

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Cowichan residents urged to 'clear the air' this autumn season

Duncan, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District is encouraging residents to embrace the Smoke Control Regulation Bylaw if they are burning natural debris on their property.

From October 15 to November 15, open burning is permitted in all nine electoral areas of the CVRD. Only untreated natural wood, prunings and branches can be burned in a single pile no larger than two metres square, and at least 10 metres from all property lines. All burning must occur between 7 a.m. and sunset of the same day, and is only allowed when the BC Southern Vancouver Island Venting Index is rated 'Good.'

"We want to remind residents that there are great alternatives to open burning," said Ian Morrison, Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. "And those few without options who are still planning to burn need to check the venting index prior to lighting up to ensure they aren't needlessly polluting the air we're breathing."

The BC Venting Index is scientific measure of atmospheric turbulence and winds. When the venting index is rated as 'poor' or 'fair,' it indicates stagnant atmospheric conditions and smoke from backyard burns and woodstoves does not disperse and remains close to the ground. This contributes to air that is rich in toxic chemicals like furans, arsenic, mercury, carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter.

CVRD recycling centres accept yard waste free of charge, and yard waste like leaves makes great compost. Residents are also encouraged to 'leave the leaves' on the ground this year as bees and butterflies are known to make homes in them over the winter.

The City of Duncan, Town of Ladysmith and Town of Lake Cowichan do not permit open burning at any time of year, and the Municipality of North Cowichan has its own burn restrictions. Residents who live in CVRD member municipalities are encouraged to contact their municipality for more information.

The CVRD has a wealth of material related to regional air quality on its website, including the daily Southern Island Venting Index and a real-time air quality map of the Cowichan region. To learn more visit www.cvrld.bc.ca/cleartheair. To report an illegal burn, contact CVRD bylaw enforcement at 250.746.2500.

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