

Important Contacts

To Report a Wildfire

1-800-663-5555

or *5555 from a cellular phone

“Personal information is collected by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource operations under section 26 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, for the purpose of reporting wildfires. For questions regarding this collection please contact the Supervisor, Provincial Forest Fire Reporting Center, 2957 Jutland Road, 250 387-2225.”

Fire Information by Phone

For recorded information on campfire, open fire and travel bans or restrictions, call toll-free:

1-888-3FOREST (1-888-336-7378)

Fire Information Online

www.BCWildfire.ca

www.facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo

twitter.com/bcgovfireinfo

Visit the Wildfire Management Branch website for:

- campfire bans or open fire restrictions
- travel restrictions
- maps showing Fire Danger Class, temperature, relative humidity, precipitation, and wind speed
- Detailed Fire Danger Class (available for 216 fire weather stations in B.C.)

Venting index

Online: www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/readings/ventilation-index.html (Environment Canada)

- Regional Burning Hotlines: Enquiry B.C. — 1 800 663-7867 (weekdays, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
Ask for the Regional Burning Hotline for your geographic region. Or, find the direct phone numbers posted at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/air/particulates/burning.html>.
- Environment Canada — 1 900 565-5000 (24 hours/7 days, toll charges may apply)

RESPECT THE USE OF FIRE

BACKYARD & INDUSTRIAL BURNING



A Guide to Category 2 Open Fires



Ministry of
Forests, Lands and
Natural Resource Operations

Category 2 Open Fires

In British Columbia, the *Wildfire Act* and Regulation specifies your legal obligations when using fire in, or within, one kilometre of forest land or grassland.

Under the Wildfire Regulation, a Category 2 open fire is a fire that:

- burns material in one pile not exceeding 2 metres in height and 3 metres in width; or,
- burns material concurrently in 2 piles each not exceeding 2 metres in height and 3 metres in width; or
- burns stubble or grass over an area that does not exceed 0.2 hectares (less than 2,000 square metres.)
- is not a campfire.

Persons may light, fuel or make use of a Category 2 open fire within one kilometre of forest or grassland when:

- There are no bans or other restrictions in place for doing so;
- Doing so is, and will continue to be, safe;
- A fuel break (sometimes called a fire break) is established around the burn area. A fuel break is a change in fuel type or condition, typically a strip of land cleared to mineral soil to reduce the likelihood of the fire spreading;
- While the fire is burning and there is risk of escape, the person
 - maintains the fuel break,
 - has an adequate fire suppression system available at the burn area,
 - ensures the fire is watched and patrolled by a person equipped with at least one fire fighting hand tool in order to prevent the fire from escaping, and
 - ensures that the fire does not exceed the capacity of the people, fire fighting tools, and heavy equipment that are on site in order to take timely action to prevent a fire from escaping;

- The person ensures the fire is extinguished before leaving the area;
- The person carries out fire control, and extinguishes the fire if practicable, if the fire spreads beyond the burn area; and
- The person must also report the fire.
- A person carrying out fire control for a Category 2 Open Fire must make available to fight the fire at least the greater of
 - one piece of heavy equipment, one fire suppression system and six workers each equipped with at least one fire fighting hand tool, and
 - all workers, fire suppression systems, heavy equipment and fire fighting hand tools within 30 km by road if on Crown land or all resources working on the land if on land other than Crown land.

Anyone who lights, fuels or makes use of a Category 2 open fire **must** comply with the Environmental Management Act and Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation. Review “A Guide to the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation,” especially for prohibited materials (www.env.gov.bc.ca/air/particulates/agttobsc.html/). The Act requires individuals to check local venting conditions prior to ignition.

A burn registration number is not required for Category 2 open fire.

This guide is intended for information purposes only. It is not legal advice. The Wildfire Act and regulation is online at: bcwildfire.ca

Safe Burning is Your Responsibility

Make Responsible Burning Decisions

The *Wildfire Act* puts the onus on you to use fire safely. This requires you to determine if you can burn safely before lighting a fire, and take reasonable precaution to ensure the fire is contained.

