

## Residents reminded to observe open air burning by-law

**April 17, 2020** — With the advent of warm weather, and continued community cooperation in social distancing and staying home to reduce the spread of COVID-19, hanging out in the backyard is becoming a popular way to pass time at home.

While spending time in one's backyard can be a healthy way to relax and share time with other members of the household, St. Catharines Fire Services would like to remind residents that a backyard fire shouldn't be a part of a night spent outdoors.

Open air burning in the urban area contravenes the City's Open Air Burning By-law. While the by-law does allow for some types of burning in agricultural areas, it can be only done under an approved permit.

Over the past weekend St. Catharines Fire Services responded to a high number of 911 calls related to illegal open air fires.

"Our main concern for this reminder is for the safety of our residents. Beyond the potential concerns of smoke impacting neighbours, the use of open flames in the close proximity to combustible materials such as homes, decks and sheds in an urban setting has the potential for a fire to get out of control and spread quickly to adjoining properties," said Fire Chief Jeff McCormick.

Failure to comply with the City's Open Air Burning By-law could result in a fee of \$268. Beyond this minimum fee, further charges may be applied and the St Catharines Fire Services may also proceed with prosecution against the owner for contravening the Ontario Fire Code for conducting unapproved open air burning.

"We're happy to see everyone enjoying their properties, but we want them to do so safely for themselves and for their neighbours. When we have to respond to complaints like this it eats up valuable emergency resources," said McCormick.

Full details on the City's open air burning by-law can be found at [www.stcatharines.ca/OpenAirBurn](http://www.stcatharines.ca/OpenAirBurn). Individuals can also contact the fire prevention division by calling 905.688.5601 ext. 4224.

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## News Release

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