

**Vanderhoof Forest District
Burn Plan for Smoke Management**

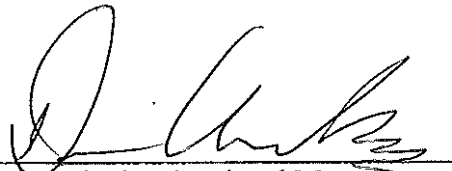
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Each year in the Vanderhoof Forest District it is necessary to burn machine piled logging debris, either to reduce the fire hazard or to remove habitat for forest pests, such as the mountain pine beetle. Smoke is the most visible product of this controlled burning. Large amounts of smoke may affect air quality and may have serious consequences such as poor visibility for aircraft and increased occurrence of respiratory ailments in communities adjacent to the smoke source.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) is mandated through the Wildfire Act and Wildfire Regulation to regulate the fire activities (open burning) of the forest industry within 1 kilometre of forest lands. In addition to the FLNRO's regulations surrounding fire activities, the Ministry of Environment (MOE) has the mandate to regulate smoke emissions from open burning under the *Environmental Management Act* and the *Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation* (OBSCR). MOE uses Environment Canada or other venting indices and weather information to regulate where and when burning is permitted, and periodically issues open burn bans.

Licensees, other agencies and the general public are responsible for obtaining current information, making appropriate burning decisions, and managing the fire activities.

This plan is considered a 'burn plan' as it pertains to the OBSCR sec. 8 (1) of Schedule A. It is also a portion of a burn plan as it pertains to section 23 of the Wildfire Regulation for the purposes of achieving smoke management objectives. This means that the venting requirements in this plan supersede the venting requirements of the OBSCR. Combined with the description or map of the smoke sensitivity areas, this Plan provides the venting conditions and other modified requirements which must be met to allow open burning to be done in compliance with the OBSCR.

2.0 PURPOSE

The intent of this plan is to maintain acceptable air quality in inhabited areas during the period that resource management pile burning is normally done, generally between September 15th to March 31st, and to provide some flexibility for burning. This is to be accomplished through:

- Identifying smoke sensitive areas in the Vanderhoof Forest District (and adjacent regions) and classifying other areas as either moderate or low sensitivity
- Identifying open burning guidelines in each sensitivity area

This plan is intended to be used as a guide and in most cases the requirements of this plan were developed to complement and assist the OBSCR and not to add extra policies or requirements. In addition to following this burn plan, persons planning to conduct open burning should review and comply with the OBSCR, Wildfire Act and Wildfire Regulation to open burn. The intention of this plan is to prevent pollution and should not be construed as a means of promoting the burning of logging residues. Where possible,

alternative uses of biomass material should be exploited e.g. providing fuel through the supply of hog, chips, and pellets.

3.0 Scope

This plan applies to the entire Vanderhoof Forest District outside of the municipal boundaries.

3.1 Smoke sources under Provincial Mandate

Controlled smoke sources under the Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations mandate include those prescribed activities below:

- Windrows (MSP)
- Spot burns
- Slash piles (landing and/or road side piles)
- Broadcast burns
- Range burns
- Habitat burns
- Pest management burns
- Fall and burn activities

4.0 GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE SMOKE MANAGEMENT

In order to improve the potential to conduct burning in a more efficient manner, operators must comply with the OBSCR except where exempted by the District Manager and this Burn Plan. A Custom Venting Forecast service may be available for use by operators. Please contact the Ministry of Environment (Skeena Region) in Smithers to determine if the service is available for use. If a Custom Venting Forecast service is not available, please refer to Environment Canada's Public Ventilation Index Forecasts for Prince George at 1-888-281-2992 or online at:

http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/forecast/textforecast_e.html?Bulletin=ficn39.cwvr

The area within the Vanderhoof Forest District was assigned smoke sensitivity ratings and burning guidelines were developed for each classification (see Table 1). The smoke sensitivity areas within the Vanderhoof Forest District are shown on the attached map, as well as on a large-scale map at the Ministry of Forests office in Vanderhoof which forms an integral part of this burn plan for smoke management. The classification is based on proximity to communities or rural residences, known geographic barriers to smoke drift, and the prevailing wind direction. Recognizing the current priority attached to harvesting pine beetle infested trees, the smoke sensitivity classification allows for a relaxation of the ignition venting conditions where the debris has been dried in piles.

The operating areas closest to Vanderhoof, Fort Fraser and Fraser Lake are classed as high sensitivity, and any proposed burning in those municipalities must be done according to the *Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation*.

