



File: 16640-06/HQ-Prov

Date: April 6, 2020

## **Recreation Order**

The following Recreation Order is effective **April 7, 2020**.

Pursuant to Section 58 (1) (b) of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, and by order of the Director of Recreation Sites and Trails Branch, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

### **All Recreation Sites with Camping Facilities are Closed**

All recreation uses are prohibited in Recreation Sites with camping facilities.

This Order is made to address public health and safety concerns regarding the spread of the COVID-19 virus and aims to discourage social gatherings and regional travel of public recreationists.

This Order will remain in effect until May 31, 2020 or until rescinded or until replaced by another order.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Hawkings".

John Hawkings  
Director  
Recreation Sites and Trails BC

## **Rationale for FRPA Section 58 Recreation Order**

**April 7, 2020**

### **Intent of Order**

The intent of the Order is to:

**manage public health and safety concerns regarding the spread of the COVID-19 virus** (help to ensure that unmanaged gatherings do not occur during the COVID-19 pandemic);

- Overnight camping increases the risk of virus spread where people gather and are in contact with frequently touched surfaces.
- Non-family gatherings present a higher risk for virus spread; families from the same household are at lower risk of spreading the virus.
- Limiting available public recreation opportunities supports provincial and national health officers efforts to discourage non-essential travel.
- Recreation Trails remain open; recreation trail facilities where people gather and are in contact with frequently touched surfaces are closed under section 20(5) of the Forest Recreation Regulation. This includes fee collection booths and kiosks, overnight shelters, backcountry cabins, day use shelters, and other related infrastructure

## **KEY MESSAGES: Camping on Crown land**

**April 8, 2020**

**Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development**

### **Current restrictions due to the COVID-19 situation (closure of Recreation Sites and BC Parks)**

- BC Parks has temporarily closed all provincial parks in response to increased action to address the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development has temporarily closed all Recreation Sites with camping facilities.
- The closure of recreation sites with camping and provincial parks is in addition to the previous ban on camping in all provincial parks. Getting outside is good, but you must stay close to home and avoid unnecessary travel.
- Now is a crucial time for our province to flatten the COVID-19 curve, so we must take every step we can. We are all in this together.
- The decision to close the Recreation Sites and the BC Parks system was difficult but necessary. It was informed by continued feedback from local government, First Nations, local search and rescue organizations, and the general public.
- Physical distancing works and it is one of the most crucial things we can do to keep people safe from COVID-19 transmission. As more people head outdoors to enjoy the warm weather, it will become increasingly difficult to enforce physical distancing in provincial parks.
- The Provincial Health Officer is very clear: now is the time to escalate action to bend the curve and reduce the spread of COVID-19. If you can stay home, do it.
- We understand the value of connecting to nature, and we want everyone to come and enjoy our recreation sites and provincial parks the moment the Provincial Health Officer indicates it is safe to do so.
- By taking this action now, we are potentially saving lives and increasing our opportunity for success. We are all in this together.

### **General information about camping on Crown land:**

- People are allowed to camp on vacant Crown land for up to 14 days (**if there are no designated closures**).
- During the current pandemic, we strongly encourage the public to not travel outside their communities for non-essential travel like recreation.
- People who camp on Crown land must do so in a safe and responsible manner. Their activities may not result in negative environmental, social, economic, health or safety impacts.
- Campers must abide by all provincial laws and regulations, including those related to campfire use, open burning restrictions, wildlife attractants, litter, waste disposal and environmental damage.
- Campers may not cut down or otherwise damage trees (dead or alive) and may not build structures on Crown land without proper authority to do so.

- All personal belongings and garbage must be removed or disposed of appropriately when the campers leave the site.
- Within municipal boundaries, campers must follow municipal bylaws.

**Enforcement:**

- Natural Resource Officers from the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (along with the Conservation Officer Service) work hard to ensure that B.C.'s natural resource laws are upheld.
- Natural Resource Officers monitor high-risk areas and activities for potential damage to economic, social, cultural or environmental values. Their ongoing presence and available compliance and enforcement actions — including penalties and fines — help deter illegal behaviour.
- Natural Resource Officers and Conservation Officers work closely with local governments to educate campers and monitor activities on Crown land. They are also authorized to evict campers from Crown land when necessary and to issue violation ticket fines to people who do not comply with applicable legislation.
- Anyone depositing waste, garbage or other debris on Crown land is subject to prosecution under the *Environmental Management Act*.
- Under the *Environmental Management Act*, people can be issued a violation ticket fine of \$115 for littering or \$575 for the illegal disposal of waste, or fined up to \$1,000,000 and/or sentenced for up to six months in jail — depending on the type and amount of material involved.
- The *Land Act* also provides for fines of up to \$20,000 or a jail term of up to 60 days for anyone found guilty of illegal dumping.

**More information:**

- Compliance and Enforcement Branch/Natural Resource Officers:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/natural-resource-law-enforcement/natural-resource-officers>
- *Environmental Management Act*:  
[http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/03053\\_04](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/03053_04)
- *Land Act*: [http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96245\\_01](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96245_01)