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FireSmart for the Wildland Urban Interface

Being a homeowner is labour-intensive. A lot of things have to be done to winterize a home and prepare it for spring, so many homeowners work on their properties at this time of year (or hire someone to do these important jobs). Removing yard debris, cleaning out gutters and stacking the woodpile for winter consumption are all part of responsible home ownership.

This is also a great opportunity to mitigate wildfire risks and deal with any damage caused by wildfires. An excellent guide for making your property FireSmart can be found online (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/wildfire-management/prevention/for-your-home-community>), but some additional tips are provided below.

Outside Your Home

- ◆ To reduce fire risks, keep roofs and eaves free of flammable debris such as leaves or pine needles.
- ◆ Move any combustible materials away from your home. This includes stacked firewood, which should be kept a minimum of 10 metres away from buildings.
- ◆ Where possible, driveways should have a minimum width of four metres and have four metres of vertical clearance so emergency vehicles can get onto your property. If you have a long driveway, consider putting in a pull-out area to allow vehicles to pass each other or turn around if necessary.
- ◆ If you have a dug-out, slough or other water source, maintain a clear path to it so emergency vehicles can reach it.
- ◆ Make sure that your address is clearly marked at the entrance to your property. Ideally, the sign should be made of fire-resistant, reflective material and the post should be metal. Clear all foliage away from the sign so the address is easily visible from the road.
- ◆ Check any utility lines or poles on or near your property, looking for trees or branches that may have grown up into the lines. If you have any concerns with the power lines near your property, contact the utility company to deal with any damage or potential hazards. Remember that fires can be started by trees or branches falling onto power lines.
- ◆ Maintain any ditches or fences running along your property lines. An accumulation of grass and weeds can act as a “wick” and allow fire to spread to your home or outbuildings.
- ◆ Keep your yard free of debris as much as possible. Items left lying around may become safety hazards for firefighters if they need to access your property during a wildfire emergency.

Farm and Acreage

- ◆ Before putting your farm equipment away for the winter, make one or two passes around your feed and storage areas with a tiller to create a fire break that could help stop a wildfire spreading into your yard.
- ◆ Mowing grassed areas of your property in the fall will create a fuel break that could slow the spread of a wildfire in the spring.
- ◆ Reduce the risk of a grass fire by letting animals graze, mowing the grass or building firebreaks around your farmyard.
- ◆ Consider storing straw or hay bales in an area where vegetation has been removed and the bales can be stored on mineral soil. If possible, store the bales in multiple areas to help minimize losses in the event of a wildfire.

Building/Renovating a Home

- ◆ When it comes time to replace your roof, consider using metal roofing material. This will increase your home’s fire-resiliency and the metal roof will last about 50 years longer than a wood roof.
- ◆ Double-paned windows can reduce the risk of wildfire damage (with the added bonus of reducing your heating and cooling costs).
- ◆ Stucco, brick and some composite sidings can also help make your home more resistant to catching on fire.
- ◆ Dry and flammable debris can accumulate below a wooden deck that has an open space underneath it. Heat can get trapped below the deck and a fire there could ignite the deck and the exterior siding of your house. Closing off the underside of your deck can help reduce potential fire damage to your home.

To Date in Coastal

Fires to Date

Person Caused 108

Lighting Caused 9

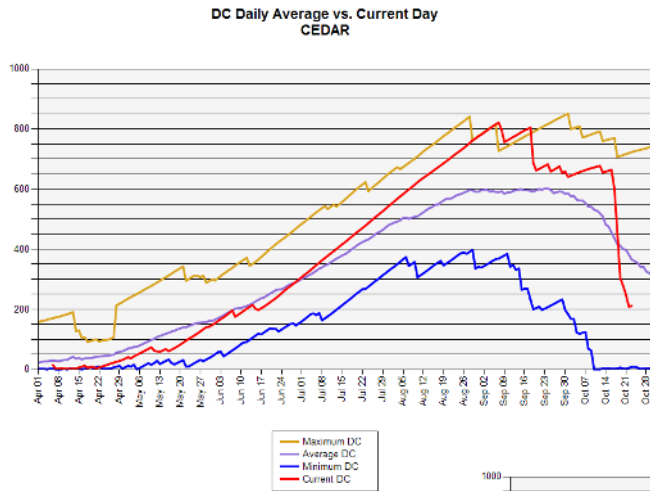
Total Number of Fires 117

Fire Danger Rating today

Current Prohibitions (within BCWS jurisdictional area)

