
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
Sept. 24, 2020

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
and Rural Development
BC Wildfire Service

Coastal Fire Centre to rescind open burning prohibitions

PARKSVILLE – Effective at noon on Friday, Sept. 25, 2020, all open fires will again be permitted throughout the Coastal Fire Centre’s jurisdiction.

Although recent rainfall has reduced the wildfire risk in the region, members of the public are urged to undertake any open burning responsibly to reduce the likelihood of starting a wildfire. The BC Wildfire Service has protocols in place to allow its staff to safely respond to wildfires while also reducing their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

This rescinding of open burning prohibitions means that campfires, Category 2 open fires, Category 3 open fires and resource management burns will be permitted everywhere within the Coastal Fire Centre’s jurisdiction. However, local governments may still have burning restrictions in place, so people should check with local authorities before lighting any fire of any size.

The following fire-related activities will also be allowed as of noon on Sept. 25:

- the use of burning barrels and burning cages
- the use of air curtain burners
- the use of binary exploding targets
- the use of sky lanterns
- the use of fireworks, including firecrackers

Anyone lighting a Category 3 fire must first obtain a burn registration number by calling 1 888 797-1717. A Category 3 fire is a fire that burns material more than two metres high or three metres wide, stubble or grass in an area more than 2,000 square metres, or three or more piles burning at the same time. A poster explaining the different categories of open burning is available online: <http://ow.ly/znnv309kV5>

Anyone who lights a fire must comply with B.C.’s air quality control legislation. The BC Wildfire Service also urges people to take the following precautions with any permitted outdoor burning. Human-caused wildfires are completely preventable and divert critical resources away from lightning-caused fires.

- Ensure that enough people, water and tools are on hand to control the fire and stop it from escaping.
- Do not burn in windy conditions. The weather can change quickly, and wind may carry embers to other combustible material and start new fires.

- Create a fireguard around the planned fire site by clearing away twigs, grass, leaves and other combustible material.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Make sure that the fire is fully extinguished and the ashes are cold to the touch before leaving the area for any length of time.

The Coastal Fire Centre covers the area west of the height of land on the Coast Mountain Range from the U.S.-Canada border at Manning Park, including Tweedsmuir South Provincial Park in the north, the Sunshine Coast, the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and Haida Gwaii.

Anyone found in contravention of an open burning prohibition may be issued a ticket for \$1,150, required to pay an administrative penalty of up to \$10,000 or, if convicted in court, fined up to \$100,000 and/or sentenced to one year in jail. If the contravention causes or contributes to a wildfire, the person responsible may be ordered to pay all firefighting and associated costs, as well as the value of resources damaged or destroyed by the wildfire.

People can follow the latest wildfire news:

- on Twitter: twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo
- on Facebook: facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo

Contact:

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