Burn ban proclamation – updated August 5 2025

Am I allowed to [fill in the blank, any activity not mentioned below]?

Our overall message is stay out of the woods and no open fires anywhere. Nobody wants a repeat of the devastation we experienced in 2023. We are asking all Nova Scotians to co-operate and be sensible in applying these rules to help keep our people and our communities safe. Don't look for loopholes. If you're not sure, just don't do it – that is the safest approach.

Why is there a provincewide burn ban? When will it be lifted?

We've had a lot of hot, dry weather, very little rain and there's no significant rain in the forecast in the near future. Conditions are ripe for any small fire to grow larger. Therefore, there is a ban on open fires across the entire province. It was put in place July 30 and will remain in place until October 15 – the end of wildfire season – or until conditions improve.

How much rain do we need before you can lift the burn ban?

We are grateful for any rain that we get, but it will take more than a couple of days of rain to change the dry conditions. We can't lift the burn ban or woods restrictions until conditions have improved enough to lower the wildfire risk. We are monitoring conditions closely and with the best interests of Nova Scotians in mind.

What is the fine for violating the burn ban? How many of these fines have you given this season…how many while the burn ban is in place?

The fine for violating the ban is $25,000.

[Get update from Orlando each time we are asked for latest number of fines.]

What does the ban apply to? What is an open fire?

The ban applies to open fires such as campfires, bonfires, brush fires, fires in chimeneas and any other fire that is not enclosed and uses wood as the fuel. Unlike gas or charcoal fires, sparks could escape from an open wood fire and cause a wildfire.

Non-woodburning devices like charcoal and gas barbeques and gas stoves are allowed to be used, following manufacturer's instructions.

[It doesn't matter what kind of charcoal as long as it's used in a device meant for charcoal and you follow manufacturer's instructions.]

Where does the ban apply?

The ban applies to all private property and provincial lands, including parks and protected areas. The Province does not have jurisdiction over federal land such as national parks.

Isn't the ban within 1000 feet of the woods? I don't live near any woods, why can't I have a backyard campfire?

We changed the Forests Act in 2024 to remove all references to "within 1000 feet of the woods." That means our daily burn restrictions and any burn bans apply everywhere, including private property no matter where it is. This makes our rules more consistent and easier for people to understand and follow.

If you have an industrial burning permit, can you still burn?

No. The proclamation overrides any permits that have been issued for industrial burning.

Are fireworks allowed under a burn ban?

The use of consumer fireworks are prohibited whenever a fire ban is in place. A failure to comply with this fire safety advisory, or the reasonable request of a fire official, may be considered an offence under the Fire Safety Act and could result in the issuance of a Summary Offence Ticket in the amount of $410. The Department of Natural Resources could also investigate if they suspect fireworks caused an open fire to be ignited, and that could lead to charges under the Forests Act.

Fireworks are allowed by professional fireworks companies that have signed approval from the local authority that has jurisdiction (for example, municipality or fire department) along with the proper fire equipment and measures.

Sky lanterns are completely banned in Nova Scotia. These devices are uncontrollable and often cause fires when they land in forests or on structures.

On a day when the map is all red, isn't that a burn ban? What's the difference between that and this provincewide burn ban?

During wildfire season – when a burn ban is NOT in place – we post the daily burn restrictions at 2 pm every day. We don't call that a burn ban – that is the daily restrictions, even on a day when no burning is allowed.

A provincewide burn ban means no open fires allowed at any of time. There are no daily burn restriction updates at 2 pm when a burn ban is in place. The Burn Safe map remains red 24/7 indicating that no burning is allowed at any time.

What authority do you have to impose a burn ban?

The ban was put in place through a proclamation under the Forests Act.