
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

Public reminded to be cautious with fire

PRINCE GEORGE – Hot and dry weather is in the forecast for the entire Prince George Fire Centre over the next week, so the BC Wildfire Service is preparing for increased wildfire activity.

Members of the public are urged to be extra cautious with any fire, and report any smoke or wildfires that they see.

Since April 1, 2018, the BC Wildfire Service has responded to 48 fires within the Prince George Fire Centre, all which are believed to have been human-caused. These kinds of wildfires are entirely preventable and divert valuable resources from naturally occurring fires, including those sparked by lightning. With northeast B.C. experiencing unseasonably dry and windy conditions, forests and grasslands in the region are very susceptible to wildfires.

The BC Wildfire Service strongly recommends that anyone who conducted a Category 2 or Category 3 open burn within the last 12 months check the burn site to ensure that the fire was completely extinguished. Some of the wildfires that have occurred this season have been caused by burn piles that were not properly extinguished.

Currently, there is a Category 2 open burning prohibition in effect in the Fort Nelson, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek fire zones. However, this prohibition does not apply to Category 3 fires or campfires that are a half-metre high by a half-metre wide or smaller, or to cooking stoves that use gas, propane or briquettes. Anyone lighting a campfire must maintain a fireguard by removing flammable debris from around the campfire area, and they must have a hand tool or at least eight litres of water available nearby to properly extinguish the fire.

A poster explaining the different categories of open burning is available online:
<http://ow.ly/znnY309Kjv5>

Anyone planning to do large-scale industrial burning or conduct a grass burn larger than 0.2 hectares (Category 3 fires) anywhere in the Prince George Fire Centre's jurisdiction must obtain a burn registration number ahead of time (at no charge) by calling 1 888 797-1717. Before lighting any fire, residents should check with local government authorities for any other restrictions.

Anyone conducting an open burn (where they are allowed) must check local venting conditions before lighting any fire. If venting conditions in the area are rated "poor" or "fair", Category 2 or Category 3 open burning is restricted. The venting index can be obtained by calling 1 888 281-2992 or by checking online: www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/venting/venting.html

Anyone conducting an open burn must comply with the Wildfire Act and air quality control legislation. It is the responsibility of that individual to ensure that burning is done in a safe manner and in accordance with regulations and any current burning restrictions.

Anyone found in contravention of an open burning prohibition may be issued a 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. If the contravention causes or contributes to a wildfire, the person responsible may be ordered to pay all firefighting and associated costs.

You can follow the latest wildfire news:

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

To report a wildfire, unattended campfire or open burning violation, please call 1 800 663-5555 toll-free or *5555 on a cellphone. For up-to-date information on current wildfire activity, burning restrictions, road closures and air quality advisories, call 1 888 3-FOREST or visit: www.bcwildfire.ca

The Prince George Fire Centre extends from the Yukon and Northwest Territories in the north to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, the Cottonwood River and Robson Valley in the south, and from the Alberta border in the east to the Skeena Mountains in the west.

Learn More:

A factsheet on Open Burning Practices for Farmers and Ranchers is available online: <http://ow.ly/QdGf30jEYBO>

People planning to light an open fire are encouraged to visit the BC Wildfire Service website and consult the FireSmart Homeowner's Manual online: <http://gov.bc.ca/firesmart>

For more information about safe open burning practices, check the BC Wildfire Service website: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/fire-bans-and-restrictions>

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