

Proposed Metro Vancouver Bylaw to Restrict the Use of Wood-burning Appliances:

What you need to know

By 2025, [Metro Vancouver](#) is proposing to ban the use of residential wood-burning appliances - including woodstoves, pellet stoves, open fireplaces, inserts, and more - that emit more than 4.5 grams particulate per hour*. The ban will be phased in starting next year (2020).

Clearly this could potentially impact a large number of Lions Bay residents, possibly with significant cost implications, if they have open fireplaces or older woodstoves.

Lions Bay is a signatory on the Climate Action Charter, which has an Addendum which includes a statement that the Village of Lions Bay is committed to continuing to pursue cooperation with other governments and communities in protecting air quality.

There are, however, options in terms of how we in Lions Bay respond to Metro's proposed legislation, and possibly influence what will be required of residents with wood burning appliances. But in order to represent the wishes of the community accurately, Council needs to hear from as many homeowners as possible. Given that Metro Staff must draft the new legislation by the second quarter of this year, and we need to formulate a response, we would like to hear from you **no later than March 27th**.

To make things easy, there are several ways you can respond:

- we've provided a short survey in print in your mailbox, also available [online](#),
- [email input to me](#),
- use the [Feedback form](#) on our website,
- drop completed survey forms or comments in the new "Have your say" letter box in the store (on the right, as you exit via the main entrance), or at the Village Office.

To encourage input, you may choose to respond anonymously.

How Metro's bylaw will roll out

2020: Seasonal ban begins

- Residential wood-burning appliances may no longer be used between May 15th and September 15th
- Residential wood-burning appliances used solely for cooking may still be used during this period

2022 - 2025: Existing and new wood-burning appliances must be registered

- Appliances that emit no more than 4.5 grams particulate per hour, depending on the appliance, must be registered
- Appliances that don't meet these requirements will not be able to be registered and therefore may no longer be used after 2025

- Registration options being considered include: at point of purchase; during installation, inspection or maintenance; or by homeowner submission.

2025: Total ban of wood burning appliances, except:

- Registered appliances that meet emission standards
- Appliances that are the sole source of heat
- In case of hardship
- In areas outside the [Metro Vancouver Urban Containment Boundary](#) (UCB)

Does my appliance qualify for registration?

It would seem most modern wood burning appliances with a closed firebox and some sort of re-burning technology will meet the new bylaw regulations, while older, closed systems that don't have any advanced burning technology will probably not. Open fireplaces will in all likelihood not be registerable.

Certainly any system installed after the Canadian Code of Practice for Residential Wood Burning Appliances of 2012 should comply. Some appliances bought in the US after the EPA regulations of 1988 could meet requirements and be in compliance. It should be noted this technology was available from the 1980's, so older models could still comply with the new regulations.

For those that like to read the details for themselves, the Canadian Code of Practice for Residential Wood Burning Appliances is on the [Village website](#) or [here](#). The EPA also publishes a list of nearly [600 registerable appliances](#). If you have an owner's manual, you can check the specifications there.

Note: Homeowners interested in upgrading older woodstoves may qualify for a [Metro program](#) that gives eligible residents a rebate of \$250 - \$400 for trading in their old uncertified wood burning appliance for a new low emission appliance. The number of rebates available is limited so act fast if you you're interested.

What's behind the new bylaw?

The fine particles in wood smoke are associated with respiratory and cardiac issues, particularly for infants, the elderly, and people with existing heart and lung conditions. Wood smoke includes toxic air contaminants and the potential for harm may increase depending on the material being burned. According to a [Metro Vancouver factsheet](#), the largest source of annual fine particulate emissions in the region is residential wood burning. Depending on which data you look at, this is between 27 & 32%.

Since heating generally occurs in the fall and winter, wood smoke can contribute even more to the fine particles in the air we breathe during those times of the year.

Is there an air quality problem in Lions Bay?

Between December 2015 and March 2016, Metro Vancouver's Mobile Air Monitoring Unit conducted a study in Lions Bay. The report states:

*“Results indicate that air quality in Lions Bay did not exceed any of Metro Vancouver’s air quality objectives during the period of the study and was **generally better than air quality measured at other air quality monitoring stations in the region.**”*

The full report is on the [Village website](#).

It does go on to state the obvious: that with less wood burning or use of cleaner burning appliances, things could be even better. The report concludes that the results of the study suggest both traffic emissions and smoke from residential wood burning influence air quality in Lions Bay at times.

Do we have a choice with regards this bylaw, or must we comply?

Given what has been published by Metro, one might believe this is a fait accompli and Lions Bay residents will have to comply with the new bylaw. However, in my discussions with the Director of Air Quality at Metro, we most certainly have an opportunity to request we be exempted from complying, based on the realities of life in Lions Bay.

Metro are clearly aware that certain circumstances exist which make an “all and everyone” bylaw unreasonable. They have already identified two criteria upon which they will grant an exception based on personal circumstance, regardless of location. They have also recognized that more rural communities don’t have equal options for heating their homes – they do not have the choice of natural gas, nor do they necessarily have the same air quality issues. For those looking for other options, [heat pumps](#) may provide a suitable alternative.

Metro has chosen to differentiate who must and who need not comply with the new legislation by using the [Urban Containment Boundary](#) (UCB). Unlike other Metro communities with whom we have so much in common – Bowen Island, Anmore and Belcarra (among others), Lions Bay falls within the Urban Containment Boundary, while they do not, even though they are still part of Metro Vancouver.

In my discussions with Metro, they agree it isn’t the ideal differentiator, but it’s all they have. So unless we motivate for exemption, we would need to comply.

The question is: as a community, do we want to comply, or do we want to be excluded?

** This specification varies depending on the type of appliance, but 4.5 g/hr applies to most fireplaces and woodstoves.*