

## Why do I need a burn permit?

Open burning poses two major risks to the health and safety of our community. Fire can escape from backyard burns and put your home, neighbours or environment at risk.

Similarly, smoke from backyard burning affects health and negatively impacts people with illnesses such as respiratory and cardiac diseases.

We ask you to obtain a permit to learn safe procedures and to help protect our community.

## Why change the open-burning bylaw?

Our Open-Burning Bylaw was overdue for an update. Provincial regulations have changed since the bylaw was last amended in 2005.

Since we were changing the bylaw anyway, we tried to improve the bylaw. We've heard comments and suggestions from islanders over the years. We looked at many neighboring communities for best practices. We've also heard concerns from islanders about improving safety, air quality and public health.

Community members were invited to participate in bylaw review and revision. The new bylaw was adopted by Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District (SSIFPD) fire trustees at a meeting on January 28, 2016.

# A Guide to the New Open-Burning Bylaw 125



## Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue

[www.saltspringfire.com](http://www.saltspringfire.com)



## How has open-burning bylaw changed?

Most of the bylaw has not changed (but it does have better wording now). But people have asked questions about a few items.

“Small Brush Piles” are now called “Backyard Burning” but you can burn in your front yard. This change was just to sound more familiar.

There's no section for beach fires in the new bylaw. A fire on the beach is probably either a campfire or a backyard burn. Like other forms of burning, you must obtain permission from the owner to get a permit.

No, the cost-recovery section is not new. SSIFR does not have the ability to issue fines but if islanders can't or won't extinguish a non-compliant fire, SSIFR can seek cost-recovery to pay for suppression.

Note that personal barbeques and gas-fired campfires are not restricted by the open-burning bylaw. But you would need a special permit for a large wood-fired barbeque.

There are also special permits available for other special situations (outdoor pizza ovens, pit kilns, etc.). Visit us for more information about special permits.

## So what is different in the new bylaw?

- 1) Permits are now required year round. There is no “unsafe burning” season. As a bonus, you don’t need to remember special dates for when to get a permit.
- 2) Contractors and tenants must now get consent from property owners before they obtain a burn permit. Property owners are ultimately responsible for any fires on their property, so they should be consulted.
- 3) Property owners must provide proof of ownership documentation to obtain a burn permit. Ownership documentation could be a property title or a tax assessment. Contractors and tenants must also obtain proof of ownership from the property owner. Corporations and societies may designate property representatives to obtain burn permits.



- 4) The bylaw now allows larger campfires backyard burns. Campfires have increased to 0.5m diameter (from 0.3m). Backyard fires have increased to 2m tall and 3m in diameter (from 1.5m tall by 2m in diameter). These larger fires now match the provincial regulation and they are still safe.
- 5) Incinerators are now defined as “backyard burning.” You can still use an incinerator. We’ve just reduced the number of permit categories. Incinerators with an intact screen require smaller safety distances from vegetation and structures.
- 6) Campfires no longer need to be extinguished by 11 p.m. Time limits were removed for campfires. If you want to stay out after midnight with your marshmallows, that’s okay as long as you and your fire are safe.

- 7) Backyard burning can now burn after sunset, but no new material can be added within two hours of sunset. Now you can burn after dark but please be responsible. Outdoor fires are more dangerous to extinguish at night.
- 8) Anyone is now permitted to supervise a machine-pile fire. This means that a property owner can supervise a machine-piled fire instead of a machine operator (if the machine is on site).



### **But I still have questions . . .**

If you have questions, comments or concerns about the new Open-Burning Bylaw, please visit us at the Ganges Fire Hall (105 Lower Ganges Rd) or phone the office (250) 537-2531.

You can also find a copy of the new SSIFPD Open-Burning Bylaw 125 on our website - [www.saltspringfire.com](http://www.saltspringfire.com).

**The new open-burning bylaw is currently pending approval from the Province of BC.**