

## Burning in a High Smoke Sensitivity Zone

August 2021

This Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR) factsheet is for burning of vegetative debris in a **High Smoke Sensitivity Zone**. If you are unsure of your Smoke Sensitivity Zone (SSZ), check your location using the directions and links provided on the Ministry's [OBSCR Smoke Sensitivity Zone Maps](#) webpage.

For more information on the different types of burning covered by the OBSCR, visit the [Open Burning Smoke Control website](#). Please also review the **Information for all burners** factsheet for information on Smoke Sensitivity Zones, prohibited materials and the ventilation index.

### Step 1 Plan before you burn

- Burn as little vegetative debris as possible. This is a requirement of the regulation and alternative disposal methods such as chipping, mulching or taking to a green waste recycling facility must be investigated before burning.
- **Follow local burning bylaws, fire bans and restrictions.** Check with your local Fire Department and the [BC Wildfire Service](#) for more information.
- Determine if you need a **burn registration number** from the [BC Wildfire Service](#). If your burn meets the criteria for a Category 3 burn, you must keep a written **record** with information about the burn.
- You cannot burn on more than 6 days in a month, for a maximum of 12 days in a year, on a single property.

### Step 2 Determine a location on your property to build piles

- You can only burn vegetative debris collected within 5 km of your burn site.
- You must meet setbacks. A setback is the measured distance between your burn pile and the nearest resident, business, school, hospital or community care facility.



Your piles must be set back at least **500 m from residences or businesses.**



Your piles must be set back at least **1000 m from schools, hospitals and community care facilities.**

### Step 3 Build your piles to minimize smoke

- Make sure that there are no prohibited materials in your burn pile. **You can not burn prohibited materials.** See the **Information for all burners** factsheet for a full list of prohibited materials.

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- Build piles to allow air flow and good combustion. Make the piles taller than they are wide with different sized pieces included. Smaller pieces burn faster, avoid burning stumps if possible.
- Minimize the amount of soil. Soil slows down the fire. Get your fire burning hot and with good airflow. Hot fires produce less smoke.
- Only include seasoned vegetative debris. Seasoned debris burns more efficiently and produces less smoke.
  - **Seasoned vegetative debris:**
    - has been dried so that moisture content is less than 30%;
    - been put in piles for at least four months; or
    - has originated from standing dead timber.

### Step 4 On the day of your burn

- **Check the ventilation index.** Please find your location on our [interactive ventilation index and Smoke Sensitivity Zone map](#).
  - The map provides information about which SSZ you are in as well as the ventilation index for the burn day. The map also provides information on how long your burn can last, for example, one day or multi-day depending on your location and ventilation conditions. For additional information on the ventilation index go to the [Information for all burners](#) factsheet.

#### One day burn

- The ventilation index for your location must be **“GOOD”** on the day of your burn.
- You must complete the burn in less than 1 day.
  - **Start time** is at least one hour after sunrise.
  - **End time** is 4:00 pm or two hours before sunset, whichever is later. This means that on days where the sun sets earlier than 6 pm, you may burn up to 4 pm and on days that the sun sets after 6 pm you can burn up to 2 hours before the sun sets. For example, if the sun sets at 6:30 you can burn until 4:30. If the sun sets at 4:45 you can burn up to 4 pm.



#### If you want to burn for a second day

- The ventilation index for your location must be **“GOOD”** or **“FAIR”** for the **second** day. This can be determined when you click your location on the [interactive map](#), a pop up box appears and in it, “Tomorrow’s Index” is listed.
- You must complete the burn in 2 days.

### Ventilation Index

To find the current forecast for your location check on the [B.C. Ventilation Index Forecast](#) website, use the interactive map hyperlinks provided on the website, or call the toll free number.



**Ventilation Index:**  
1-888-281-2992



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

### More Information

For additional information see the Ministry's [Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation](#) webpage or send your inquiry to: [OBSCR@gov.bc.ca](mailto:OBSCR@gov.bc.ca)

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- **Start time** is at least one hour after sunrise.
- **End time** is 4:00 pm on the second day.
- **Adding vegetative debris** and **igniting new piles** can only occur on the first day and only until 4 hours before sunset. You can not add vegetative debris overnight.
  - On the second day, you can not ignite new piles and can not add vegetative debris to existing piles.

### Step 5 Watch your smoke

Be aware of the smoke produced and where it is going.

- If the smoke from your burn could negatively impact people or cause a navigation hazard by reducing visibility at nearby highways or airports, do not start your burn.
- If your burn is in progress and is negatively impacting people or causing a navigation hazard by reducing visibility at nearby airports or highways, no more vegetative debris can be ignited or added to the burn until the conditions have improved.

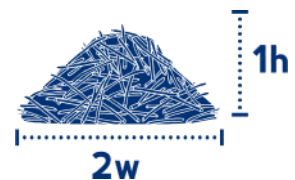
### Special situations

#### Reduced setbacks

If you can't meet the setbacks, follow this additional set of restrictions to reduce your setback distance.

#### To use reduced setback distance you must:

- Build your piles at least half as tall as they are wide (taller is better).
- Only burn vegetative debris smaller than 50 cm in diameter.  
**Burning stumps is not allowed.**
- Provide notice at least 24 hours in advance to occupants and managers of residences, businesses, schools, hospitals and community care facilities within 500 m of the burn piles.
  - Notification options include phones calls, signs at the site, fliers distributed to residents, and print sources such as newspaper, community boards or social media.
- Keep a written **record** of when the vegetative debris was piled.
- Obtain a ventilation index for your location. The index must be "**GOOD**" on the day of your burn.



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- Complete your burn within **one day**.
  - **Start time** is at least one hour after sunrise.
  - **End time** is 4:00 pm or two hours before sunset on the same day the burn, whichever is later.

If all of these conditions are met, you may burn using the following set backs:



Reduced setbacks are at least **100 m** from all neighbouring residences or businesses.



Reduced setbacks are at least **500 m** from schools, hospitals and community care facilities.

During periods of poor air quality the Director may prohibit all burning. Please check [air quality advisories](#) before burning.

Persons preparing for or conducting an open burn should review and comply with the legal provisions set out in the [Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation](#). This Factsheet provides summary information only.

### More Information

For additional information see the Ministry's [Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation](#) webpage or send your inquiry to: [OBSCR@gov.bc.ca](mailto:OBSCR@gov.bc.ca)