
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

SMALLER CAMPFIRES COME INTO EFFECT CANADA DAY

VANCOUVER – New regulations that shrink the size of legal campfires will come into effect July 1 to reduce the risk of human-caused wildfires, Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell announced today.

“As we head into peak camping season, I want to remind people that more than 850 fires resulted from careless human behaviour in 2009. That number must come down,” said Bell. “We want people to enjoy the great outdoors, but not at the cost of public safety.”

Under the new regulations, campfires cannot be larger 0.5 metres in height and 0.5 metres in diameter, or approximately a foot-and-a-half by a foot-and-a-half. Previously, campfires were permitted to a maximum size of one-metre by one-metre.

The new rules also require campers to build a fireguard around their fires by scraping down to the dirt and clearing away potentially flammable debris, such as twigs, leaves and needles. A shovel or at least eight litres of water must be stored nearby to extinguish the fire.

Provincial staff will begin educating campers about the new regulations during the Canada Day long weekend, giving people an opportunity to learn about the changes. As summer progresses, failure to comply with the new rules will result in a \$345 fine. An additional \$345 fine will be levied for campfires lit during a ban.

“Make no mistake. If we catch people being careless and causing wildfires this summer, we will aggressively pursue penalties for those responsible,” said Bell. “The message we want to deliver is that we take wildfires seriously – and so should you.”

An advertising campaign has been launched to reinforce the province’s zero tolerance for people who start wildfires. A new website, www.firesafebc.ca, is also available that encapsulates all provincial information related to wildfire activity, campfire bans, health advisories and evacuation orders.

Facebook and Twitter users can follow the latest wildfire information at BCForestFireInfo (www.facebook.com) and BCGovFireInfo (www.twitter.com).

Since April 1, fire crews have responded to 310 fires across the province, of which 260 were human-caused. Anyone who causes a wildfire through arson or recklessness can be fined up to \$1 million or spend three years on prison.

To report a wildfire or unattended campfire, call *5555 on your cellphone, or toll-free to 1 800 663-5555.

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More information on wildfires in British Columbia is available on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo> and on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo>.

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.