

Burn Permits + Fire Advisories - Foothills County Div. 4 Councillor Suzanne Oel

Fire Burning Permits are mandatory in Foothills County: A Burning Permit is a legal document which conditionally authorizes a person to burn materials (clean/dry wood/paper ONLY) at a time specified on the permit. Open fires are allowed during suitable weather/moisture conditions, through the process of obtaining a Burning Permit online, or in person at the Heritage Pointe Fire Station, or by calling the station at 403-603-3571. All burns require permits except burning barrels with screen covers located on non-combustible surfaces, and campfires within fire rings. Caution is to be observed with any fire and please be considerate of your neighbours! Learn more and obtain your “free-of-charge” online Burning Permit or Fireworks Permit here: <https://www.foothillscountyab.ca/emergency-services/foothills-fire/online-burn-fireworks-permit-application>

Fire Advisory Notification: The next paragraphs provide some background information about how fire risk status declarations are made. Please also check the County’s website homepage for the latest fire risk status and any fire-related notices throughout the summer months and beyond: <https://www.foothillscountyab.ca/>

4 Levels: As noted, Foothills County allows burning of clean/dry wood/paper materials when conditions are appropriate, with applicable Burning Permits in place. If risk increases, there are levels of notifications that will be enacted with cautions or restrictions applied:

1. Burning allowed.
2. Fire Advisory.
3. Fire Restriction.
4. Fire Ban.

Who decides on declaring a Fire Advisory, Restriction or Ban? The Foothills Fire Chief and Department Director are always checking weather/moisture/wind conditions and adjacent municipal situations. Recommendations are made from the Foothills Fire Department to Foothills County Council as to any level of restriction being imposed. Council votes to pass an official resolution in response to the recommendations. Messaging is then shared through various media options to get the word out about the Fire Advisory, Restriction or Ban.

Fire Advisory Example: Once the County's fire risk status is assessed, a Fire Advisory may be put in place due to conditions at the time. The fire risk status of the Calgary Forest area, bordering the west end of Foothills County, is also considered. Official notification is then provided to Foothills County residents to confirm the fire risk evaluation, the type of restriction implemented, that the status will be monitored, and the level of the restriction may be amended if determined to be necessary. A Fire Advisory declaration comes with the following details: For Class 1 (10' x 10' x 5' and under) and Class 2 (10' x 10' x 5' and more) burns, Burning Permits could be issued but could be revoked at any time with little or no warning should the conditions change in a way that would justify it. The County further states that residents are urged to abide by burning rules and regulations and to remain cautious when burning even though there is no Fire Ban or Fire Restriction in effect at the time. Additionally, residents are reminded that obtaining a Burning Permit is always required.

If Conditions change: Increasing from a Fire Advisory, the County may impose a Fire Restriction or a Fire Ban at any time. If a Fire Ban is imposed, residents must immediately and fully extinguish all fires. All existing permits will become void and no new permits will be issued. Detailed information about a Fire Advisory, Restriction or Ban will be posted on the County’s website.

Who checks on reported Fires? Complaints or serious concerns about a fire can be reported to 9-1-1, whereupon a determination can be made regarding a Burning Permit being in place and what else may be occurring. The Foothills Fire Department will be dispatched to check on the fire, if that action is warranted. Foothills Regional 9-1-1 is aware of all Burning Permits and any restrictions imposed in Foothills County because they monitor Burning Permits as a service provided to the County. Included in the service, Foothills Regional 9-1-1 receives the mandatory notification of Burning Permit starts, issues Burning Permit extinguishing notices, and dispatches the area Fire Departments.

View all Alberta Fire Advisories, Restrictions and Bans: <https://albertafirebans.ca/>

Disclaimer: While I have done my best to prepare this summary accurately, I may have forgotten something or made errors. S.O. 2025