

Firefighting Water in Central Otago

In an emergency, the ability for firefighters to have fast access to reliable water sources can be critical to ensure damage and fire spread are minimised. In urban areas, water for firefighting purposes is usually provided by fire hydrants, however, rural properties that do not have access to a reticulated supply, are significantly more at risk from fire outbreak and it is important that specific provisions for firefighting water are made on rural properties.

Urban Areas with Hydrant Coverage

Firefighting water standards are covered by SNZ PAS 4509:2012, which is available for free online. For dwellings in residential areas, this standard requires two fire hydrants to be available. The first hydrant needs to be within 135m of the dwelling and the second within 270m. Both need to be capable of providing 750 litres per minute of water flow at the hydrant. Other buildings, such as commercial premises have different standards. Refer to Tables 1 and 2 of SNZ PAS 4509:2012 for more information about determining what level of supply is required for your building.

Rural Areas or Areas Without Hydrant Coverage

Council requires every dwelling to have an adequate firefighting water supply. In Central Otago District, the following are considered to meet the minimum requirements for an adequate 'Alternative Water Supply' for a single dwelling;

- A home sprinkler system with a 7,000 litre reserve. NB: FENZ strongly recommend that any dwelling more than 10 minutes from the nearest fire station, or which is difficult to access for a fire truck, be fitted with sprinklers.

Or

- A tank with a minimum 20,000 litres held as a static firefighting reserve (plumbed so that it is only accessible for firefighting purposes), and
- A firefighting connection within 90m any buildings with the following connections:
 - For suction sources (most common) – 100mm female suction couplings
 - For flooded sources (less common) – 70mm female instantaneous couplingsNB: Must be capable of providing 25 litres per second of flow at the coupling
- A 4.5m by 11m hardstand area adjacent to the connection with a 4.5m width clear working area around it capable of accommodating a FENZ fire appliance parking on it. Clear access shall be maintained to this area at all times.

- The tank, connection and hardstand must not be located where they are able to be compromised in the event of a fire, and must have at least six (6) metres of separation from any buildings.

Under certain circumstances ponds, lakes, rivers and the like may be used as an Alternative Water Supply, however, these types of supply will only be accepted by the Council where the written approval from FENZ has been provided for the Alternative Water Supply.

Appendix B of SNZ PAS 4059:2008 provides more guidance on rural firefighting water standards including descriptions of suction vs flooded sources. FENZ also provide a district specific guidance note for residential activities describing the requirements for rural firefighting water standards, also available on Council's website.

Please note that buildings other than dwellings, such as commercial premises, may require a different level of protection. Refer to Tables 1 and 2 of SNZ PAS 4509:2012 or, for more information, contact the FENZ Central-North Otago Office on 03 441 4537.

The type of fire protection you install may affect your insurance and it is advisable to talk to your insurer when considering your fire protection measures.