The following procedures will be followed within each sensitivity area in the Vanderhoof Forest District:

- In *High sensitivity* areas, open burning is only permitted in accordance with all the requirements of the *Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation*. Ignition of piles are only allowed when the ventilation index is "Good" for the day of ignition and are forecast to be "Fair" or better for the following day.
- In *Moderate sensitivity* areas, unrestricted open burning is allowed when venting conditions are "Good" for the day of ignition and is forecast to be "Fair" or better for the following day (follow the requirements of the OBSCR). Restricted burning can also be done when "Fair" or better venting conditions are identified for the day of ignition and "Poor" or better conditions are forecast for the following day. The restriction is that the material can only be burned if it has been first dried in piles for at least one summer prior to burning it. No ignition is allowed within one kilometre of any residence under "Fair" venting conditions. No ignition of piles is allowed when the Venting Index is forecast to be "Poor" on the day of ignition for Moderate sensitivity areas.
 - Ignition of new material should be avoided for the duration of any periods of smoke build-up in the area.
 - Ignition of new materials, during Fair venting, should not be done whenever smoke is being blown persistently toward a High sensitivity area.
- In *Low sensitivity* areas, open burning is allowed, as specified under the OBSCR when venting conditions are "Good" for the day of ignition and are forecast to be "Fair" or better for the following day (follow the requirements of the OBSCR). Conditional open burning is also allowed under "Poor" venting conditions as follows:

If venting conditions are in the "Fair" category for the day of ignition and are forecast to be "Poor" or better for the following day, unlimited open burning may occur in Low sensitivity areas.

Unlimited ignition of piles under "Poor" venting conditions may occur in low sensitivity areas. After three consecutive days of "Poor" venting, ignition of new piles must not occur until the Venting Index returns to at least the "Fair" category on the day of ignition.

4.1 General Ignition Guidelines for All Sensitivity Areas:

Ignition of materials is only allowed when airflows are expected to carry smoke away from residences (observe local airflows). If an MOE FLNRO burning ban is issued no ignition is allowed in the area specified by the burn ban.

All other conditions of the OBSCR still apply to all open burns (e.g. set-back distances, initiation of burns under poor local air flow, duration of burns, etc). In addition to the requirements of the *Regulation*, good burning practices, such as piling, drying, observation of wind and other weather conditions contributing to effective smoke dispersion, and avoidance of smoke build-up should continue to be followed when burning under this Plan. MOE may issue burn bans under the OBSCR when air quality advisories are in effect in areas such as the Lakes District.

Table 1. Vanderhoof Forest District Burning Ignition Summary

Sensitivity Rating	Venting Conditions on day of Ignition		Ignition Guidelines*
	day one	day two forecast	
High	Good	Good or Fair	Unrestricted burning as specified in the OBSCR
	Fair	Good or Fair or Poor	No ignition (OBSCR)
	Poor	Good or Fair or Poor	No ignition (OBSCR)
Moderate	Good	Good or Fair	Unrestricted burning as specified in the OBSCR
	Fair	Good or Fair or Poor	Only material dried in piles over at least one summer; no ignition within 1 km of residences; avoid igniting new piles if smoke build-up is visible in area, and if smoke is blowing into High sensitivity area.
	Poor	Good or Fair or Poor	No ignition
Low	Good	Good or Fair	Unrestricted burning as specified in the OBSCR
	Fair	Good or Fair or Poor	Unrestricted burning
	Poor	Good or Fair or Poor	Unrestricted unless the VI remains in the Poor category for three consecutive days; at this point no further ignition of piles until the VI improves to at least the Fair category.

* Follow "General Ignition Guidelines for all sensitivity areas".

The above guidelines apply to burning of all sources of land clearing debris that are burned on the land parcel from which the material originated. If the material is moved off-site, an authorization to discharge waste is required under the Environmental Management Act. Contact the Ministry of Environment for more information. These guidelines will be reviewed and updated annually or when related legislation changes.

Other Information

All Category 3 and Resource Management Open Fires require a Burn Registration Number (BRN). This can be obtained by calling the Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations, Wildfire Mgmt Branch toll free number: 1-888-797-1717.

Prior to initiating an open burn, the operator shall ensure that there are no burn restrictions in effect. This can be done by calling the Ministry of Environment's Air Quality Information Line: 1-888-281-2992

Custom Venting forecasts may be available depending on whether a contract can be arranged with a qualified custom venting forecaster approved by MoE. If a contract can be arranged by the Ministry of Environment Skeena Region, licensees would be contacted to advise that the system is the same as it had been previously.