

April 2, 2019

Fire reminder: dry conditions and rules to know for open burning and recreational fires

With less rain over the past winter and a relatively dry spring, British Columbia is already gearing up for fire season, and the Campbell River fire department is reminding residents about the rules for open burning and recreational fires.

“We’ve seen far less rain than usual so far this year, and the fire department has been responding to a number of calls about open burning in violation of the City bylaw. We’re asking people thinking about a recreational fire or backyard burning to refresh themselves about the rules for open burning,” says fire chief Thomas Doherty.

Campbell River’s Clean Air Bylaw lays out where open burning is permitted (only certain areas on the outskirts of the community) and requirements for recreational fires. The bylaw can be found under Frequently Asked Questions at campbellriver.ca/fire.

Doherty is reminding Campbell River residents to review the City bylaw and abide by it, or face fines.

“The fire department has responded to a steep increase in burning complaints in the past few weeks,” Doherty says. *“Many of those fires were in violation of the City’s Clean Air Bylaw, and most people burning said they were not aware of the bylaw and restriction in place.”*

The City of Campbell River’s Clean Air Bylaw prohibits burning of garbage and does not allow open burning within city limits except in select locations (Area B on map) and under certain conditions:

- with advance notification to and permission from the fire department and in compliance with all applicable provincial and federal regulations (i.e. Ministry of Environment’s Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation)
- in April and October during daylight hours
- with restrictions on size (no larger than four cubic metres – five feet by five feet by five feet)
- with appropriate supervision and means of extinguishing the fire at hand
- and at a prescribed distance from property lines, building, shrubs, trees, wooden fences and other combustible material

“The fire department is also called to a high number of recreational beach fires this time of year,” Doherty says. *“Beach fires are also regulated, and people could be fined for violations. The main infraction we’re seeing with beach fires right now is that they’re often larger than what’s permitted, and they’re left unattended. This creates a public safety hazard as there’s a potential for these fires to spread to neighbouring properties.”*

Recreational wood fires for cooking or heat also have limitations on size and use and must be:

- in a permanent outdoor fireplace, barbecue or fire pit not larger than 60 centimetres (24 inches) in diameter that is designed and constructed to confine the fire
- or within a fully enclosed burner or similar device
- with appropriate supervision and means of extinguishing the fire at hand

“Please consider the impact of a recreational fire on neighbors, and avoid locations close to homes and buildings,” Doherty adds. *“If you are going to have a fire on the beach, be sure to take a bucket with you for carrying water to ensure your fire is completely extinguished before leaving the area.”*

Although recreational fires are currently permitted, during dry, hot conditions the City of Campbell River Fire Department may restrict or ban them. Please check local and provincial fire restrictions before lighting any fire. Visit www.campbellriver.ca/fire for more information.

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