



Local Air Quality Bylaw Basics

June 2006

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 Town of Smithers Open Burning Bylaw No. 1155, 1996
- The Village of Burns Lake Fire Department and Regulation Bylaw 570, 1987
- The District of Houston Open Burning and Air Quality Bylaw No. 947, 2006
- The Town of Smithers Wood Burning Appliance Smoke Control Bylaw No. 1520, 2006

The main features of all bylaws relating to wood burning appliances and open burning are stated below.

Wood burning Appliances

1. Installations

All wood burning appliances installed in Smithers and Houston 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.

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.**

2. Restrictions

In 2005, there were 19 Air Quality Advisories issued in the Bulkley Valley –Lakes District. Do not burn when an Air Quality Advisory has been issued if you have another source of heat. Pellet stoves are exempt from this restriction.

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.

If you follow manufacturer guidelines for operating your appliance, then smoke emissions should be minimal. If you have a concern with someone burning in your neighbourhood please contact your municipal office.

3. Non-certified wood burning appliance removal

In the BVL Community Action Plan for Clean Air adopted June 2004, a five year target was set for removing non-emission certified appliances. As a result of this, the District of Houston became the first community in Canada to set a mandatory removal date of December

31, 2010 and Smithers has also set this as their target. To help residents comply with this target, a Woodstove Exchange program will be established to provide cash rebates and assistance in selecting an energy efficient and clean burning replacement heating system.

In addition, after January 1, 2007, all non-emission certified appliances must be replaced or removed prior to the transfer or sale of a property within the Town of Smithers. This requirement comes into effect in Houston in 2010.

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.

Alternative 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 and 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 the Ministry of Environment's Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation.

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 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.

On the **Community Action Plan for Clean Air** please contact the BVL D Airshed Management Society at (250)847-1672 or visit our website at www.cleanairplan.ca.

On **air quality and regulations**, contact the Ministry of Environment Skeena Region at 847-7260 or Phone (Enquiry BC): 1 800 663 7867. visit wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/skeair/.

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

- The Town of Smithers 847-1600
- The Village of Burns Lake 692-7587
- The District of Houston 845-2238

For **health effects of air quality**, please contact Northern Health at 565- 2150 or check the Northern Health website at 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.