

Debbie Schulz

From: Debbie Schulz
Sent: January 11, 2021 2:27 PM
To: Debbie Schulz
Subject: FW: re smoke

From: Deb Schramm
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 2:38 PM
To: Erick Thompson <ethompson@rdos.bc.ca>
Subject: re smoke

There is information regarding smoke. I have been in touch with the bylaw officer in Oliver. She says there is nothing she can do about wood stove smoke as they have no bylaws on nuisance smoke. I sent an email off to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change who has said they look after burning if the wood is over 3 cm or 1 1/4 inches in diameter, otherwise it is up to the Regional District to address the situation.

I was contacted by your board director when I sent an email on smoke here in the valley. I was told by that lady that this matter has come up before an agriculture is responsible. Looks like many are passing the buck and brush this under the rug. Just today this came up on Castanet... <https://www.castanet.net/news/BC/321189/The-burning-question-What-pollution-and-health-threats-are-lurking-in-wood-stoves#321189>

I will copy and paste my email from Minister George Haymen of the NDP government.

Maybe it is time for the RDOS to start moving on this matter and works on the growers and wood stove owners to stop burning and also find other sources of heat. Sweden has now done a study also showing that smoke is connected to causing heart issues, breathing/lung, cancers and Alzheimers... That last one is of importance to me as my husband has it.

Looking forward to the response from RDCO and if they will take up this matter again and get some new rules brought in.

Deb Schramm

Reference: 366555

December 21, 2020

Deb Schramm

Dear Deb Schramm:

Thank you for your email of November 28, 2020, addressed to the Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, regarding burning in the South Okanagan Valley. Minister Heyman has asked that I respond on his behalf.

Various provincial ministries and local governments have legislation managing aspects of open burning in B.C. The open burning of woody debris is primarily regulated by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy's (ENV) Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR).

Agricultural operations have the right to carry on normal farm practices; however, as dictated by the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*, they are also required to follow certain acts and regulations. These include the *Public Health Act*, the *Integrated Pest Management Act*, the *Environmental Management Act* (EMA) and the regulations under these acts and any applicable land use regulations.

Since they are required to follow the EMA, they are also required to act in accordance with the OBSCR when conducting open burning. For reference, the [OBSCR can be found here](#) and a [general factsheet can be found here](#). The OBSCR regulates the open burning of woody debris over 3 cm in diameter. Materials under 3 cm in diameter (such as grasses, leaves, very small branches etc.) are exempt from OBSCR and would be regulated instead by your regional district. The OBSCR encourages the re-use of vegetative debris and places restrictions on the open burning of land-clearing debris in all areas of the province. Restrictions include the types of fuels allowed, when and where debris piles can be ignited and how long a burn can release smoke. Certain types of agricultural crop residues are exempt from OBSCR, but orchard, berry, and vineyard pruning are not considered to be crop residue if they are burned.

If you suspect that an OBSCR applicable burn is being conducted in contravention of the regulation, please call the Report All Poachers and Polluters line (1-877-952-7277 (RAPP)) to report the incident for investigation by the Conservation Officer Service.

Open burning may include residential backyard burning, agricultural burning, burning of slash piles, resource management fires, and community wildfire risk reduction burns. All these activities will produce smoke, but the impacts can be managed by following the OBSCR or local burning bylaws. Generally, burning is avoided or restricted in the warmer months due to the risk of wildfires, leaving the cooler months for open burning activities. Unfortunately, during the cold season we see a reduction in how well the atmosphere can disperse pollutants. Under poor venting conditions, smoke is less likely to disperse and may stay close to ground level where it can build up to unacceptable levels. Following good burning practices is not about restricting burning to a single month of the year, but about encouraging people to burn in good venting conditions and following local burning bylaws and/or the OBSCR (as applicable).

Woodstove smoke is a known problem in many communities in B.C., which is exacerbated by stove replacement costs and the lack of availability or suitability of other home heating methods. ENV regulates the types of woodstoves that can be sold in B.C. through the [Solid Fuel Domestic Appliance Regulation](#). However, it is up to local governments to regulate the emissions from individual installations. This is accomplished through the development of local woodstove bylaws, air quality bylaws, or nuisance bylaws. Your concerns regarding chipping programs, backyard burning, wood stove emissions, and local burn periods are all excellent queries to bring to your local government, the [Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen](#).

I understand that smoke and other air pollutants can be upsetting, particularly considering the current COVID-19 pandemic.

For further clarification on the contents of this message please contact Trina Orchard, Air Quality Meteorologist (Trina.Orchard@gov.bc.ca).

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

Laurel Nash

Assistant Deputy Minister

Environmental Protection Division

cc: Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health

Trina Orchard, Air Quality Meteorologist, Environmental Protection Division, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy