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Category 2 Open Fire—Common Questions

Q: What is a Category 2 open fire?

A: A Category 2 open fire is an open fire, *other than a campfire*, that:

- burns material in one or two piles not exceeding two metres in height and three metres in width
- burns stubble or grass over an area that does not exceed 0.2 hectares.

All backyard leaf burning or debris-type fires are Category 2 open fires.

Q: How long will the current Category 2 prohibition be in effect in the Coastal Fire Centre?

A: The Coastal Fire Centre implemented a fire prohibition covering the open burning of yard debris, grass, etc. from May 27 to October 16, 2015, or until further notice. This prohibition covers the entire Coastal Fire Centre except for the Haida Gwaii Forest District and the “Fog Zone”.

Larger Category 3 open fires (used for clearing land and requiring a burn registration number) and campfires (smaller than 0.5 metres wide by 0.5 metres high) are not prohibited by the Coastal Fire Centre at this time.

Q: What is the Fog Zone?

A: The area known as the West Coast Fog Zone is a band of land two kilometres wide that runs from Owen Point near Port Renfrew to the district boundary of Port Hardy.

Since this area is subject to frequent and heavy fog, it tends to be wetter and generally has lower wildfire risks than surrounding areas.

Q: How do you make the decision to bring in a

Category 2 prohibition? Is it common for these types of prohibitions to be implemented at this time of year?

A: The ministry’s fire management officers review current weather conditions and weather forecasts and base their decision on the dryness of forest fuels and the likelihood of Category 2 fires causing wildfires.

This year is comparable to previous years. In 2014, a similar prohibition was implemented on June 3.

Q: What other devices or activities will be subject to restrictions?

A: The use of fireworks, firecrackers, burn barrels and burn cages of any size, as well as binary exploding targets (e.g. for rifle target practice), has been prohibited since May 27.

Q: What are binary exploding targets and why are they banned?

A: These are commercially made or homemade exploding targets that can send embers into nearby flammable material when they are ignited.

One significant fire on the coast this year was caused by exploding targets and the use of these devices is increasing. It’s suspected that two other wildfires elsewhere in the province were caused by exploding targets.

Q: Why are large, land-clearing burning piles allowed when smaller fires are prohibited?

A: The Wildfire Management Branch’s procedures require all land-clearing burning piles to be registered. This makes it relatively easy to revoke or reinstate registration numbers as weather conditions affect local fire danger ratings.

People who light large land-clearing or industrial burn piles are obligated to have additional fire suppression resources on site in case a fire spreads beyond the intended burn area.

The Coastal Fire Centre encourages the reduction of wildfire hazards through the burning of land-clearing debris. The flexibility of the fire registration process allows large piles to be safely burned when the weather conditions are favourable.

Q: What is the Coastal Fire Centre’s jurisdictional area?

A: The Coastal Fire Centre has jurisdiction over all public or private land that is not within a local government response area, and is not governed by an existing burning bylaw that administers the use of open fire.

The Coastal Fire Centre covers all of the area west of the height of land on the Coast Mountain Range from the U.S.-Canada border at Manning Park, including Tweedsmuir South Provincial Park in the north, the Sunshine Coast, the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and Haida Gwaii.

Reporting—We receive a lot of questions regarding when and how to report a fire. Many people don’t want to report an incident if it turns out to simply be a campfire or it turns out to be a Category 3 fire that has a burn registration number.

We have had the public phone the media or post an incident to Facebook (sometimes ours—BC Forest Fire Info) before reporting the fire.

We ask that if you see a fire or smoke that is of concern—please phone it in before tweeting, Facebooking or calling media, friends and family.

Timely Reporting is Important!

To Report a Wildfire call: 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on your cell phone

To Report a Wildfire:
1-800-663-5555
Or Cell
*5555

Please visit www.bewildfire.ca for up-to-date information about burning prohibitions.

