

St. Catharines Fire Services reminds residents fires prohibited under Open-Air Burning By-law

May 7, 2021 — As the weather warms residents are heading out into the backyard for some much-needed fresh air, but, while they enjoy the open air, they should remember a fire must not be added to the mix.

Getting outdoors to spend time with family and other household members is a great way to stay healthy and active. However, St. Catharines Fires Services (SCFS) would like to remind residents that a backyard fire can be both a fire safety risk and a nuisance to neighbours. Outdoor fires are not permitted under the City's Open-Air Burning By-law in the urban area.

While the by-law does allow for some types of burning in agricultural areas, it can be only done under an approved permit. This time of year, SCFS typically sees an increase in responses related to open-air fires, often tying up important emergency resources.

"It's always great to see our residents enjoying their properties, but we want them to do it safely. Outdoor fires pose considerable risks in urban areas where fire can spread quickly to adjacent properties," said Fire Chief Jeff McCormick. "On top of this drifting smoke can be unpleasant for neighbours, and in some cases negatively impact the health of others, especially those with respiratory diseases or issues."

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 St. Catharines Fire Services may also proceed with prosecution against the owner for contravening the Ontario Fire Code for conducting unapproved open air burning.

Full details on the City's open air burning by-law can be found www.stcatharines.ca/BackyardFires.

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Contact:

Lars Larson
Assistant Chief Fire Prevention Officer
llarson@stcatharines.ca
905.688.5601 ext. 4206