

Important Contacts

Burn Registration Line
1-888-797-1717

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.)



Ministry of
Forests, Lands and
Natural Resource Operations



RESPECT THE USE OF FIRE

INDUSTRIAL & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BURNING



A Guide to Category 3 and Resource Management Open Fires



Ministry of
Forests, Lands and
Natural Resource Operations

Category 3 Open Fires

In British Columbia, the *Wildfire Act* and regulation specify your legal obligations when using fire in, or within, one kilometre of forest land or grassland. A Category 3 open fire is defined as a fire that burns:

- material at the same time in three or more piles each not exceeding 2 metres in height and 3 metres in width; or
- material in one or more piles each exceeding 2 metres in height or 3 metres in width; or
- one or more windrows; or
- stubble or grass over an area exceeding 0.2 hectares (more than 2,000 square metres).

Persons may light or make use of this type of open fire if:

- There are no other restrictions in place for doing so;
- Doing so is, and will continue to be, safe;
- The person obtains a burn registration number for the fire;
- The person takes all necessary precautions to ensure the fire is contained in the burn area;
- A fuel break (sometimes called a fire break—a change in fuel type or condition, typically a strip of land cleared to mineral soil to reduce the likelihood of the fire spreading) is established around:
 - the burn area; or
 - each debris pile or windrow;
- 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;

- ensures fire does not exceed the capacity of the persons, fire fighting tools and heavy equipment on site for timely action to prevent any fire from escaping, and
- The person carries out fire control, and extinguishes the fire if practicable, if the fire spreads beyond the burn area. The person must also report the fire.
- A person carrying out fire control for a Category 3 Open Fire must make available to fight the fire at least the greater of
 - two pieces of heavy equipment, two fire suppression systems and 11 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 3 open fire **must** comply with the Environmental Management Act and Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR). The Regulation requires individuals to check local venting conditions prior to ignition and to ensure that no air quality burning bans are in place. Burning anything other than clean woody debris requires a permit or approval from the Ministry of Environment. The OBSCR also contains clauses on setback distances and smoke release periods. For more information, see www.bcairquality.ca/regulatory/index.html or call your local Ministry of Environment office.*

For details regarding **Resource Management Open Fires**, please see reverse.

Resource Management Open Fires

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

Under the regulation, a resource management open fire means a fire that:

- burns unstacked slash over an area of any size; or
- is not a campfire, or a Category 2 or 3 open fire and is lit, fuelled, or used for silviculture treatment, forest health management, wildlife habitat enhancement, ecological restoration, or range improvement.

A person may light, fuel or make use of a resource management open fire when:

- There are no other restrictions in place for doing so;
- Doing so is, and will continue to be, safe;
- The person submits a burn plan to an official and receives the official's approval to it in writing (details on burn plans can be found at www.BCWildfire.ca);
- The person obtains a burn registration number for the fire by calling 1-888-797-1717 toll-free;
- The person takes all the necessary precautions to ensure the fire is contained in the burn area.

Burn Responsibly

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 precautions 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 www.BCWildfire.ca or phone the Fire Information line at 1-888-336-7378.
- Check the forecast wind conditions. If the wind is strong enough to carry sparks to other combustible material, do not burn.
- When conducting a Resource Management Burn you must ensure that all obligations specified in the burn plan are met, including resources required on ignition and in the event of an escape.

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.

If the fire gets out of control:

- First, try to extinguish it if practicable.
- Second, report the escaped fire as soon as possible to the Ministry of Forests, Lands 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. A Category 3 open fire must be extinguished in adherence to the requirements of the burn registration number.

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

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*.

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 Fire Centre nearest you:

Coastal Fire Centre

250 951-4222

Kamloops Fire Centre

250 554-5500

South East Fire Centre

250 365-4040

Cariboo Fire Centre

250 989-2600

Prince George Fire Centre

250 565-6124

North West Fire Centre

250 847-6600

Burn Registration Line

1-888-797-1717



Venting Index

- **BC Environment** (text) www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/readings/ventilation-index.html
- **Provincial Venting Index Hotline** 1-888-281-2992
Venting conditions updated daily at 7 a.m.
Air quality burn bans also advertised.
Some regions may provide air quality information.

RESPECT THE USE OF FIRE

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