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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release  
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Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource  
Operations  
BC Wildfire Service

### **Public urged to use caution with outdoor burning**

PRINCE GEORGE – Given current and predicted weather conditions, the BC Wildfire Service is encouraging members of the public and industry personnel to exercise caution when doing any outdoor burning.

In April 2016, the BC Wildfire Service responded to 79 fires that ended up burning over 14,000 hectares. Given the potential for similar weather conditions this spring, the Prince George Fire Centre is preparing for an early start to the fire season.

The Peace Region and the area around Vanderhoof in the south are experiencing below-normal snowpack levels and some areas of the Prince George Fire Centre are already snow-free, so the BC Wildfire Service is reminding the public to be extra cautious with any open burning. As the snow melts, it won't take long for the grass to dry out and become flammable, especially in windy conditions.

The BC Wildfire Service strongly recommends that anyone who conducted a Category 2 or Category 3 open burn within the last 12 months should check the burn site to ensure that the fire was completely extinguished.

Currently, there are no fire prohibitions in place for the Prince George Fire Centre. However, people wishing to light an open fire must watch for changing weather conditions and follow all burning regulations to reduce the number of preventable wildfires. They should also take the following precautions:

- Ensure that enough resources are on hand to control the fire and prevent it from escaping.
- Do not burn during windy conditions. Weather conditions can change quickly and the wind may carry embers to other combustible material and start new fires. (Wind was a key factor that affected wildfire activity in the spring of 2016.)
- Create an appropriately sized fireguard around the planned fire site by clearing away twigs, grass, leaves and other combustible material right down to the mineral soil.
- Consider conducting smaller burns around the perimeter of the main fire site before lighting the main fire. This will create a fuel break and help prevent the fire from spreading beyond its intended size.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Make sure that your fire is completely extinguished and the ashes are cold to the touch before you leave the area for any length of time.

Before conducting any burn, check with the local fire department, municipality and regional

district to find out if any open burning restrictions or bylaws are in effect.

Anyone planning to do any large-scale industrial burning or conduct a grass burn larger than 0.2 hectares (Category 3 fires) must obtain a burn registration number ahead of time (at no charge) by calling 1 888 797-1717. Burn registration numbers are entered in the Open Fire Tracking System, which allows the BC Wildfire Service to track open burning activity throughout B.C.: <http://ow.ly/Wdip306frpN>

Anyone conducting an open burn must adhere to specific requirements in the Wildfire Act and must comply with air quality control legislation. They must also always check venting conditions before lighting any fire. If the venting conditions for your area are rated “poor” or “fair”, Category 2 or Category 3 open burning is restricted. The venting index can be obtained by calling 1 888 281-2992 or online at: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/venting/venting.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/venting/venting.html)

If an open burn escapes and causes a wildfire, the person responsible may be held accountable for damages and fire suppression costs. It is the responsibility of that individual to ensure that burning is done in a safe manner and in accordance with regulations and any current burning restrictions.

The Prince George Fire Centre extends from the Yukon and Northwest Territories in the north to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, the Cottonwood River and Robson Valley in the south, and from the Alberta border in the east to the Skeena Mountains in the west.

#### **Learn More:**

A poster explaining the different categories of open burning is available online: <http://ow.ly/zny309kV5>

For more information about safe open burning practices, check the BC Wildfire Service website: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/fire-bans-and-restrictions>

You can follow the latest wildfire news on:

- Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo>
- Facebook at: <http://facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo>

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

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