

FACT SHEET: BACK-COUNTRY CLOSURE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RESOURCE DISTRICT

Why are you restricting access to all Crown land in the Rocky Mountain Resource District?

- Our first priority is keeping people safe. Every British Columbian needs to do his or her part to ensure the safety of their community.
- In order to protect public safety, specific areas of B.C.'s backcountry may be formally closed to public access due to wildfires and firefighting activity, in accordance with the *Wildfire Act* and *Wildfire Regulation*.
- Given the level of fire activity and the extreme fire danger rating in the Southeast, we do not want people possibly stranded in remote areas.
- Backcountry closures and wildfire conditions are constantly monitored by BC Parks and the BC Wildfire Service.

Why was this area restriction not announced sooner?

- When deciding to implement a restriction multiple factors are considered, such as current and forecasted weather conditions, anticipated fire behaviour, access routes, the number of active fires and the current extreme fire danger rating.
- Given, the extreme wildfire activity within the Rocky Mountain Resource District and forecasted high temperatures and winds, it has, in the interests of public safety, become necessary to restrict access to the backcountry in the Rocky Mountain Resource District.

My permanent residence is accessed via forest service road. Do I need authorization to go to my home?

- No, the area restriction order provides for a person to travel to and from his or her residence without special authorization.

Is access to lakes and rivers prohibited by the area restriction?

- Yes, bodies of water are included in the area restriction.

I have a boat moored in a lake. Can I take it out?

- Yes, you can take your boat out as long as it's before noon on Sept. 2, 2017.

I just want to launch my boat from a recreation site. Is that permitted?

- No. All recreation sites and trails are closed within the Rocky Mountain resource District.

I have an RV parked on Crown land. Can I access it?

- No, not after 12 noon on Sept. 2, 2017

Where can I find the specific boundary lines of the Rocky Mountain Resource District?

- A map of the affected area is available online at: <http://ow.ly/EfiR30eQBUM>

Are provincial Parks included in the area restriction?

- Front country provincial parks are excluded. (Backcountry provincial parks and trails are included in the area restriction).
- However, there are several provincial parks closed in the areas currently impacted by wildfires. The public is encouraged to continue to monitor the BC Parks website at www.bcparks.ca for the most up-to-date information on provincial park closures.

- This restriction does not apply to National parks.
- The following BC Parks are considered front country:
 - o Dry Gulch
 - o James Chabot
 - o Premier Lake
 - o Whiteswan Lake
 - o Wasa
 - o Jimsmith Lake
 - o Kikomun Creek
 - o Mount Fernie
 - o Moyie Lake
 - o Norbury Lake
 - o Yahk

How will the area restriction be enforced?

- There will be increased patrols by enforcement personnel, including Natural Resource Officers, Correction Officers, and the RCMP.
- Individuals found to be in contravention of the area restriction may be issued a violation ticket that carries a fine of \$767.
- If the activity causes or contributes to a wildfire, the person responsible may be ordered to pay all firefighting and associated costs.

Does this area restriction apply to First Nations and towns?

- The area restriction applies to all provincial Crown land. It does not apply to private land such as Indian Reserves, Aboriginal Titles Land, or to land within municipal boundaries.

I have a lease on Crown land. (Example: I have a lease for my farm animals to graze) Does the area restriction apply?

- Under the *Wildfire Act*, leased Crown land is considered private land.

Are highways through the restricted area closed?

- No. As long as it is highway serviced/recognized by the Ministry of Transportation.

I am a commercial operation or guide/outfitter. Does this area restriction apply to my business operations? Can I apply for an exemption?

- If your business operations are located/conducted within the Rocky Mountain Resource District, then yes, this area restriction applies to your business activities within that geographic.
- If you are a guide/outfitter there are no exemptions.
- If you have industry operations that will be at risk due to the area restriction, please send your name, contact information and the details to: Charlene.Turgeon@gov.bc.ca

Consideration for exemption include:

- Range Tenure Holders
- Front country parks

- Mine Act Permit holders == in order to remove equipment.
- Large scale mining operation i.e. coal mining
- Forest industry personnel to remove or service equipment.
- Mountain Resorts with controlled recreation areas.
- Commercial operators that need to remove or monitor assets.

Exemptions **not** for consideration

- Guiding outfitter, including rafters, fly fishers
- Resorts
- Commercial recreation permittees

What is the fine associated with this restriction?

- People can be issued a violation ticket that carries a fine of \$767.
- If the activity causes or contributes to a wildfire, the person responsible may be ordered to pay all firefighting and associated costs.
- Enforcement patrols have been stepped up this summer to ensure compliance with this prohibition.