



CAMPFIRE REGULATIONS 2010 Q&A

COASTAL FIRE CENTRE

Q: What is the difference between the old Category 1 open fires and the new Campfire open fires definition?

A: The old definition of Category 1 open fires was for fires up to 1 meter by 1 meter in size and smaller and included backyard leaf or debris burning as well.

The new regulation defines "Campfire" open fires, which are a half a meter by a half a meter in size or smaller, used specifically for recreation or First Nations ceremonial purposes.

All burning of backyard leaf or debris type fires are now "Category 2" open fires.

Q: What are the requirements for Campfires?

A: The campfire must only be allowed to burn when it is safe to do so, and likely to continue to be safe. Campfires should not be lit in windy conditions, or if high wind is expected.

Campfires must be no larger than half a meter by half a meter in size (.5m x.5m or smaller) and used for recreational or First Nations Ceremonial purposes.

There must be a fuel break or an area free of combustible material around the fire, and the campfire must have a person in constant attendance to maintain the fuel break and to monitor for escapes. The attending person must have either a fire fighting tool or 8 (eight) litres of water in one or more containers at the fire site.

And lastly, the campfire must be extinguished when the person leaves the area.

Q: What is a fuel break?

A: A fuel break is defined as a "barrier or a change in fuel type or condition, or a strip of land that has been modified or cleared to prevent fire spread".

For practical purposes for a campfire, this means scraping the area around the fire down to mineral soil and removing any flammable debris – twigs, leaves and needles – from the campfire area. We recommended the fuel break be at least one-metre wide.

Q: What qualifies for a "fire fighting tool"?

A: Any tool that the person could use to build the fuel break would be considered a "fire fighting tool". Commonly used garden tools such as shovels and rakes have this ability.

Q: Why are "one or more containers of water" specified?

A: It is necessary for the water to be in containers so it can be used quickly. For example, water in a stand pipe is not sufficient. It must be readily available in a container, to ensure it can be used quickly in the event of a fire escape.

Q: What is the purpose of the change in campfire regulations?

A: This regulation change has been put in place to help prevent human-caused wildfires.

The changes ensure campfires are small enough to easily extinguish, and provide additional safety measures to reduce the risk of escapes.

Also, the new definition provides clarity and improves communication around campfire requirements, and is consistent with the size of campfire allowed within BC Parks.

Q: Do the new regulations apply to BC Parks? Private campgrounds? Private property?

A: Yes, the regulations apply to provincial and private campsites and private land, as long as the location is not within a regional districts or municipalities that have their own local burning bylaws requirements.

Some of the new campfire regulations are already in place for provincial parks under the Parks Act. The changes make the rules consistent.

Q: When campfires are prohibited, are propane campfires or cooking stoves permitted? Tiki Torches? Liquid fuelled camp stoves?

A: It is possible that during a prohibition of campfires that we may have a need to restrict these type of flame or spark producing devices that could start a wildfire due to severely dry conditions. Campfires are usually restricted if the fire danger rating enters into High for a period of time, and we may consider further restrictions if the fire danger rating enters into Extreme.

Usually, campfire stoves using liquid or gaseous fuels or briquettes are permitted, unless specifically mentioned in the prohibition. Portable propane campfires that are CSA approved and with small flame length (maximum 15 centimetres) will usually be permitted as well.

Tiki Torches and fireworks are often prohibited when a campfire prohibition is in place, due to the danger of them tipping over or the lack of control of where sparks land.

Please go to www.bcwildfire.ca to ensure portable campfires and other devices are permitted during a campfire prohibition before using them.

Q: What is a Category 2 Open Fire? How does this change affect them?

A: A Category 2 Open Fire is an open fire that burns one or two piles of material up to 2 meters tall by 3 meters in wide used to burn backyard leaf or debris or stubble or grass burning up to 0.2 hectares in size. Campfires are no longer in this category.

Q: What are the penalties for breaking the new regulations?

A: Failure to follow the new rules could result in a \$345 fine. An additional \$345 fine would be levied for campfires lit during a ban.

Further, anyone who causes damage to Crown forest or grass land through arson or recklessness can be fined up to \$1 million or spend up to three years in prison.

Q: What sort of Wildfire Act infractions can you receive a violation ticket for?

A: Common infractions in which violation tickets can be issued are:

- Failure to report a fire - \$115
- Drop, release, or mishandling a burning substance - \$173
- Failure to extinguish a burning substance - \$173
- Lighting, fueling or using fire against restrictions - \$345
- Failure to comply with a fire restriction - \$345
- Failure to have eight litres of water or a firefighting handtool - \$345