



NEED FURTHER INFORMATION...

Ban on open fires in or near forested areas

WHO DECIDES?

Under section 134 of the Forest Act: *“The Minister, when of opinion that weather conditions so require, may prohibit or restrict access to and travel in the forest and prescribe any other measures calculated to decrease the risk of fire.”*



A ban on open fires in or near forested areas is a preventive measure decreed by the Minister for National Resources and Wildlife.

WHEN?

- When the fire danger reaches critical levels set out in the « decision assistance » document.
- Simultaneously with suggested preventive measures during forestry operations.

WHAT IS AN « OPEN FIRE »?

An open fire is one that burns freely or that could spread freely. Pyrotechnical devices (fireworks) and instruments producing sparks (welding instruments) are also examples of open fires.

Are not considered as open fires: fires lit in an apparatus designed for this purpose and equipped with a fireguard, such as a wood stove, fireplace or metal container. To comply with regulations, fireguard openings must not exceed 1 cm.

WHAT DOES « NEAR FORESTED AREA » MEAN?



It is difficult to establish a specific distance since the risk of fire spreading depends on several factors such as weather conditions, time of day and type of fuel.

In addition, these same factors are themselves influenced by the seasons. In the spring, for instance, it is important to be extremely vigilant since surface fuel, composed of dry grass, twigs or moss, are highly flammable and risk spreading a fire to the surrounding forest.



APPLICATION

Local municipalities have an important role to play in applying the ban on open fires. Here are a few guidelines :

- This preventive measure applies if the local municipality is located in a forested area or near one.
- Some residents could be given the permission to make a fire:
 - Because the fire would be lit in an apparatus designed for this purpose and equipped with a fireguard that complies with regulations;
 - Because they are neither near a forest nor in an area that risks setting fire to the vegetation cover, which in turn could spread the fire to the forest.
- What should be done in case of doubt?

When there is a ban in effect on open fires in or near forested areas, the risks of causing a forest fire are very high, and can even reach extreme levels. As a result, if it is too difficult to assess the situation, the best would be to not let people risk being careless.

FAILURE TO COMPLY, WHAT TO DO?

- A person who wants to report an offence must contact SOPFEU, which will then register the complaint and take down the name and number of this person. This information is promptly sent to the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune which will take the necessary action. The objective is to investigate the event reported and, if need be, impose a fine.

This preventive measure automatically cancels any permission to make fires or carry out burning activities in sectors covered by the ban, whether for industrial or household purposes.

Under section 185 of the Forest Act (L.R.Q., Chapter F-4.1), every person who fails to comply with a ban on open fires or a restriction governing access to or travel in a forest imposed by the Minister or contravenes a measure prescribed by the Minister is liable to, in addition to the payment of fees, a fine of \$ 500 to \$ 50,000.