



# Coastal Fire Centre

hot topics in *Wildfire on the Coast*

2018 ISSUE 8

# Wildfire news

AUGUST 17, 2018

## In this Issue:

Alternatives to campfires

Where did you park your vehicle?

Firefighter camping hacks

How to properly dispose of briquettes

Pallet fires

Know before you go

## How can I check which prohibitions are currently in place?

All open burns (including campfires, Category 2 open fires and Category 3 open fires) are currently prohibited throughout the Coastal Fire Centre’s jurisdiction. The exception is an area on the outer coast of Vancouver Island known as the “fog zone”, where only campfires are still allowed. A map of the fog zone can be found online at: <http://ow.ly/bCJc30calul>

The following activities are also prohibited throughout the Coastal Fire Centre’s jurisdiction, with the exception of the fog zone:

- the use of stoves and other portable campfire apparatuses that are not CSA-approved or ULC-approved
- the use of tiki torches, fireworks, firecrackers, sky lanterns, chimineas, burning barrels or burning cages of any size or description
- the use of binary exploding targets (e.g. for rifle target practice)

These prohibitions apply to all public and private land, unless specified otherwise - for example, in a local government bylaw. Please check with local government authorities for any other restrictions before lighting any fire.

To learn more about BC Wildfire Service open burning prohibitions that are currently in effect, visit [www.gov.bc.ca/wildfirebans](http://www.gov.bc.ca/wildfirebans)

If you prefer to not use the Internet or don’t have access to it, the BC Wildfire Service’s Fire Information Line (1 888 336-7378) provides pre-recorded information about current prohibitions and other wildfire-related topics.

If you cannot find what you are looking for online or through the Fire Information Line, Coastal Fire Centre staff are available to answer your questions. Coastal Fire Centre Information Officers can be reached at 250 951-4209 or at [BCWS.COFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca](mailto:BCWS.COFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca)

**To report a wildfire or open burning violation, call**  
**1 800-663-5555**  
**toll-free, or \*5555**  
**on a cellphone.**

See page 5 for the Coastal Fire Centre’s weather forecast

### Alternatives to campfires

During a campfire ban, only CSA-approved or ULC-approved portable campfire apparatuses may be used, so long as their flame height does not exceed 15 centimetres. These apparatuses are good alternatives to campfires because they re-create many aspects of the campfire experience, including an opportunity to cook over an open flame outdoors.

However, we enjoy campfires for much more than cooking purposes. When campfires are prohibited where you are camping, you could try other ways to provide some of the ambiance that a campfire does, such as:

- Place flickering lights (in the form of battery-powered LED candles) as a focal point or solar-powered garden lights at the periphery of your gathering to help recreate the flickering light of a campfire.
- Use a white noise machine or smartphone app to provide the “snap” and “crackle” background noise that a campfire produces.
- Play music at your campfire (at a volume that is considerate of your neighbours) or enjoy some live music if someone in your party is a musician.
- It’s hard to re-create the smell of a campfire, but cooking foods that you associate with campfires on a CSA-approved or ULC-approved stove is one way to bring in “the smell of camping.”
- Engage in the same kinds of storytelling, conversations or other activities that you and your family or friends typically do around a campfire.



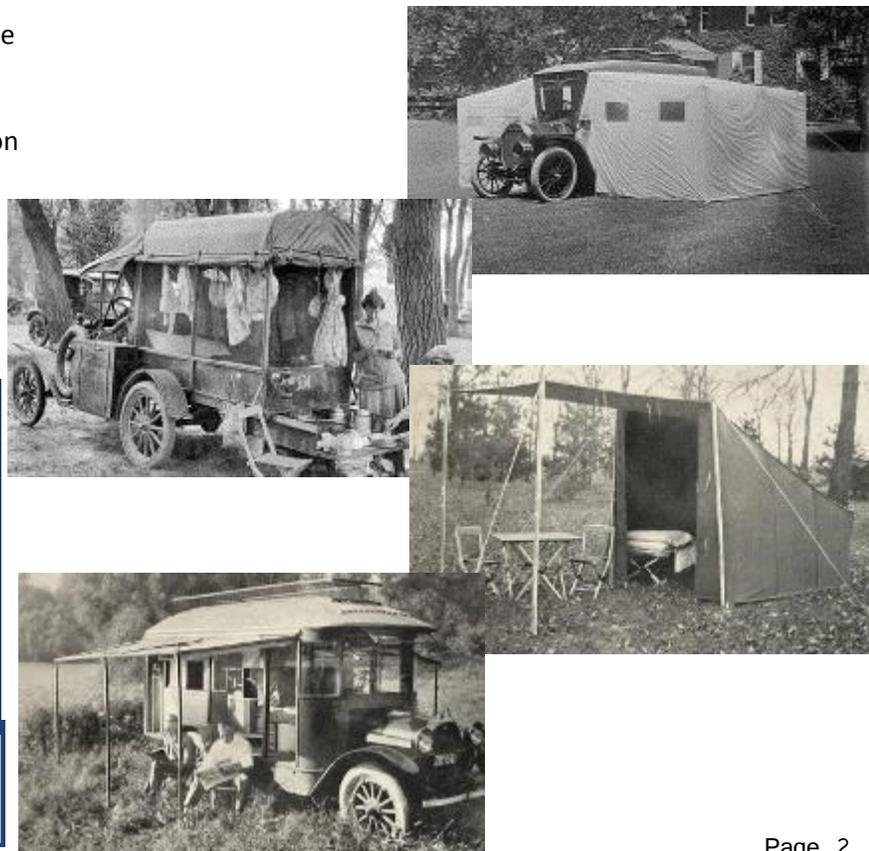
S'mores date back at least to 1927 when a recipe for the more formally designated “some mores” appeared in *Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts*.

