

Burning in a Medium Smoke Sensitivity Zone

August 2021

This Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR) factsheet is for burning of vegetative debris in a **Medium 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.

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.
- 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.

Burning in a Medium Smoke Sensitivity Zone

OBSCR Factsheet

- Minimize the amount of soil. Soil slows down the fire. Get your fire burning hot and with good airflow. Hot fires produce less smoke.

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.

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

A. Burning for in a Medium SSZ for less than one day

You may carry out a burn in a Medium SSZ for less than one day, provided that the following conditions are met:

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

B. Burning in a Medium SSZ for up to four days

You may carry out a burn in a medium SSZ for a consecutive period of up to four days, provided that the following conditions are met:

- **Start time** is at least one hour after sunrise.
- **End time** is 4 pm on the fourth day.
- The ventilation index for your location is **“GOOD”** for the first day of burning, and **“GOOD”** or **“FAIR”** for the second day of burning. The second day ventilation forecast 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.
- **Additional piles** are ignited only between one hour after sunrise and two hours before sunset on the first day of the burn.



More Information

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

Burning in a Medium Smoke Sensitivity Zone

OBSCR Factsheet

- **Remaining vegetative debris** is added to ignited piles only between one hour after sunrise and two hours before sunset on the first or second day of opening burning.
 - The ventilation index must be **“GOOD”** or **“FAIR”** on the second day of open burning to add debris. You must recheck the ventilation index on the second day to determine if you can add debris.

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.

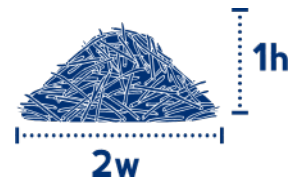
Special situations

Reduced setbacks

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

To use reduced the 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.
- Complete your burn within **one day**.
 - **Start time** is at least one hour after sunrise.
 - **End time** is 4 p.m. or two hours before sunset on the same day the burn, whichever is later.



Burning in a Medium Smoke Sensitivity Zone

OBSCR Factsheet

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



Reduced setbacks are at least **100 m** from all 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