



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of
Environment

MEDIA RELEASE

AIR QUALITY ADVISORY AND OPEN BURNING RESTRICTIONS ISSUED FOR WILLIAMS LAKE

November 19th, 2014 10:30 - Surrey. The Ministry of Environment has issued an Air Quality Advisory and open burning restrictions for Williams Lake because of high concentrations of fine particulates that are expected to persist until the weather changes.

Persons with chronic underlying medical conditions should postpone strenuous exercise until the advisory is lifted. Staying indoors and in air conditioned spaces helps to reduce fine particulate exposure. Exposure is particularly a concern for infants, the elderly and those who have diabetes, and lung or heart disease.

Open burning restrictions are now in effect for Williams Lake and surrounding areas for the next 2 days. No new fires may be initiated and no additional material may be added to existing fires. For more information on burning restrictions, see the section below entitled 'Mandatory Emission Reduction Actions.'

For more information on current air quality, see: www.bcairquality.ca.

Tips to reduce your personal health risk.

- Avoid roads with heavy vehicle traffic and areas with wood smoke.
- Continue to control medical conditions such as asthma, chronic respiratory disease and heart failure. If symptoms continue to be bothersome, seek medical attention.
- Maintaining good overall health is a good way to reduce health risks resulting from short-term exposure to air pollution.

Additional tips for those with chronic underlying medical conditions:

- Stay indoors, keep windows and doors closed and reduce indoor sources of pollution such as smoking, vacuuming and use of wood stoves.
- Run an air cleaner. Some room air cleaners, such as HEPA filters, can help reduce indoor particulate levels provided they are the right size for your home and filters are changed regularly.
- Take shelter in air-conditioned buildings which have large indoor volumes and limited entry of outdoor air.

Voluntary Emission Reduction Actions

- Avoid the use of wood stoves and fireplaces unless the sole source of residential heat.
- Where wood stoves or fireplaces are the sole source of residential heat, use only CSA/EPA emissions approved wood-burning appliances and well-cured wood, and ensure an adequate supply of combustion air.
- Follow local backyard burning bylaws.
- Avoid backyard burning where a bylaw does not exist.
- Reduce the use and idling of vehicles.

Mandatory Emission Reduction Actions:

- Pursuant to sections 2(i) and 4(2) of the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR), as pollution may occur from open burning:
- The Director has suspended the exemption in the OBSCR that allows for open burning of debris to occur in the area within a 25 kilometre radius of the Williams Lake City Hall without a permit or approval from the Ministry of Environment. For a period of 2 days, no new fires may be initiated.
- The Director requires that no additional material be added to existing fires.
- Contravention of the above provisions may be subject to a fine under the Regulation.



Robyn Roome

Director,
Environmental Management Act,
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Section.

Date Issued: November 19, 2014

Additional Information

- Sources of fine particulates contributing to this air quality episode include wood smoke (wood stoves and/or open burning) as well as emissions from industry and transportation sources such as automobiles, trucks and rail traffic.
- Real-time air quality information from Williams Lake and other B.C. communities can be found at: www.bcairquality.ca.
- This advisory will remain in effect until further notice.

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