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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

June 24, 2010

Ministry of Forests and Range

### **CAMPFIRE REGULATION CHANGES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2010**

**Q: What are the amendments to the Wildfire Act regulations?**

A: Under the new regulations, campfires cannot be larger than 0.5 metres by 0.5 metres – roughly a foot-and-a-half by a foot-and-a-half. The previous maximum was one-metre by one-metre.

People must maintain a fireguard, which means scraping down the dirt and removing flammable debris – twigs, leaves and needles – from the campfire area. We recommended the guard be at least one-metre in diameter.

You must also have a hand tool, such as shovel, or at least eight litres of water nearby to properly extinguish a fire.

Essentially we've taken best practices for campfire management and made them requirements under the law.

**Q: What is the purpose of the amendments?**

A: 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 fire escaping.

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

A: Yes, the regulations apply to both provincial and private campsites.

**Q: Do these new regulations apply to private campgrounds?**

A: Most managed campgrounds already meet the new regulations, or are set-up to easily do so. Some fireplaces many need to be relocated or require firebreaks.

Our compliance and enforcement staff will also be out in the coming weeks educating people about the new rules and how to meet them.

**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.

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: Do the new regulations apply to propane stoves, charcoal-burning Hibachis or tiki torches/candles?**

A: Not explicitly, no. However we ask that people use common sense and be aware that these items may be specifically prohibited under certain conditions.

In general, never leave these devices unattended, and if you have tiki torches, ensure the flame is no bigger than 15 centimetres tall and that you have the means to extinguish them fully.

**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

**Q: How many fires typically result from escaped or abandoned campfires?**

A: We average 134 fire starts a year due to campfires, representing annual suppression costs of more than \$2.2 million.

**Q: Will you be increasing compliance and enforcement during campfire bans again this year?**

A: Compliance and Enforcement Officers -- including RCMP and Conservation Officers -- will be out in full force during burn restriction periods.

In 2009, more than 2,400 patrols were conducted across the province.

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