- Check with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations for bans or restrictions on open burning. These are typically put in place when the forest is dry and the danger of wildfires increases. Check the Ministry website at bcwildfire.ca or phone the Fire Information line at 1-888-336-7378.
- Check the wind conditions. If the wind is strong enough to carry sparks to other combustible material, do not burn.
- While burning you must ensure that:
 - the fuel break is maintained,
 - a suitable fire suppression system is available,
 - the fire is watched and patrolled by a person equipped with at least one fire fighting hand tool in order to prevent the fire from escaping, and
 - the fire does not exceed your capacity to take timely action to prevent any fire from escaping.

About the Wildfire Act

The *Wildfire Act* specifies your legal obligations when using fire for campfires, backyard burning, industrial/agricultural burning and resource management purposes. It reflects a new approach to wildfire prevention and control in British Columbia that puts the onus on those persons using open fire to ensure their activities do not lead to wildfires.

Contravention of the *Wildfire Act* is an offence. A person who contravenes the *Wildfire Act* may be liable for an administrative penalty, a fine upon conviction, and/or fire fighting and rehabilitation costs as specified in the *Wildfire Act*.

Be Prepared to Respond

Under the law, you must watch the fire to prevent escape. If an escape occurs, the person responsible for the fire must be equipped with at least one fire fighting hand tool to control and extinguish the fire.

To keep the fire from spreading further:

- First, try to extinguish it if practicable,
- Second, report the escaped fire as soon as possible. Your options are reporting to an official employed in the Ministry of Forests, Range and Natural Resource Operations, a peace officer (for example, RCMP or municipal police), OR by calling a fire emergency response telephone number (911 in organized areas, or 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on your cellular phone).
- Continue carrying out fire control until relieved by an official.

Extinguish the Fire Properly

You must extinguish the fire before leaving the area. Ensure that ashes are cold to the touch.

Careless or improperly conducted open burning costs B.C. in excess of \$3 million annually.

Where the Act applies

The *Wildfire Act* applies on both public (Crown) and private land throughout B.C.

Check with your local fire department, municipality, improvement district or regional district to determine if there are local bylaws that pertain to open fires. If there are local bylaws in place, these agencies will provide further information.

Still not sure?

If you need help planning your burning activities, contact the Wildfire Management Branch Fire Centre office nearest you:

Coastal Fire Centre
(Parksville) 250 951-4222

Kamloops Fire Centre
(Kamloops) 250 554-5500

South East Fire Centre
(Castlegar) 250 365-4040

Cariboo Fire Centre
(Williams Lake) 250 989-2600

Prince George Fire Centre
(Prince George) 250 565-6124

North West Fire Centre
(Smithers) 250 847-6600

Have you considered other recycling or disposal options? Try the B.C. Recycling Hotline at 1-800-667-4321. On the Lower Mainland, call 604-732-9253.



High Risk Activities

The *Wildfire Act* also sets out additional obligations for those engaged in high risk activities on or within 300 metres of forest land or grass land.

These activities are listed in the regulation, and include mechanical brushing, disk trenching, preparation or use of explosives, using fire- or spark-producing tools (including cutting tools), using or preparing fireworks or pyrotechnics, grinding (including rail grinding), mechanical land clearing, log forwarding other than by logging truck on a road, skidding logs, yarding logs using cable systems, operating a vehicle equipped with metal tracks, chains or studs (other than operating it for road construction, road maintenance or road deactivation, or on a road or landing or in a log sort area), operating a power saw other than while doing so on a road or a landing or in a log sort area, clearing or maintaining rights of way, including grass mowing, rock drilling, tree processing, including de-limbing, welding and portable wood chipping, milling, processing or manufacturing.

When engaged in these activities, the person must check the Fire Danger Class for the location of the activity, to maintain a fire watcher, and to have the means to report a fire.

RESPECT THE USE OF FIRE