

Cleaning fire burns dirty

Hastings residents were up in arms after the reality of sharing a suburban neighbourhood with an industrial firm hit home when VJ Distributors caught fire on March 4.

Crews from around the Hawke's Bay spent their Saturday pouring thousands of litres of foam onto the blaze, in a warehouse that did not have sprinklers installed.

Thick, choking smoke spread out from the site to surrounding houses, and many residents were evacuated.

The regional council advised locals to seek medical attention for respiratory complaints, air their homes and cars and wash all their food preparation areas.

Afterwards, about half a million litres of sludge was collected from the area around the fire.

Ironically, the source of much of the toxic smoke and sludge was household cleaning products, such as Spray and Wipe.

Since the fire, debate has smouldered on about the placement of industrial premises such as VJ Distributors in residential areas.



Pictures: Kerry Marshall

