# BYLAW 4-2021 OUTDOOR FIRE BYLAW

Section 7 of the Municipal Government Act permits Council to pass bylaws for municipal purposes in relation to the safety, health and welfare of people and the protection of people and property, and to create offences and impose fines and penalties; and

Section 8 of the Municipal Government Act permits Council to regulate or prohibit particular activities, industries, businesses, or other things; and

Section 3(c) of the Municipal Government Act states that the development and maintenance of safe and viable communities is one of the purposes of a municipality; and

Council recognizes that outdoor fires can easily lead to running fires, become dangerous, and present a risk to the safety, health, and welfare of persons and the safety of property within Strathcona County, particularly when certain precautions are not taken to ensure that the fires are monitored and controlled appropriately;

Therefore Council enacts:

### PART I – PURPOSE, DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

### Purpose

- 1 The purposes of this bylaw are to:
  - (a) establish rules governing burning and outdoor fires within Strathcona County; and
  - (b) prevent wildfire incidents that have the potential to cause serious damage to persons and property; and
  - (c) prevent uncontrolled fires of any kind.

### Citation

2 This bylaw is cited as the Outdoor Fire Bylaw.

### Definitions

- 3 In this bylaw:
  - (a) "burn barrel fire" means a fire, in a non-combustible container with an open top, that is used to burn household refuse, and includes devices typically referred to as incinerators;
  - (b) "bylaw enforcement officer" means an individual appointed or authorized by the Chief Commissioner to enforce County bylaws, including a peace officer and a police officer;
  - (c) "Chief Commissioner" means the chief administrative officer of the County or delegate;

- (d) "County" means the municipal corporation of Strathcona County, a specialized municipality established under the authority of the Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26 and Order in Council 761/95;
- (e) "Fees and Charges Bylaw" means the County's Fees, Rates and Charges Bylaw, Bylaw 37-2019, as amended or replaced;
- (f) "fire ban" means a partial or complete ban of any burning as declared pursuant to this bylaw;
- (g) "fire permit" means a permit issued under this bylaw, which permits a particular type of burning, under the conditions specified as part of the permit or this bylaw;
- (h) "fire pit" means a structure used for recreational fires, and that;
  - i. is fully enclosed on all sides; and
  - ii. is constructed entirely from brick, concrete block, heavy gauge metal, or other non-combustible material; and
  - iii. is located at least three metres from any building, property line, or combustible material; and
  - iv. is fueled only by charcoal or by dry, preservative-free wood or wood products; and
  - v. is covered with a non-combustible mesh screen with openings no greater than 13 millimetres across.
- (i) "fire place" means a structure used for outdoor fires, and that:
  - i. is constructed entirely from brick, concrete block, heavy gauge metal, or other non-combustible material; and
  - ii. has a base fire burning area that is at least 30 centimetres above the surrounding surface grade; and
  - iii. has a fire burning area that is no more than 1.25 metres wide in any direction and is between 40 centimetres and 60 centimetres deep; and
  - iv. has a chimney that extends at least 2.5 metres above the base fire burning area; and
  - v. is covered with a non-combustible mesh screen with openings no greater than 13 millimetres across; and
  - vi. is located at least one metre from any building, property line, or combustible material; and
  - vii. is fueled only by charcoal or by dry, preservative-free wood or wood products.
- (j) "hamlet" means a hamlet, as set out and mapped in the County's Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 20-2017, as amended or replaced;

- (k) "Municipal Government Act" means the Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26;
- (I) "municipal tag" means an offence notice issued pursuant to this bylaw;
- (m) "outdoor fire" means any fire that is not contained within a residence;
- (n) "peace officer" means an individual appointed by the province of Alberta under the authority of the *Peace Officer Act*, SA 2006, c P-3.5, as a peace officer, and with the authority to enforce this bylaw, and includes a police officer;
- (o) "propane or gas appliance" means an appliance or device that is designed, and is being used, to contain a fire that burns exclusively propane gas, natural gas, or naphtha (sometimes referred to as white gas), and which fire can be immediately extinguished by using a manual mechanism such as a valve to completely cut off the source of fuel to the fire;
- (p) "person" means an individual or an incorporated entity;
- (q) "prohibited material" means the materials and items set out in Schedule B;
- (r) "Provincial Offences Procedure Act" means the *Provincial Offences Procedure Act*, RSA 2000, c P-34;
- (s) "recreational fire" means a fire that is used for the purposes of cooking, warmth, or viewing pleasure, and that is fully contained within a;
  - i. fire pit;
  - ii. fireplace;
  - iii. propane or gas appliance; or
  - iv. solid fuel appliance.
- (t) "residence" means an enclosed property, home, house, shelter, room, place, building, or structure, including a portion of a multiunit building or structure, that is occupied by, in the possession of, or under the control of a person who lives or resides there, but does not include the lands associated to it or any structure that is not enclosed on all sides and above;
- (u) "solid fuel appliance" means an appliance or device that is designed, and is being used, to burn solid fuels including wood or wood products, charcoal briquettes, and fuel pellets, and that:

