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## Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Wildfire Management Branch

### Some fines will triple under amended wildfire laws

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VICTORIA - The B.C. government is taking a tougher stand to discourage behaviour that contributes to increased wildfire risks, to help protect communities, natural resources and infrastructure from wildfire damage.

Additional legislative changes will result in significantly increased ticket fines for 19 different violations under the Wildfire Act and for seven different violations under Wildfire Regulation. These changes mean that British Columbia now has some of the highest wildfire-related violation ticket fines in the country.

For example, the fine for failing to comply with a fire restriction under the Wildfire Act is increasing from \$345 (including a \$45 victim surcharge) to \$1,150 (including a \$150 victim surcharge). This represents a 333.33% increase over the old fine for that offence.

In addition:

- Bill 12 clarifies what is considered to be "interference", in terms of actions that could hinder firefighters. The proposed amendments would also clarify that interference does not have to be intentional to constitute a contravention of the Wildfire Act.
- The proposed amendments to the Wildfire Act would strengthen compliance and enforcement provisions by establishing an offence and penalties of up to \$100,000 and/or imprisonment for up to one year for failing to comply with a stop work order.

On average, 30-40% of wildfires in British Columbia are human-caused. The 2015 fire season was one of the busiest and most expensive in recent years, with over 283,400 hectares burned and over \$278 million spent on wildfire management.

To report a wildfire, call 1 800 663-5555 toll-free or \*5555 on a cellphone.

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**Quotes:**

Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson -

"These legislative amendments propose tough new regulations to discourage people from interfering in wildfire suppression or violating British Columbia's wildfire laws."

"These proposed changes are partly a result of Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Mike Morris's review of wildfire fines last year. I would like to thank him for his insight on this important initiative."

**Learn More:**

To follow Bill 12's progress through the legislature, visit [www.leg.bc.ca](http://www.leg.bc.ca) and click on "Bills".

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