
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Thompson Okanagan Wildfire Motorized Vehicle Restrictions

Motor vehicle closures are in place for the following wildfire areas in the Thompson Okanagan Region. This is pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation under Section 109 of the *Wildlife Act*.

Fire	Fire number	closure area (ha)
Sparks Lake	K21001	105,131
Momich Lake	K21658	28,651
Tremont Creek	K21849	74,509
Two Mile Road	K42078	4,724
Bunting Road	K41561	7,167
Hunakwa/Crazy Creek complex	K41676/ K41769	8,592
Thomas Creek	K51794	16,350
Nk'Mip	K52061	20,714
July Mountain	K61882	23,316
White Rock Lake	K61884	99,409
Garrison Lake	K62088	18,328
Mckay Creek	K71030	44,784
Mowhokam Creek	V11669	8,941
Lytton complex	K71086/ K70804	96,087

Why are these motorized vehicle restrictions in place?

- Communities and forests were severely impacted by the 2021 Wildfire season with more than 550,000 ha of habitat in the Thompson Okanagan Region burnt.
- The 2021 wildfires and fire suppression activities (e.g., creation of approximately 2,900 km of fire guards) have opened up areas that were previously difficult to access.
- High road and fire guard densities, improved sight lines for hunters and predators across burnt landscapes, and concentration into remnant habitats is likely to increase vulnerability of wildlife populations.
- Broad public access can have negative effects on sensitive burned ecosystems including increased soil compaction, increased spread of invasive species, and accelerated erosion of wildfire-charred soils which impacts aquatic ecosystems and fish habitat.

Will these motor vehicle prohibitions be permanent?

- These closures are intended as a temporary measure that will be in effect while restoration activities for the fire area are being planned and initiated. Although there is no 'sunset clause' in the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation, the intent is to repeal or replace these closures in approximately 18 months time. Where appropriate, they will be replaced with site-specific mechanisms that reflect the fire severity, the degree of

recovery, and the intent of the recovery plans that will be collaboratively developed with First Nations, and informed by Stakeholders.

What types of vehicles are included in this prohibition?

- The motor vehicle closures apply to all motorized vehicles including automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, motorhomes, electric bikes and all types of off-road recreational vehicles, wheeled or tracked.

Which areas, roads and trails are included in this motor vehicle closure?

- all Industrial Roads, including Forest Service Roads are closed unless the road is used to access private property or is highlighted in green and designated as open year round.
- Off road motor vehicle use is prohibited in these areas.

Which roads are not included in this motor vehicle closure?

- All roads that are used as the boundary of a closure are open year round.
- Highways, or roads maintained by the Ministry of Transportation, remain open year round. Generally, these roads can be identified if they are numbered highways, are paved, or are in place to access communities. Examples of highways that remain open include, but are not limited to:
 - The Douglas Lake Road on the White Rock Lake closure
 - The Allendale Lake Road (201 road) in the Thomas Creek closure
 - The McKinney Road in the Underdown Creek/Nk'Mip closure
 - The Tunkwa Lake and Barnes Lake Roads in the Tremont Creek closure
 - The Deadman-Virdette road in the Sparks Lake closure
- Access for commercial activities in the area, other than hunting, may continue.

Can I hunt, trap or recreate within the motor vehicle closure areas?

- Motor vehicle closures can be accessed by non-motorized means (e.g., on foot, horseback or non-electric bicycle).
- As this area is sensitive to disturbance, if you do need to go into the area, please stay on existing roads and trails to minimize any disturbance.

Are there any exceptions to the current motor vehicle prohibitions?

- The closures do not apply to commercial activities other than hunting
- Individuals may use or operate a motor vehicle on private property and on roads used to access private property.

Can I get a permit to access a closure area using a motor vehicle?

- You may apply for an exemption to access a motor vehicle closed area through Front Counter BC at [General Wildlife Permit - Authorization Guidance - Natural Resource Online Services \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/soc/life/wildlife/permits/authorization-guidance)

- Currently, exemptions will be considered only for disabled access, for activities required for assessment, maintenance and public safety, or for activities that otherwise support the goals of wildfire recovery.
- For all other purposes, please contact staff at 2021Wildlife.closures@gov.bc.ca prior to submitting an application.

Will the closures be enforced?

- Enforcement patrols will ensure compliance with these prohibitions.

How can I find out more information?

More Information on the motor vehicle closures, including maps, can be found:

- At www.gov.bc.ca/motorvehicleprohibitions
- By emailing 2021Wildlife.closures@gov.bc.ca
- By calling 778-362-4683. Note that this is an answering service. Staff will return your call within 2 business days.