To Report a Wildfire: 1-800-663-5555 Or Cell *5555

To Date in Coastal

Fires to Date

Person Caused 29

Lighting Caused 22

Total Number of Fires 51

Fire Danger Rating as of June 5



Current Prohibitions (within WMB jurisdictional area)

Category 2 Open Fire

First Nation's Emergency Services Society (FNESS)

The Wildfire Management Branch operates in a variety of jurisdictions, including treaty and non-treaty lands. Over 100 First Nations bands live within the boundaries of the Coastal Fire Centre and many of them have Wildfire Response Agreements with the Provincial government.

With the support of the First Nations' Emergency Services Society of B.C. (FNESS) — a non-profit registered charity — many aboriginal communities now have well-developed fire response programs and are helping to lead the way in forest fuel management in the province.

FNESS's mission is to help First Nations develop and sustain safer and healthier communities by providing prevention, preparedness and emergency response programming. FNESS makes use of programs such as the provincial Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative (SWPI), FireSmart and the Aboriginal Training for Employment Program (ATEP) to support this important work.

In keeping with aboriginal traditions and values, fuel management has become an important focus of

FNESS in recent years. For example, its staff help First Nations communities complete Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). A CWPP assesses wildfire risks in interface areas (where communities border on grasslands or forested areas) and recommends mitigation activities to improve community safety.

The CWPP program focuses on Crown land near (but not on) First Nations reserve lands. Programs such as FireSmart and other emergency support programs are used within the reserves.

The First Nations' Emergency Services Society works closely with the Wildfire Management Branch to provide the best possible service to its members. The society's work is both valued and supported by the Wildfire Management Branch.

For more information about FNESS and its programs, visit: <http://fness.bc.ca/>

At Coastal

A flurry of activity has ebbed as 75 Coastal staff return from deployments at the Bobtail Lake, Klua Lake and acting as support at the Prince George Fire Centre. We currently are waiting for the demobilization of one unit crew from Alberta and some finance personnel who are still supporting Prince George.

V10111—Buntzen Lake Fire—on Saturday May 31st the Coastal Fire Centre assisted the Sasamat Volunteer Fire Department with a fire on the Indian Arm (by the decommissioned Buntzen Lake Power Station). The fire was human-caused and necessitated bucketing by a medium helicopter and the work of an initial attack crew on the first day before being finalized by a squad from a unit crew on the second day. The fire was .2 of a hectare in size and produced a great deal of smoke, making it highly visible from Vancouver. When asked what the terrain was like a crewmember reported that it is like doing eight flights of the 'Grouse Grind'.

Going into a hot, dry weekend we would like to ask anyone camping to please make sure that your campfire is out! Completely out! Make it a habit. The Coastal Fire Centre puts out 500 campfires (on average) each year.

Weather

SYNOPSIS: (Fri./Sat). A large and strengthening upper ridge now building over Vancouver Island brings clear skies and warmer temperatures today. There is a weak front currently crossing Haida Gwaii where 3-1/2 mm of rain fell last night but the clouds ahead of this front now reaching the Mid-coast are dissipating and no further rainfall is expected. Humidity is falling off as well with low afternoon readings today around 25 to 35 percent. Saturday will see the same weather pattern except the ridge will be a bit stronger and this leads to a further rise in temperatures and fall off in humidity. With the dry air flooding in its unlikely that even coastal see significant overnight clouds.

OUTLOOK: (Sun./Tues). The ridge peaks by Sunday afternoon and this is also going to be the day with the warmest temperatures and lowest humidity. The Sunday surface map shows a very weak outflow trough pattern bringing the possibility of some poor overnight recovery and low afternoon relative humidity down into the teens. But by Monday afternoon the strong upper ridge is decaying as a fast moving shortwave trough crosses all southern zones. Skies likely remain sunny but temperatures fall off into the low to mid 20s. Winds should increase becoming gusty in the afternoon leading to increased spread rates. Tuesday sees the ridge rebuild slightly with continuing sunny warm weather.

6 TO 10 DAY: (Wednesday to Sunday next week). A series of weak upper troughs cross the coast next week and by the end of the week an upper low pressure centre forms over the BC southern interior.

