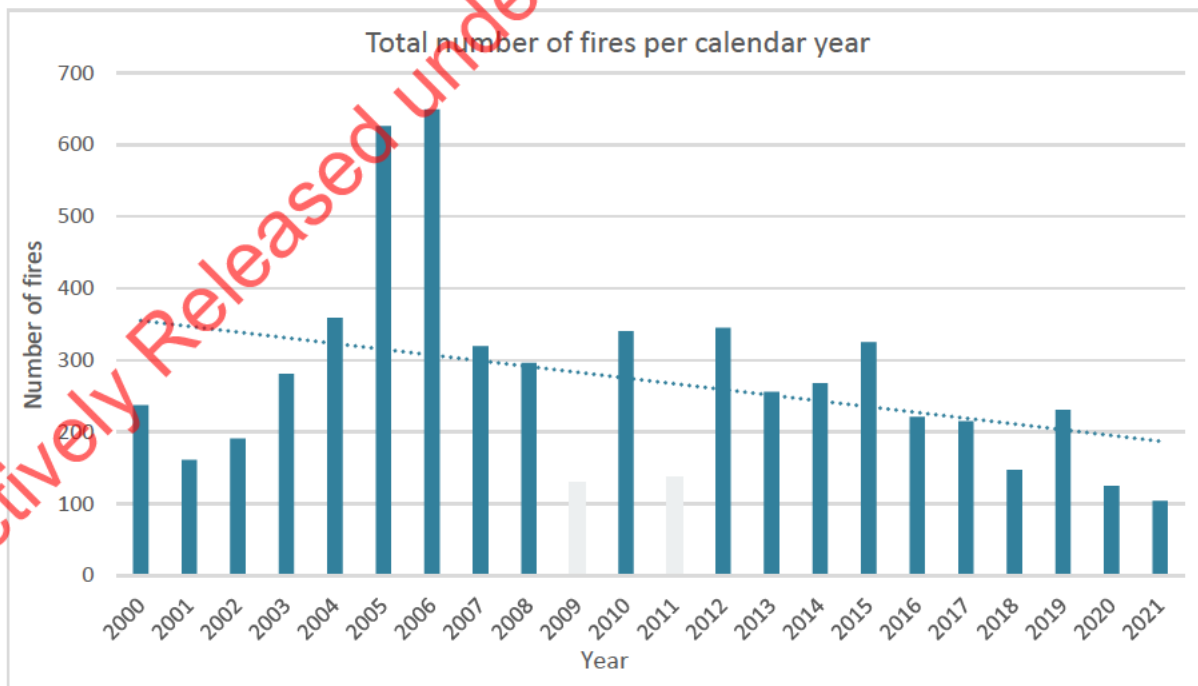


Figure 1: Total number of fires where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2021. Please note, industrial action took place in 2009 and 2011/2012 resulting in a lower number of call-outs.

