

# Let's keep cool and safe this summer

Helpful tips for you  
and your whānau



Translations in te reo Māori,  
Samoan, Tongan or Chinese are  
available at [kaingora.govt.nz](https://www.kaingora.govt.nz)



# Stay cool and protected in the sun this summer



The sun may be shining, but it's important to protect yourself and your family from its rays. Here are some tips to help you enjoy the sun safely.

- ! Wear sun-protective gear:** Choose a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses with UV protection, and long-sleeved clothing that covers up as much skin as you can when possible. Light-coloured, lightweight cotton clothes can also help you keep cool in the heat. Choose loosely woven or well-ventilated fabric, so it doesn't trap the heat.
- ✓ Use sunscreen regularly:** Apply SPF 30+ sunscreen and plenty of it at least 20 minutes before going outside. Reapply every two hours or more frequently if swimming or sweating.
- ✓ Take breaks in the shade:** Use umbrellas, trees, or shade structures to get a break from direct sunlight whenever possible and avoid it when the sun is the hottest between 10am and 4pm. Or simply hop back inside when the sun gets too hot. If you are feeling too hot, try to cool down by using a cold, damp cloth on the back of your neck or a sprinkle of water on the skin.
- ! See more ways to protect yourself at [sunsmart.org.nz](https://www.sunsmart.org.nz)**
- ✓ Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day to prevent dehydration and keep a drink bottle handy, especially if you're out and about.
- ! Plan outdoor activities wisely:** Try to schedule outdoor fun and activities in the early morning before 10am or late afternoon after 4pm when the sun's rays are less intense and the temperature is cooler.
- ✓ Be mindful of sunburn:** If you feel sunburn coming on, cover up, and head indoors to cool down. Remember, sunburn increases your risk of skin cancer. If you do find yourself sunburnt, treat it gently and limit your sun exposure.
- ✓ Change up the way you work:** If your job is physical or requires you to work outdoors, talk with your employer about heat risks and options to keep you and your colleagues safe.
- ✓ Keep your house on the cool side:** Set your heat pump to cooling mode at around 24-25 degrees before your home gets too warm. By doing this it saves energy and money.

## Remember, babies need extra care!

Babies' skin is very fragile, so try to keep them out of direct sunlight. Ensure they are cool and avoid overdressing with heavy layers. Babies should be protected by shade, breathable clothing and broad-brimmed hats. Babies under six months of age have sensitive skin and may react to sunscreen – try testing a small amount of sunscreen made for sensitive skin. See more tips for sun safety at [plunket.org.nz](https://www.plunket.org.nz)



# Keep your whānau safe around water

Enjoy summer splashing around, but remember to prioritise safety. Follow these essential water safety tips.

- ❗ **Always supervise children near any water**, especially those under 5 years of age and even if they're strong swimmers. This includes pools, baths, buckets, ponds, streams and water troughs.
- ✅ **Avoid distractions** like phones or books. Don't leave older children in charge of the younger ones; always make sure an adult is watching.

## Putting up a pool this summer?

Follow these rules to keep your whānau safe. If you have a backyard swimming pool at your home, there are nationwide pool laws that apply:

- ✅ **All pools**, even above-ground temporary backyard pools, must be fenced to keep tamariki out. This includes your neighbours' kids.
- ❗ **Even paddling-style pools** that hold water to a depth of 400mm or more must have fencing to keep unsupervised kids out.
- ❗ **Empty paddling pools** when not using them: including buckets and containers, and turn them upside down to prevent water collection.
- ❗ **Our Housing Support Managers** will be conducting their usual property inspections. If you have a temporary pool on the property that does not comply, you will be asked to remove it.



## Swim safely

Swim with a buddy: Never swim alone. Having someone with you can help if an emergency arises.

- ✅ **Follow flags and lifeguards:** Stick to areas at the beach that have been marked as safe to swim, and follow the guidance of lifeguards at all times.
- ✅ **Know your swimming ability:** Stick to areas within your skill level, and avoid deep or fast-moving water if you're not comfortable.
- ❗ **Use life jackets where appropriate:** For non-swimmers, young children, or anyone around open water, a properly fitting life jacket, water wings or other equipment adds an extra layer of safety.
- ❗ **Alcohol and water don't mix:** Alcohol impairs judgement and coordination, so save the drinks for after your swim.



