

## Important Contacts



**Burn Registration Line**  
1-888-797-1717

**Report a Wildfire**  
1-800-663-5555

or \*5555 from a cellular phone

### Fire Information by Phone

1-888-3FOREST (1-888-336-7378)

For recorded information on campfire, open fire and travel bans or restrictions, call toll-free.

### Fire Information Online

Visit the Wildfire Management website at [bcwildfire.ca](http://bcwildfire.ca)

- campfire bans or open fire restrictions
- area 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 and Range

## RESPECT THE USE OF FIRE

# INDUSTRIAL & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BURNING



## A Guide to Category 3 and Resource Management Open Fires



Ministry of  
Forests and Range

## 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 concurrently 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 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;

- the 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.env.gov.bc.ca/air/airregs.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/air/airregs.html) or call your local Ministry of Environment office.

*This guide is intended for information purposes only. It is not legal advice. The Wildfire Act and Regulation is online at: [bcwildfire.ca](http://bcwildfire.ca)*

## 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, 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 [bcwildfire.ca](http://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.

## Safe Burning is Your Responsibility

### 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 and Range 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 wildfire website at [bcwildfire.ca](http://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 and Range, 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.

## 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 an 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*.

### High risk activities

The *Wildfire Act* also sets out additional obligations for those engaged in high risk activities on or within 300 metres of forest land or grass land. These activities are listed in the regulation, and include the use of explosives, some silvicultural and harvesting practices, maintenance of rights-of-way, the use of spark-producing tools, rock drilling and tree processing. The requirements include need to check the Fire Danger Class for the location of the activity, to maintain a fire watcher, and to have the means to report a fire.

## Still not sure?

If you need help planning your burning activities, contact the Fire Centre nearest you:

### Coastal Fire Centre

250 951-4222

### Southeast Fire Centre

250 365-4040

### Cariboo Fire Centre

250 989-2600

### Prince George Fire Centre

250 565-6124

### Northwest Fire Centre

250 847-6600

### Burn Registration Line

1-888-797-1717

## Venting Index

- **BC Environment** (text)  
[www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/venting/venting.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/venting/venting.html)
- **Environment Canada** (graphic)  
[www.weatheroffice.pyr.ec.gc.ca/wxhealth/smoke/default\\_e.html](http://www.weatheroffice.pyr.ec.gc.ca/wxhealth/smoke/default_e.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.

## Where the Act applies

The *Wildfire Act* applies on both public 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. These agencies will provide further information.

RESPECT THE USE OF FIRE