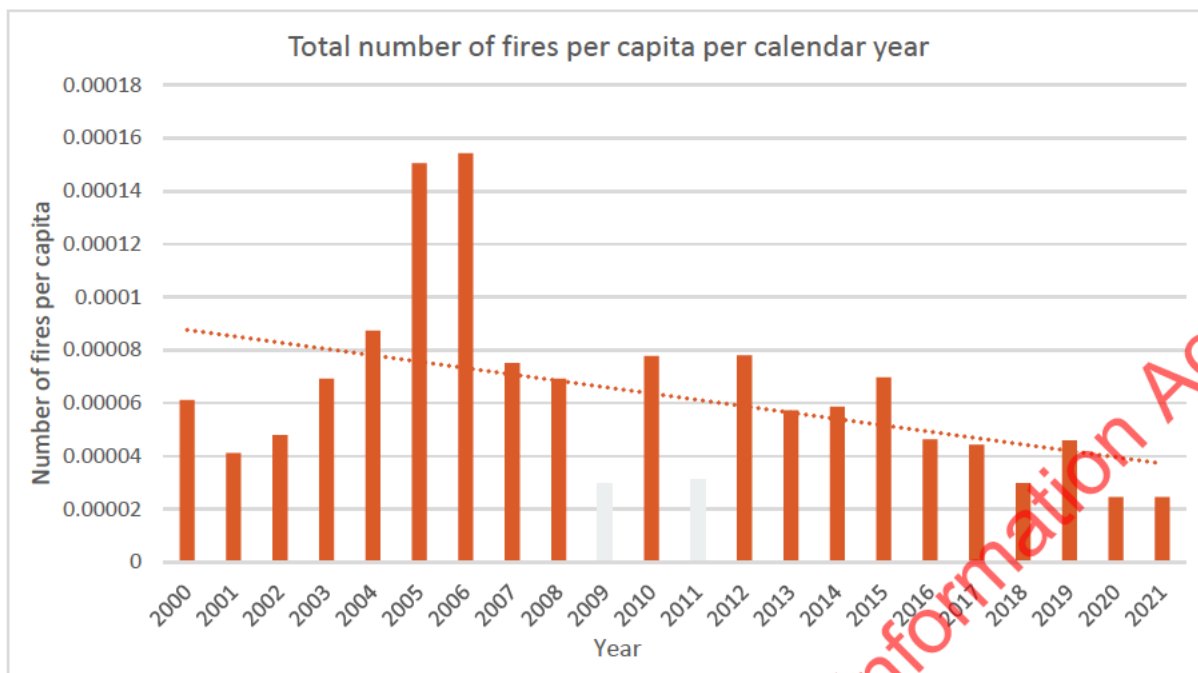


Figure 2: Total number of fires per capita where the cause, heat source or object ignited were fireworks between 2000 and 2021. Please note, industrial action took place in 2009 and 2011/2012 resulting in a lower number of call-outs.

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

15. ACC has advised that their definition for fireworks related injuries has been updated since the 2021 briefing. As a result, they note that the data is no longer comparable with data provided in the last years' briefing, but should more accurately represent the amount of fireworks-related claims.
16. ACC reports that there were 244 new claims for fireworks-related injuries in 2021. The top three most common primary diagnoses remained consistent with the previous year: burns, soft tissue injuries, and laceration/puncture/sting. ACC has also provided data from prior years based on their new definitions, showing 260 new claims in the previous year (2020).
17. The cost of active claims for fireworks-related injuries in 2021 was \$535,255, for a total of 264 active claims. ACC has provided prior year totals based on their new definitions showing a small cost increase from the 2020 figure (\$527,953).
18. Due to a loss of funding, the Injury Prevention Research Unit at the University of Otago is no longer able to collect and collate national injury data from the Ministry of Health. This includes data relating to non-fatal hospital admissions for injuries caused by the 'discharge of fireworks.'

New Zealand Police – Unlawful behaviour

19. The New Zealand Police (NZ Police) received 633 fireworks-related service calls in and around the fireworks sale period for 2021. 330 calls were received between 2 and 5 November 2021, and a further 303 calls were received between 6 and 18 November 2021.

20. For comparison, in 2020 NZ Police received 331 fireworks-related calls between 2 and 5 November and a further 507 calls between 6 and 18 November, for a total of 838 calls.
21. In 2021, the top four categories for fireworks-related calls were:
- Breach of the peace (41.9%)
 - Information from public (16.6%)
 - Suspicious activity (4.4%)
 - Property damage (3.9%).
22. While most fireworks-related service calls occur during November, service calls occur throughout the year. Data is also collected on the number of fireworks-related offences that come under the Summary Offences Act 1981.
23. In the 2021 calendar year, there were 45 recorded occurrences of the offence 'Setting off Fireworks in a Public Place'. This is a substantial increase on 2020, in which there were 27 occurrences. Notably, occurrences during the 2-18 November 2021 period remained the same as the prior year (13 occurrences). November occurrences accounted for 48% of the yearly total in 2020, but only 29% of the total in 2021. This demonstrates a large increase in offences outside of the Guy Fawkes period in 2021.

Benefits of retail fireworks

24. 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 estimated the benefits provided to the public by retail fireworks could be valued at \$30 million.
25. Beyond these estimates there is a lack of data on the benefits that retail fireworks provide to the New Zealand public.

Public opposition to retail fireworks

26. There was one Ministerial letter received by (or forwarded to) your office in 2021 relating to fireworks. This is a decrease on the four letters received in 2020, and the 10 letters received in 2019.
27. There may be more letters than this received by electorate MPs that the Ministry does not have knowledge of.
28. Auckland Council and the Tūpuna Maunga Authority closed access to 14 tūpuna maunga (ancestral mountains) from 2-6 November in 2020 and 2021. The closures were a response to large fires caused by fireworks on several maunga in November 2019 and November 2020. The Tūpuna Maunga Authority reported no fires during the 2020 and 2021 fireworks seasons and will continue the closure policy in 2022. The Authority has stated that this annual closure policy will continue as long as fireworks remain publicly available.

Current work

29. The Ministry is currently developing an infringement scheme for hazardous substances which is likely to include infringements for minor offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks.
30. The absence of an infringement notice for minor offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks means that the NZ Police are limited to issuing a warning or prosecuting through the courts. This lack of an intermediary enforcement measure represents a gap in the current enforcement system for retail fireworks.
31. The introduction of infringement notices for minor offences could potentially disincentivise the illegal sale of fireworks but would not directly affect the misuse of fireworks by members of the public.
32. The Ministry will recommend the introduction of infringement notices for minor offences relating to the retail sale of fireworks as the lack of infringement notices impedes the ability for the NZ Police to appropriately enforce the Fireworks Regulations.
33. The Ministry is not currently working on progressing a ban on the sale of retail fireworks to the public.

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