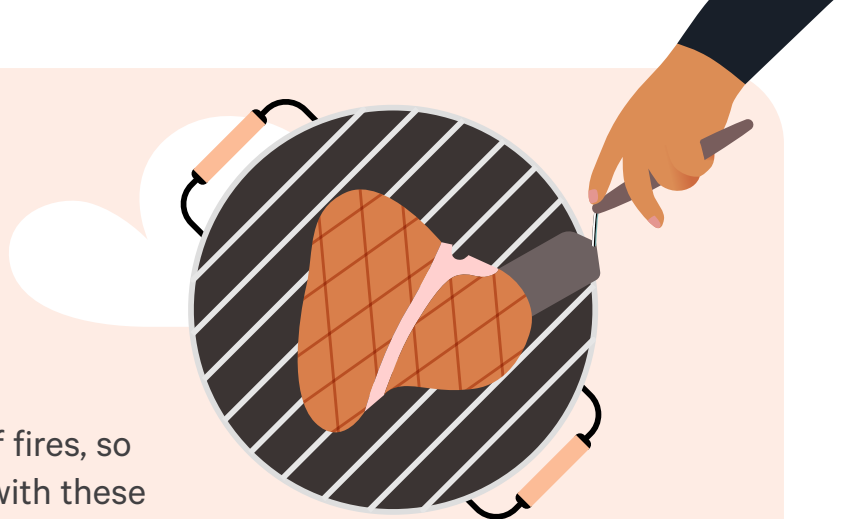
You can see the full pool rules at [building.govt.nz](https://www.building.govt.nz)



# Stay fire safe this summer

Warm weather can increase the risk of fires, so keep your home and loved ones safe with these fire safety measures at home or outside.

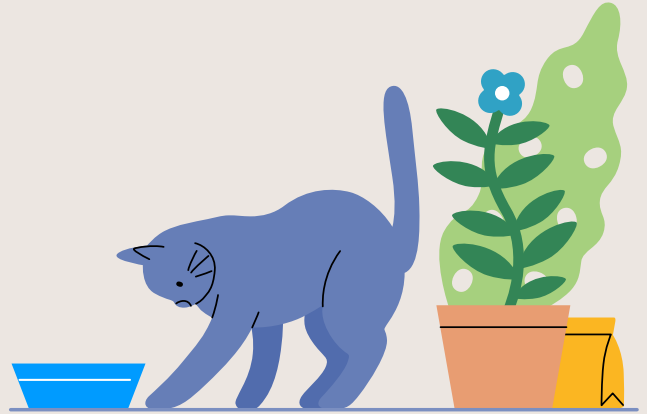
-  **Check smoke alarms:** Make sure smoke alarms are working, and test them monthly. Replace batteries at least once a year. Even though Kāinga Ora checks your smoke alarms, it's always a good idea to stay on top of them in between inspections.
-  **Practise safe grilling:** Before you light up the barbecue, give it a good clean and if it's gas, check the cylinder and all hoses for leaks by spraying soapy water on the gas hose connections. Turn the gas on and if bubbles start to show up, you have a leak. Only use your barbecue in a well-ventilated area, away from your home, overhanging trees, and flammable materials. Remember to always turn off gas or extinguish charcoal safely when you're done.
-  **Don't drink and fry:** Falling asleep while cooking is the leading cause of house fires in New Zealand. The same applies to drugs.
-  **Never leave open flames unattended:** Whether it's a candle or a barbecue, stay close and keep an eye on it. Put out candles if you're leaving the room.
-  Visit [checkitsalright.nz](https://www.checkitsalright.nz) for information and tips about fire danger and the fire season in your area.
-  **Be cautious with outdoor fires:** If you have a fire pit, keep it small and contained. Never leave it unattended, and always extinguish it fully before you go inside.
-  **Bonfire safety:** Campfires should only ever be lit where allowed and away from anything that might catch fire. Always have water handy and make sure the fire is completely put out when you're finished.
-  **Keep flammable items away from heat sources:** Store items like paper, cloth or cleaning supplies away from stoves, heaters and other heat sources.
-  **Don't let off fireworks:** Fireworks are banned at many places in summer. They can start wildfires that quickly get out of control, especially when it's windy.



 **111**  
and ask for Fire

# Keep your pets cool, safe and comfortable

Our pets can feel the summer heat even more than we do! Here are some tips to help keep your furry friends safe.



- ✔ **Provide plenty of fresh water:** Ensure your pets have constant access to clean, cool water throughout the day, especially if they're outside.
  - ✔ **Create a shady spot:** Set up a shaded area for pets outside, or bring them inside during the hottest parts of the day to keep them cool. Remember to keep an eye on the sun as it moves throughout the day.
  - ✔ **Provide a cooling mat or towel:** Use a damp towel or a pet-safe cooling mat to give them a place to lie down and cool off.
  - ! **Be cautious with exercise:** Reduce your pet's exercise intensity on hot days, and watch for signs of overheating like panting or drooling.
  - ! **Avoid hot pavements:** If the pavement or sand is too hot for you to touch with your bare hand, then it's too hot for your pet to walk on. Walk your dog in the early morning or late evening to protect their paws from hot asphalt, which can burn their sensitive pads.
  - ! **Pets get sunburnt too:** Pets with lighter skin and fur are most at risk. You can protect them by rubbing pet-safe sunscreen on their noses, ears and bellies.
  - ! **Never leave pets in a parked car:** Even with the windows slightly open, the temperature inside a car can quickly become life-threatening. It's always best to leave pets at home. If you find a dog in distress in a locked car, call the Police or your local SPCA immediately.
- Visit [spca.nz](https://www.spcanew Zealand.org.nz) for more great summer tips and advice for your pets.



