
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
2020FLNR0019-000642
April 7, 2020

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

Category 2, Category 3, Resource Open Management Fires to be prohibited

KAMLOOPS – Effective at noon (Pacific time) on Thursday, April 16, 2020, most open burning activities will be prohibited throughout British Columbia to reduce the likelihood of human-caused wildfires, although campfires will still be allowed.

The following activities will be prohibited, and these restrictions will remain in effect until the public is otherwise notified:

- Category 2 open fires;
- Category 3 open fires;
- Resource Management open fires;
- the use of fireworks;
- the use of sky lanterns; and
- the use of burn barrels or burn cages of any size or description (except when used for a campfire).

These prohibitions apply to all public and private land within British Columbia, unless specified otherwise (e.g., in a local government bylaw). Check with local government authorities for any other restrictions before lighting any fire. A poster explaining the different categories of open burning is available online: www.gov.bc.ca/openfireregs

A map of the affected areas is available online: <http://ow.ly/8uct30qvSv2>

COVID-19 and wildfire response

These open burning prohibitions will reduce demands on firefighting resources and help protect the health and safety of the public, as well as BC Wildfire Service staff. They will also help reduce the impact of wildfire smoke on air quality and public health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A strategic deployment of wildfire management resources is critical this fire season, so it is especially important to reduce the number of unnecessary, human-caused wildfires. It is vital BC Wildfire Service staff remain healthy to respond to wildfires throughout the 2020 season and ensure the BC Wildfire Service's response capability is not affected.

During the current pandemic, larger open burns pose an unnecessary risk and could detract from wildfire detection and response capabilities. The open burning prohibitions coming into effect on April 16 should decrease the number of false alarms (where firefighters respond to a report of smoke, only to find the smoke is coming from a controlled burn and not from a wildfire).

These open burning prohibitions also support the BC Centre for Disease Control's recommendation to help reduce excess air pollution in airsheds throughout the province.

Enforcement

Enforcement of fire prohibitions is undertaken by:

- the Compliance and Enforcement Branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development;
- the Conservation Officer Service; and
- the RCMP.

All illegal fires will be investigated, and charges may be laid under the Wildfire Act or Wildfire Regulation, depending on the outcome of the investigation.

Anyone found in contravention of an open burning prohibition may be issued a violation ticket for \$1,150, required to pay an administrative penalty of \$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.

To report a wildfire, unattended campfire or open burning violation, call 1 800 663-5555 toll-free or *5555 on a cellphone.

For the latest information on current wildfire activity, burning restrictions, and air quality advisories, go to: <http://www.bcwildfire.ca>

Follow the latest wildfire news:

- on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo>
- on Facebook: <http://facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo>

Learn More:

For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

Or follow @CDCofBC on Twitter.

For provincial health officer orders, notices and guidance, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance

For non-health related information, including financial, child care and education supports, travel, transportation and essential service information, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/Covid-19 or call 1 888 COVID19 (1 888 268-4319) between 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week.

Contact:

Fire Information Officer
Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre
BC Wildfire Service
FIREINFO@gov.bc.ca
250 312-3051

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect