

# BYLAW BASICS

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Fact Sheet, updt: Jan 18, 2021

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bulkley valley - lakes district  
airshed management society

All communities in the Bulkley Valley – Lakes District are concerned about local air quality and public health. Some of these communities have adopted bylaws to enhance air quality as follows. The last update for this sheet was Spring 2020.

- The Town of Smithers Open Burning Bylaw No. 115
- The Town of Smithers Wood Burning Appliance Smoke Control Bylaw No. 1520
- The Village of Burns Lake Open Air Burning Bylaw # 871<sup>1</sup>, 915 (open air burning)
- The District of Houston Open Burning and Air Quality Amendment Bylaw No. 1006 (phasing out non certified wood burning appliances)
- The District of Houston Open Burning and Air Quality Bylaw No. 947 (no burning during an advisory)

The main features of all bylaws relating to wood burning appliances and open burning are stated below. <sup>2</sup>

## Wood burning Appliances

### 1. Installations

All wood burning appliances installed in Smithers, Houston and Burns Lake must meet environmental standards for particulate emissions. This applies to both new and used appliances. Check the label or ask the retailer. This includes:

- wood furnaces,
- outdoor wood boilers,
- woodstoves,
- pellet stoves,
- fireplace inserts,
- fireplaces.

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<sup>1</sup> contact us at [coordinator@cleanairplan.ca](mailto:coordinator@cleanairplan.ca)

<sup>2</sup> last update April 29, 2019

If you are considering installing a wood burning appliance in or about any premises (this includes your home, garage, shed, sauna etc.) it must meet the particulate emission requirements of the CSA or US EPA standards. You must also apply for a [building permit](#) for any installation of a wood burning appliance. Please contact your local municipal office for more information.

If you are planning to sell a home in these communities, the wood stove must be EPA certified or compliant and cannot remain installed at the time of sale if it is not.

## **Town of Smithers**

### **General Rules**

- a. no person shall install a wood burning appliance in and around a residence unless the appliance is certified to the current standard.
- b. no person shall install an outdoor solid fuel combustion appliance
- c. for all new construction the building shall contain an alternate heating appliance in the vent wood burning is prohibited
- d. all installations and modifications are subject to building code Bylaw 1435

### **Restrictions**

- a. no person shall use a wood burning appliance during an air quality advisory, unless there is no other heating appliance available. Advisories are posted at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-quality/air-advisories>
- b. no person shall use their wood burning appliance in a manner that will disperse air contaminants and possibly affect health. If you follow manufacturer guidelines for operating your appliance, then smoke emissions should be minimal.
- c. no person shall use prohibited fuel or materials in their wood burning appliance. Only seasoned wood or manufactured pellets in the case of pellet stoves are to be used as fuel. Unseasoned wood, garbage, and other noxious materials are prohibited.

### **Removal**

- a. removal of Non certified wood burning appliances concludes with their being rendered permanently inoperable
- b. prior to completion of sale or transfer of real property, after 2007, all non certified wood burning appliances shall be removed, replaced or rendered permanently inoperable

### **Violations**

- orders and inspections, fire department cost recovery and fines no more than \$10 000.00

### **Recreational Fires**

If you plan to have a recreational fire in your backyard it must be done in a permanent outdoor fireplace, barbecue or fire pit. In addition, the fire must be for cooking purposes only and only seasoned firewood is permitted for fuel.

Burning of household garbage and other noxious materials is prohibited.

**During air quality advisories, recreational fires are not permitted.**

## **Open Burning**

Open Burning means the combustion in the open air of yard and garden waste, land clearing debris (see definition below), or any other material, including burning of any of these materials in a container.

Alternatives to open burning are encouraged in all communities and drop-off composting sites are in place. Backyard composting tips are readily available from gardeners, municipal halls, and several websites including [www.compost.org](http://www.compost.org) and [www.rcbc.bc.ca](http://www.rcbc.bc.ca).

Open Burning is not permitted in Smithers for domestic and yard waste.

All communities require burning permits for land clearing debris and compliance with best practices and the Ministry of Environment's Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR).

Before you burn today check...

1. venting: <https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6d288bc667b24528a5c1e3b4c0373d07>
2. advisories: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-quality/air-advisories>

For more on the OBSCR: (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-pollution/smoke-burning/regulations/openburningregulation>)

*Land Clearing Debris:* any organic material cleared from land in the process preparing the land for development, agriculture, silviculture, highway construction or utility installation or any other use.

**Do not open burn when an air quality advisory has been issued.**

## **For More Information**

On the **health effects of air quality**, please contact Northern Health at 565- 2150 or check the Northern Health website at [www.northernhealth.ca](http://www.northernhealth.ca). The BC Lung Association is also a good source of information at 1.800.665.LUNG (5864) or [www.bc.lung.ca](http://www.bc.lung.ca).

On hourly air quality readings and related health messages check out: the Air Quality Health Index: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/data/aqhi-table.html>

On particulate matter levels and Air Quality Advisories, please call the 24 hour Ministry of Environment's **Ventilation and Air Quality Information line** at 1-888-281-2992. Press '6' for Skeena Region. Or subscribe to free notification at [aqadvisories.ca](http://aqadvisories.ca). Please note: you must confirm within 24hrs of registration or you will not get notifications.

On all things air, inventories, regulation, appliance recycling, industry siting, best practices and/or the **Community Action Plan for Clean Air** please contact the BVL D Airshed Management Society at [www.cleanairplan.ca](http://www.cleanairplan.ca) or [coordinator@clanairplan.ca](mailto:coordinator@clanairplan.ca)

On **air quality advisories and regulations**, contact the Ministry of Environment - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-quality/air-advisories> or Phone (Enquiry BC): 1 800 663 7867.

For **enforcement issues related to open burning or indoor appliances and bylaws**, please contact your local government office or fire department as follows:

- Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP) or #7277 on the TELUS Mobility Network, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/natural-resource-law-enforcement/conservation-officer-service/cos-rapp>
- TheTown of Smithers 847-1600, <http://www.smithers.ca/residents/public-safety/open-burning>
- TheVillage of BurnsLake 692-7587, <http://office.burnslake.ca/mayor-council/bylaws-and-policies/>
- TheDistrict of Houston 845-2238, <https://houston.civicweb.net/>