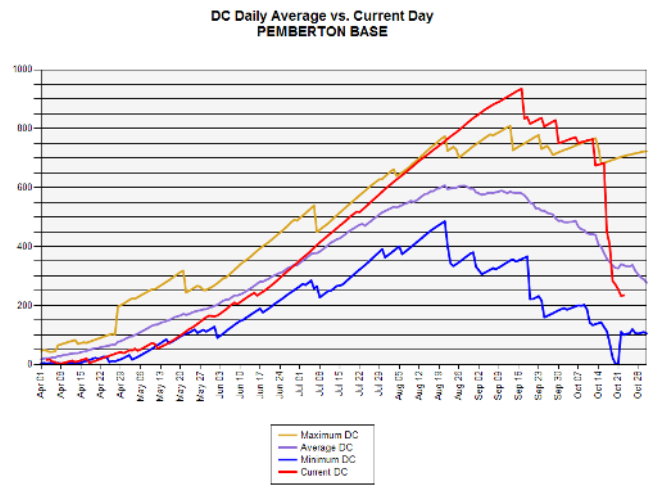
none

At Coastal



- ◆ The Drought Code for 2017 is shown in red.
- ◆ The Drought Code this year surpassed 27 years of data and, in mid-October remained only slightly below the maximum level recorded.
- ◆ Considering how high the Drought Code was, we were very fortunate not to have more fire starts in the region.
- ◆ There have been 26 wildfires in the Mid-Island Fire Zone in 2017.
- ◆ Graph generated on Oct. 24, 2017.

- ◆ The Drought Code in Pemberton remains above average.
- ◆ From the middle of August until the first week of September, this year's Drought Code surpassed that of all previously recorded years.
- ◆ This graph is based on 16 years of data from this weather station.
- ◆ There have been 18 wildfires in the Pemberton Fire Zone in 2017.
- ◆ Graph generated Oct. 24, 2017.



Weather (as of October 23, 2017)

SYNOPSIS: Moisture associated with a warm front pushing through a dominant upper ridge should maintain mainly cloudy skies across the region today. A few isolated, generally light showers are expected south of roughly Gold River – Powell River this afternoon with progressively thicker cloud and more widespread, frequent showers or rain to the north. Moderate to strong winds and moderate to heavy rain in Haida Gwaii today. A trend towards slightly milder temperatures should be seen in most areas on Tuesday as conditions become sunnier in most areas. A cold front should push southeastwards over the region Tuesday night bringing periods of rain or a few showers to most areas (winds may be gusty at times). **OUTLOOK:** The remnants of a cold front should produce a few more hours of rain in upslope sections of the south on Friday (isolated showers inland) before exiting southeastwards out of the Fraser zone late Wednesday morning or early Wednesday afternoon. Otherwise expect gusty northwesterly winds, a mix of

sun and cloud, slightly cooler temperatures, and what will likely be the best venting of the week Wednesday afternoon. A ridge of high pressure should rebuild Thursday and Friday bringing slightly warmer temperatures (low to mid-teens), light winds, and mainly sunny skies in most areas each afternoon with a risk of patchy low cloud or fog each morning. **6 TO 10 DAY:** High pressure should remain in control this weekend and into the beginning of next week to maintain warm, dry & stable conditions with generally light winds each day. Temperatures in this pattern would remain in the low teens with high freezing levels (above 2500m), poor to fair venting, and patchy fog or frost in local cold sinks each morning (areas where cool air naturally pools on calm, clear nights). The next Pacific frontal system should approach from the northwest towards the middle of next week bringing a more unstable airmass along with rain or showers (similar rainfall totals to the feature expected this week).