

Open Fires During a Restricted Fire Zone

Under the Forest Fires Prevention Act commercial campground owners and operators have the authority to allow their guests to continue to enjoy campfires during Restricted Fire Zone periods provided certain criteria are met and strict conditions are applied. Also, portable charcoal equipment (i.e. BBQs, Hibachis, etc.) are not legal for use during a Restricted Fire Zone except close to a dwelling or in an organized campground.

The Forest Fires Prevention Act Regulations states the following:

A person may have a campfire or use a charcoal installation during a Restricted Fire Zone provided they are in an organized campground that meets all of the following criteria:

1. Campground:

Offers camping facilities to the public on a temporary basis

Allows camping only in cabins or designated campsites

Has campsites or cabins that are accessible by motor vehicle as defined by the Highway Traffic Act.

Has adequate fire suppression equipment (i.e. shovels, axes, water pails, etc.) to control and extinguish a fire and the equipment is within ten minutes of any campfire site

Has staff on site 24 hours a day who are familiar with the location and use of the fire suppression equipment

Has reliable two-way communications to obtain assistance should a fire escape

2. The owner/operator of the campground must expressly permit campfires and the use of charcoal installations. The final decision resides with the campground owner/operator.

3. Should the campground owner/operator decide to permit campfires, the following regulations must be followed:

- Campfires are not allowed between 10:00am and 7:00pm
- The owner/operator clearly posts when campfires are allowed
- The owner/operator provides all guests with printed information on safe campfires
- The campfires must be in a permanent fire installation (i.e. fire grate,

- fireplace or fire pit) that cannot be moved to an unsafe location
- The campfire must be at least 3 metres from any forest or woodland, and the area within the 3-metre radius must be free of all flammable material
 - The space above the campfire must be at least 3 metres from any overhanging vegetation
 - Don't start a fire unless conditions will allow the fire to burn safely from start to extinguishment
 - Never leave your fire unattended. Leave a responsible person in charge
 - Be sure you have tools handy to control the fire. A pail of water and a shovel are ideal.

Remember, any person who starts a fire outdoors must take all necessary steps to tend the fire, keep it under control, and extinguish the fire before leaving the site.

For more information, visit www.mnr.gov.on.ca