- i. is constructed entirely from brick, concrete block, heavy gauge metal, or other non-combustible material; and
- ii. has a base fire burning area that is at least 30 centimetres above the surrounding surface grade; and
- iii. has a fire burning area that is no more than 1.25 metres wide in any direction; and
- iv. is installed and used according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- (v) "smudge fire" means a fire for the purpose of repelling insects or to prevent frost damage to crops;
- (w) "stubble burning fire" means a fire used to burn the crop residue of annual forage, cereal, oilseed, or pulse crops resulting from a harvesting operation;
- (x) "urban service area" means the urban service area as set out and mapped in the County's *Municipal Development Plan* Bylaw 20-2017;
- (y) "violation ticket" means a ticket issued pursuant to the *Provincial Offences Procedure Act*, RSA 2000, c P-34;

### Interpretation

- 4 The following rules apply to interpretation of this bylaw:
  - (a) The word "including" means "including, but not limited to";
  - (b) Headings, titles, and preambles in this bylaw are for ease of reference only;
  - (c) References to one gender includes all genders, and the singular includes the plural as the context requires;
  - (d) Every provision of this bylaw is independent of all other provisions and if any provision of this bylaw is declared invalid by a Court, all other provisions of this bylaw remain valid and enforceable;
  - (e) References to bylaws and enactments in this bylaw include amendments and replacement bylaws and enactments, and regulations and orders thereunder; and
  - (f) All offences under this bylaw are strict liability offences.

### Application

5 Nothing in this bylaw relieves a person from the obligation to comply with a provision of any other bylaw or enactment, or the requirements of a permit, order, or license issued under another bylaw or enactment.

- 6 The provisions of this bylaw do not apply to:
  - (a) The County's emergency response activities;
  - (b) The County's fire extinguishing, fire prevention, or fire training operations; or
  - (c) Patio torches or candles, provided the burning:
    - i. is not near or in dry vegetation; and
    - ii. is not in a place conducive to the spread of a fire or to an explosion; and
    - iii. is not more than 1 metre in any horizontal dimension, and not more than 60 centimetres in height;
  - (d) An incinerator that is regulated under the *Environmental Protection* and *Enhancement Act*, RSA 2000, c E-12.

### **PART II – ALLOWED FIRES**

# Fire Permit Required

- 7 A person must not build, ignite, or allow an outdoor fire unless that person possesses a valid and subsisting fire permit issued by the Chief Commissioner.
- 8 A person must not build, ignite, or allow an outdoor fire in a manner contrary to the conditions set out in the fire permit that permits that fire.
- 9 For greater clarity, a person allows an outdoor fire if that person:
  - (a) permits another person to build or ignite the fire;
  - (b) permits or allows the fire on that person's property;
  - (c) is present in the vicinity of the fire and is not taking steps to extinguish it; or
  - (d) fails to extinguish the fire when directed to do so by the Chief Commissioner or a bylaw enforcement officer.
- 10 A property owner must ensure that there is a valid and subsisting fire permit for any outdoor fire on the property owner's property. For the purposes of this bylaw, a property owner that fails to do so allows the outdoor fire.

# Permit Exceptions

- 11 Despite any other requirements of this Part, the following types of outdoor fires are permitted without a valid and subsisting fire permit issued by the Chief Commissioner:
  - (a) Recreational fires;

- (b) Fires in public parks on County owned land, when the fire is in a receptacle installed by the County; and
- (c) Smudge fires.

