
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
2017FLNR0131-001263
June 28, 2017

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

Help prevent wildfires on the Canada Day long weekend

VICTORIA – With the arrival of rising temperatures and drier conditions, wildfire danger ratings are climbing in many parts of British Columbia.

Members of the public are urged to exercise caution and remain vigilant over the Canada Day long weekend to help prevent human-caused wildfires.

From April 1 through June 27, 2017, the BC Wildfire Service responded to 237 wildfires in B.C., 165 of which were caused by people. Human-caused fires are completely preventable and unnecessarily tie up crucial firefighting resources that could be used to deal with naturally occurring wildfires.

Campfires are currently permitted in most parts of the province, although a partial campfire ban will take effect in the Cariboo at noon on Thursday, June 29. More information about this ban is available online: <http://ow.ly/8vh730cYanB>

Larger Category 2 and Category 3 open fires are prohibited in some parts of the province to reduce wildfire risks and protect public safety. The use of fireworks is also prohibited in some areas. Detailed information about current restrictions is available on the BC Wildfire Service website: www.gov.bc.ca/wildfirebans

A poster explaining the different categories of open burning is available online: www.gov.bc.ca/openfireregs

Local governments might also have their own burning restrictions or bylaws in place, so always check with local authorities before lighting any fire of any size.

Campfire safety (where they're allowed) and fire use precautions:

- Campfires must not be larger than 0.5 metres high or 0.5 metres wide.
- Never light a campfire or keep it burning in windy conditions. Weather can change quickly and wind may carry embers to other combustible material.
- Maintain a fireguard around the campfire. This is a fuel-free area where all flammable materials (grass, kindling, etc.) have been removed right down to the soil.
- Never leave a campfire unattended.
- Have a shovel or at least eight litres of water available to properly extinguish your campfire. Make sure that the ashes are cold to the touch before leaving the area for any length of time.
- Anyone who lights a campfire is legally responsible for making sure it doesn't escape. That person could be held accountable for damages and fire suppression costs if his or

her negligence results in a wildfire. 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.

- Anyone riding an all-terrain vehicle or dirt bike should have a spark arrestor installed on the vehicle. Check the condition of the muffler, regularly clear build-ups of grass or other vegetation from hot spots on the vehicle, stay on dirt paths and avoid tall grass and weeds to reduce wildfire risks.
- Smokers must dispose of cigarette butts and other smoking material responsibly, making sure that these materials are completely extinguished.

The government's natural resource officers and conservation officers conduct regular patrols throughout British Columbia, monitoring high-risk activities and looking out for potential damage. These officers work closely with BC Wildfire Service staff to investigate the cause of wildfires and any improper use of fire when an open burning prohibition is in effect.

To report a wildfire, unattended campfire or open burning violation, call 1 800 663-5555 toll-free or *5555 on a cellphone. To report suspicious activities, environmental damage or a natural resource violation, call 1 877 952-RAPP (7277) or *7277 on a cellphone.

The BC Wildfire Service thanks the public for its help in preventing wildfires. For the latest information on fire activity, conditions and prohibitions, visit the BC Wildfire Service website: www.bcwildfire.ca

You can also follow the latest wildfire news:

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

Learn More:

Current fire restrictions and bans: www.gov.bc.ca/wildfirebans

Wildfire prevention: www.gov.bc.ca/wildfireprevention

FireSmart program (including the FireSmart Homeowner's Manual): www.gov.bc.ca/firesmart

Drive BC: www.DriveBC.ca

Emergency Info BC: <https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca>

Recreation Sites and Trails BC: www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca/default.aspx

BC Parks: www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks

Discover Camping: <https://secure.camis.com/Discovercamping/>

Contact:

Provincial Fire Information
BC Wildfire Service
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural
Resource Operations
250 312-3051

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