

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2020 #20-08

For further information, contact:
Chief Howard Exner at 604-463-5880
hexner@mapleridge.ca

City of Maple Ridge Issues an Immediate Open Air Burning Ban

Maple Ridge, BC: Effective immediately, Maple Ridge has enacted, and will be enforcing, an Open Air Burning Ban in support of Metro Vancouver, BC Ministry of Environment, BC Ministry of Health and Climate Change Strategy, BC. This order has been enacted by the City of Maple Ridge's Emergency Operations Centre as part of the local COVID-19 health emergency response.

The Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, through the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), requested fire bans in aid of people infected with COVID-19 which results in a severe respiratory infection. Open air burning restrictions for all High Smoke Sensitivity Zones across the province and in Metro Vancouver municipalities will be in place until further notice. Some key points from the BCCDC regarding pollutants and respiratory viral infections:

- Deterioration in air quality may lead to more COVID-19 infections overall,
- Deterioration in air quality may lead to more cases of severe COVID-19 infections, adding further demand to our healthcare system, and
- Improvements to air quality may help to protect the whole population from COVID-19 and its potentially severe effects.

These measures are being put in place to help reduce excessive air pollution in the high risk sheds across the province and in particular the Lower Mainland. Studies have shown air pollution increases susceptibility to respiratory viral infections (COVID -19) by decreasing immune function leading to more severe effects.

Back yard fire permits will not be issued and, effective immediately, there will be a COMPLETE FIRE BAN until further notice. This includes ALL recreational fires.

This fire ban will be enforced and could lead to fines of up to \$1,000. We ask that citizens do their part during the COVID-19 health emergency and refrain from having any fires.