### Where did you park your vehicle?

When parking your vehicle to head to your campsite or participate in a recreational activity, please remember the following:

- Leave your car in a designated parking area or parking lot, if one exists. This can help ensure that your vehicle will not be in anyone’s way and reduce the risk of a vehicle break-in.
- Never park your vehicle in tall, dry grass or other dry organic material. Heat from your exhaust system can spark a wildfire.
- Avoid parking anywhere that cuts off access to anything resembling a logging road or path where an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) could travel. If a wildfire starts in the area, BC Wildfire Service crews may need to use those access trails — even if they appear to be overgrown or in a remote area.

### Early Camping Accommodation



### Firefighter camping hacks

#### Sleeping Warm When it's Cold

**Go to Bed Warm**—do a few push ups or squats before going to bed. Increase your body temperature slightly and take that body heat with you into your sleeping bag.

**Wear a Toque**—you lose a significant amount of body heat through your head, so wear a hat to bed to help stay warm

**Socks**—keep a pair of socks just for bed to keep your feet warm. Do not wear the socks for anything else as you do not want to wear sweaty socks to bed.

**Shake out Your Sleeping Bag**—if a sleeping bag is packed or stored the insulation will pack down or compress so give your sleeping bag a good shake before settling in for the night.

#### Your Tent

**Keep Your Tent Dry**—Use two ground sheets. Put one under your tent and put the other inside under your insulated pad and sleeping bag.

**The Most Important Peg**—People often get lazy and choose not to put in their tent pegs but this is a big mistake. A change in a weather is usually preceded by wind. You don't want your tent carried away.

Do not forget to put the peg in below your tent doorway. This will help when you are trying to get into the tent with your arms full. With this peg in you can unzip your tent with one hand.

**Tuck it In-** Tuck the edges of your groundsheet under your tent so the water dripping off the fly won't pool and flow under your

#### Wildlife

**Do Not Send out an Invitation to the Wildlife**—In fire camps, one of the most stringent rules is no food in your tent. Bears, raccoons and other wildlife will come looking for it. There has even been a case when a bear entered a tent to eat toothpaste. Avoid perfumes and other scents as much as you can.



#### Lighting

**Light the Way.** In fire-camps, which are generally large with numerous single tents, a number of large 'Ranger' tents and several trailers including offices, kitchen and bathrooms the way is often lit by solar pathway lights. Logistics will often install them along the path to the bathrooms so

no one trips and gets hurt in the dark. They can also work to keep some critters out of the camp area.

#### Invest in a Good Flashlight and Bring Extra Batteries.

A lot of people rely on their smart phones for everything. Do not rely on your phone as a flashlight. It uses too much power and may drain your battery should you need to call for assistance. Instead invest in a good flashlight or headlamp that has a powerful light. It can be used as a weapon should the need arise, and to signal for help.



#### Staying Cool in Hot Weather

- Use a broad-brimmed hat to keep the sun off your face and sunglasses to protect your eyes. Firefighters wear hardhats and rotate out of the sun as they do their work when they can.
- Hydrate often and avoid becoming dehydrated
- Soak a bandanna in cold water and drape it around your neck or tie it around your forehead
- Pack a cotton sheet along with your sleeping bag
- Ensure you open up all doors/windows on tent to maximise cross breezes. Nylon tents heat up more quickly than canvas tents, though nylon allows the air to escape more easily too.
- Don't use a fly on your tent if you are confident it's not going to rain. This allows the air to circulate better.



### How to properly dispose of briquettes

Briquettes are a popular fuel source for outdoor stoves, barbecues and portable campfire apparatuses. They're made from various compressed materials, such as coal dust, charcoal and sawdust.

Hot briquettes are capable of starting wildfires, particularly if they're dumped at the periphery of a campsite or beyond, and then forgotten. They can ignite fine fuels on the ground if they come in contact with them and they can also spark a subsurface fire if they ignite small roots and other organic material in the top layer of the soil.

It's crucial to dispose of briquettes properly. When you're finished using them, leave them to cool completely in the barbecue (or other apparatus) before disposing of them. This can take up to 48 hours.

If you want to cool the briquettes faster, you can place them individually or in small groups into water. (Avoid dumping all of the hot briquettes in water at the same time, since that can produce a lot of steam and cause burns.)

If you need to use the apparatus again before the briquettes are completely cool, you don't want to reuse the briquettes and you don't have water to submerge them in, put the briquettes in a non-flammable container. Generally speaking, once these used briquettes are cool and dry, they can be re-used if some fresh briquettes are mixed in with them.