# Keep your home tidy and organised this summer!

Summer is the perfect time to take care of your home and prevent small issues from becoming big problems.



✓ **Clear gutters and downspouts:** If it's within reach, remove leaves, twigs and debris from gutters to prevent blockages that can lead to water damage.

✓ **Check for leaks:** Inspect under sinks, around windows, and on ceilings for any signs of water damage. Report leaks or building maintenance to Kāinga Ora as soon as you spot them.

✓ **Keep outside areas tidy:** Remove rubbish, old furniture or clutter from your yard to prevent tripping hazards and reduce fire risk. Remember to mow your lawn and keep your gardens tidy.

📞 The Kāinga Ora Customer Support Centre is open over the summer period on **0800 801 601**. You can also lodge any repairs or maintenance requests through the [MyKāingaOra app](#)

! **Clean and organise storage areas:** Use the summer to organise cupboards, closets and sheds, getting rid of anything you no longer need.

! **Rubbish and recycling:** Dispose of rubbish and recycling using the correct council bins or communal facilities for larger complexes. Check your local council website for any changes to collection over the summer period.



# Keep your home a safe haven this summer!

With more people out and about, keep your home secure with these smart tips.

- ❗ **Get to know your neighbours:** Strong community ties mean neighbours can watch out for each other's homes and report any unusual activity.
- ❗ **Lock up when you leave:** Always lock windows and doors, even if you're just popping out for a quick errand.
- ❗ **Don't leave valuables visible:** Keep valuables like electronics or cash packed away and out of sight and away from windows.
- ❗ **Light up entryways:** Keep lights on outside your home to deter intruders and make it easier to see when you come home.
- ❗ **Keep an eye out:** If you're living in a large complex, make sure not to let others follow you into the building if they don't have their own keys or swipe cards.
- ✅ **Be mindful on social media:** Avoid sharing your travel plans or showing that you're away from home on social media. Keep those holiday photos ready to go for when you're back.
- ❗ **Report suspicious behaviour:** If you notice anything unusual in your neighbourhood, let your Housing Support Manager or the Police know. Your vigilance helps keep everyone safe.



## When road tripping this summer

We all want to get to where we need to be safely, and this is even more important during busy holiday traffic in the summer. The NZ Police would like to reduce the number of fatal incidents year-round. But you'll notice an even stronger Police presence as they patrol the roads and enforce the road safety laws..

### Make sure that:

- You and your passengers are restrained with seat belts.
- You're not driving while impaired (by alcohol, drugs or fatigue).
- You're not being distracted by your mobile phone, or your passengers.
- You're following the speed limit and adapting to the roading conditions.
- ❗ Check your tyre pressure, tyre tread and brakes well before you set off on your road trip. Make sure you're well rested and, if possible, share the driving on long journeys.





# Need a little extra help over the summer?

While summer can be a lot of fun, the holidays can also be stressful with budgeting and family commitments. Sometimes we all need a bit of extra support. Here are some valuable resources and services that can make things a bit easier.



**Foodbanks:** If you need assistance with food, you can find your nearest foodbank at [foodbank.co.nz](https://www.foodbank.co.nz)

**Budgeting help:** If you need some help with planning matters and getting your budget in place, visit [sorted.org.nz](https://www.sorted.org.nz)

**Need to talk:** If you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, you can call or text 1737 to speak anonymously with a trained counsellor or peer support worker. This service is free and available 24/7.

**Need advice:** If you need legal advice or support, you can contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau for a confidential chat. Find your local branch at [cab.org.nz](https://www.cab.org.nz)

**Community Alcohol and Drug Support:** If you, or your whānau, need support, you can call 0800 787 797 or text 8681 to speak anonymously with a trained counsellor. This service is free and available 24/7.

**Visiting Service:** The Age Concern Visiting Service is a befriending service that connects older people with volunteers who are keen to spend time getting to know them. The volunteers are police-checked and trained, and spend about an hour each week sharing conversation and activities with their older friend. Some visits take place in the client's home, and some involve going out together. Matches are made thoughtfully based on personality, shared interests, cultural needs, and location, with regular reviews to ensure compatibility.

If you or anyone you know needs their help, please contact your local Age Concern office on 0800 652 105 or visit [www.ageconcern.org.nz](https://www.ageconcern.org.nz)

**Police and emergency services:** If you require help from the Police or emergency services:

- Call 111 for emergencies or if you need immediate assistance
- Call 105 for non-emergencies

## For more information



► [sunsmart.org.nz](https://www.sunsmart.org.nz)



► [watersafety.org.nz](https://www.watersafety.org.nz)



► [checkitsalright.nz](https://www.checkitsalright.nz)



► [spca.nz](https://www.sPCA.nz)



► [ageconcern.org.nz](https://www.ageconcern.org.nz)



► [police.govt.nz](https://www.police.govt.nz)

[kaingaora.govt.nz](https://www.kaingaora.govt.nz)