



NEWS RELEASE

Abbotsford Police, Fire Rescue and Bylaw Services Team Raise Awareness to Reduce Grass Fires this Summer

Abbotsford, August 19, 2016 - Abbotsford Police, Fire Rescue and Bylaw Services are asking smokers to “Think before they Toss” their cigarette butts this summer announced Mayor Henry Braun today.

“The hot, dry conditions make grass and bark mulch fires a community safety issue,” says Mayor Braun. “Last summer we saw over 150 fires that were carelessly started by tossed cigarettes. Not only is it a fire hazard, but it costs us valuable time and money for our emergency personnel to attend these fires.”

Already this year, there have been 48 grass fires caused by discarded cigarettes, and that number is likely to climb with the hot, dry weather forecast for the next week, says Fire Chief Don Beer.

“Dry weather creates optimal conditions for these little fires to get out of control fast. Sometimes they can smolder in hot bark mulch for hours, and then ignite like a box of matches. Depending on where the fire starts, consequences can be devastating, especially if buildings and personal property are close by.”

“If you toss a cigarette out of the window or onto the ground it definitely could cost you but if that cigarette causes a fire it could cost all of us,” says Police Chief Bob Rich.

This year, fines will be issued by Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service, Abbotsford Police and City Bylaw officers.

“We can all issue fines under various City Bylaws for offences related to this type of activity,” adds Rich. “Hopefully, a fine of at least \$750 will act as a deterrent. It would be even better if Police, Fire Rescue and City Bylaws didn’t have to write any tickets and people simply took proper care of our community.”

Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service is posting roadside signs where fires have been started to raise awareness about the risk.

“Our bylaw team, fire and police members are working together to ensure we have a safe community this summer,” adds Mayor Braun. “These are preventable incidents and we’re simply asking folks to think about the effects of their actions.”

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