Dispose of the briquettes only when they are completely cool. Some municipalities have programs that accept used briquettes as part of their hazardous waste programs (for briquettes with additives) or as part of recycling or composting programs (for additive-free briquettes). If you are using additive-free briquettes, you can add them to compost piles. Used, additive-free briquettes can also be beneficial when

added directly to a garden without composting, depending on the type of soil you have and what plants you are growing.

Otherwise, dispose of your cooled briquettes in a trash can. Many municipalities recommend wrapping cooled briquettes in aluminum foil or placing them in a non-reactive container before putting them in the garbage.

### Pallet fires

It's important to remember that pallet fires are not campfires. A full-sized pallet that's on fire is far too large to be considered a campfire.

In addition, numerous nails are left behind after a pallet is burned. They can put other recreationalists, dogs, horses or wildlife at risk of injury.

Anyone who starts a pallet fire may be committing a number of infractions, including littering and having too large a fire (if campfires are the only kind of open burning currently allowed in your area).

### Know before you go

Whether you're recreating within the Coastal Fire Centre or in other parts of the province, keep in mind that all six fire centres in B.C. are currently experiencing heightened levels of wildfire activity and that are be impacts to some recreation sites and road ways.

**BC Parks affected by wildfire:** <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/wildfire/>

**Rec Sites and Trails closures:** <http://www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca/closures.aspx>

**Drive BC:** <http://www.drivebc.ca/>

## Fires to Date

Total 253

Lightning 124

Person 115

## Number of fires since last Newsletter (August 3)

Total 106

Lightning 71

Person 25

## Fire Danger Rating today



Current Prohibitions (within BCWS jurisdictional area)

All open burning, including campfires, is prohibited throughout the Coastal Fire Centre's jurisdiction, with the exception of the 'fog zone.' Campfires are permitted in the 'fog zone.' A map of the 'fog zone' can be found online: <http://ow.ly/bC1c30calu>.

For more information, visit [gov.bc.ca/wildfirebans](http://gov.bc.ca/wildfirebans)

# Wildfire news

## Coastal Fire Centre

### About Coastal—August 17

With over 100 new wildfires in the last two weeks, the Coastal Fire Centre has been busy prioritizing and responding to wildfires. There are currently 59 wildfires burning on northern Vancouver Island, two of which are considered Fires of Note. The Gold Valley Main wildfire is burning near the Village of Zeballos and an evacuation alert has been issued by local government. For more information on this alert, visit [www.zeballos.com](http://www.zeballos.com)

The Pinder Creek wildfire is burning in the vicinity of the Zeballos Forest Service Road, which is the only access road to the Village of Zeballos.

There is one other Fire of Note in the Coastal Fire Centre, located north of Agassiz. The Mt. Hicks wildfire is considered a Fire of Note because it has impacted Highway 7 in

the form of intermittent closures.

More information about current Fires of Note can be found at [gov.bc.ca/wildfiresofnote](http://gov.bc.ca/wildfiresofnote)

While many of the recent wildfires have been caused by lightning, there have been a significant number of human-caused wildfires in the last two weeks. Human-caused wildfires are completely preventable and divert resources away from lightning-caused wildfires.

All six regional fire centres in B.C. are experiencing high levels of fire activity and on August 15, a provincial state of emergency was declared. The BC Wildfire Service is urging the public to use caution with any activity that could start a wildfire and to report wildfires, open burning violations and abandoned campfires to 1 800 663-5555 or \*5555 on a cell phone.

### Weather-issued at 11:00 am August 17

**SYNOPSIS:** As the persistent upper ridge builds stronger and stronger over the next few days, a deepening thermal trough pattern will emerge along the coast. This pattern threatens to bring northeasterly outflow winds at times as strong as 25 to 30 km/h and lowering relative humidity readings. In the meantime, along the outer coasts a more extensive marine stratus-fog layer has moved in overnight and will be slow to clear away. But the areas that are in the clear are already heating quickly. Today will be slightly warmer than yesterday with a few per cent lower humidity and relatively light winds—some typical gusty afternoon inflows. A weak thermal trough forms along the coast tonight with a gentle east or northeast wind which allows patchy areas of only moderate recovery. The ridge is stronger Saturday with warmer afternoon temperatures and lower humidity readings. Winds switch from weak outflow in the morning to light afternoon inflow.

**OUTLOOK:** (Sunday-Tuesday) By Sunday morning the inverted thermal pattern intensifies with east to northeast winds blowing in the 15 to 20 km/h range. During the day the trough weakens, the pressure gradient slackens, and afternoon winds return to light and variable. Afternoon highs reach the low 30s with relative humidity dropping in spots into the teens. On Monday, the thermal trough amplifies bringing morning outflows to 25 to 30 km/h and broad areas of poor humidity recovery. Although the winds ease Monday afternoon they continue from the east or northeast and afternoon humidity readings likely fall to the mid or low teens. Conditions moderate somewhat by Tuesday as the upper high transits eastward. A new upper low centre may by then sit south of BC with some potential for a southerly subtropical flow.