**ACTIVITY: Fire in Antarctica**

**Activity idea**

In this activity, students read online articles related to fire in Antarctica and discuss why fire is a big hazard there.

By the end of this activity, students should be able to:

* use fire knowledge to consider and discuss the impact of fire in an environment different from their own.

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**What you need**

Copies of these internet resources:

* [Flames destroy Sir Ed’s old hut](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/environment/news/article.cfm?c_id=39&objectid=10574378)
* [Antarctic terrestrial ecosystem](https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/951-antarctic-terrestrial-ecosystem)

**What to do**

1. Have students read the internet article [Flames destroy Sir Ed’s old hut](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/environment/news/article.cfm?c_id=39&objectid=10574378). Draw attention to the end of the article where it says, “Fire is the biggest hazard in Antarctica. Earlier this season, two Russians were killed when one of their buildings burned down.” Students could also read the first paragraph of the [Antarctic terrestrial ecosystem](https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/951-antarctic-terrestrial-ecosystem) article.
2. As a class, discuss why fire is such a big hazard in Antarctica:

* Although the Antarctic is so cold and there is snow and ice everywhere, it is one of the driest places on earth. The biggest problem with fires is that there is no flowing water with which to fight them.
* Blizzards make it difficult to get firefighting equipment to a fire. Hagglunds (Antarctic vehicles) are equipped with firefighting equipment, but in a blizzard, they are likely to blow over.
* The winds can be so fierce that foam (or especially collected water) is blown away before it reaches the fire. The winds fan the flames and increase the speed of burning.
* In blizzard situations, fires are left to burn until the winds die down.
* Buildings with really important scientific equipment have halon dump systems that flood the building with halon gas and smother the fire.