# Rules for Permitexempt Fires

- 12 A person that builds, ignites, or allows a permit-exempt outdoor fire must ensure that it is:
  - (a) contained within a container or pit, as set out in this bylaw; and
  - (b) kept the required distance, as set out in this bylaw, away from structures, combustible materials, and from any property line; and
  - (c) attended and supervised at all times, until the fire is extinguished and the ashes are cold, by a person 18 years of age or older.

# Method of Extinguishing Required No Prohibited Materials

- 13 A person that is attending and supervising an outdoor fire must ensure that an adequate means of extinguishing the fire is available at all times.
- 14 Except as allowed in this bylaw or in any condition placed in a fire permit, a person must not burn any prohibited material.

#### Offences

15 A person who fails to comply with a provision under this Part is guilty of an offense.

### **PART III – FIRE PERMITS**

## Authority to Issue Fire Permits

- 16 The Chief Commissioner is authorized to issue fire permits under this bylaw.
- 17 For each fire permit application, the Chief Commissioner may:
  - (a) issue or decline to issue a fire permit;
  - (b) issue a fire permit on a one-time or on an annual basis;
  - (c) require a site inspection before issuing a fire permit or before an outdoor fire;
  - (d) impose conditions on a fire permit, and on a person that a fire permit is issued to;
  - (e) impose conditions that allow one or more outdoor fires on the same property, and set the same or different conditions on each outdoor fire or on different areas of the property;

- (f) permit the burning, through a condition or conditions in a fire permit, of prohibited materials; or
- (g) any one or more of the above.

# Information Required in Application

- 18 A fire permit applicant must provide any records and information that in the opinion of the Chief Commissioner are material to the fire permit application, including records and information related to:
  - (a) the applicant's name and telephone contact number;
  - (b) the size of parcel of land;
  - (c) the density of structures on land;
  - (d) the size of the proposed fire;
  - (e) the proposed container for the fire;
  - (f) fire control measures put in place by the applicant or the property owner where the outdoor fire will be;
  - (g) the applicant's history of compliance;
  - (h) anything that may lead the Chief Commissioner to believe, reasonably, that the outdoor fire permitted by the fire permit may become a running fire or out of control; and
  - (i) any other safety concerns.

# Factors the Chief Commissioner May Consider

- 19 When determining whether to issue a fire permit, and the conditions and restriction on a permit, the Chief Commissioner may consider:
  - (a) the safety of persons and property;
  - (b) the fire risk at the proposed location, and in the County in general;
  - (c) the consent or objections to the proposed activities by the owner of the land on which the proposed activities will occur;
  - (d) noise or nuisance that may result from the proposed activities;
  - (e) any other information requested or required by the Chief Commissioner or by this bylaw; or
  - (f) any one or more of the above.

## Fire Permit Fee

- 20 (1) Every person applying for a fire permit must pay the fire permit fee prescribed by the Fees and Charges Bylaw.
  - (2) The Chief Commissioner is not authorized to issue a fire permit unless the permit application fee has been paid.

# Permit Not Transferable Chief Commissioner May Vary Conditions

- 21 A fire permit is not transferable between locations or persons.
- 22 The Chief Commissioner may vary the conditions and restrictions of a fire permit, and may revoke a fire permit, if:
  - (a) the applicant provided false or misleading information or records in support of the application;
  - (b) the information or records provided by the applicant are no longer current or correct;
  - (c) there is a contravention of any condition or restriction in the fire permit;
  - (d) due to a change in circumstances, the activity permitted in the fire permit may cause a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a person or persons, or may cause a risk or damage to property; or
  - (e) the applicant is convicted of an offence under this bylaw.

### Offences

23 A person who fails to comply with a provision under this Part is guilty of an offense.

### **PART IV - FIRE BANS**

# Declaring a Fire Ban

- 24 The Chief Commissioner may declare a fire ban that includes a partial or complete ban of any fires or burning, or of any specific kind of fires or burning, within the municipal boundaries of the County.
- 25 The Chief Commissioner may allow an exemption to a fire ban on an individual basis for holders of a valid and subsisting fire permit.

### Fire Ban Factors

- 26 When determining whether to declare a fire ban, the Chief Commissioner may take into consideration any or all of the following factors:
  - (a) current or forecast wind conditions;
  - (b) the levels of recent precipitation;
  - (c) water shortages or restrictions, or water levels in reservoirs;

- (d) availability of firefighters and firefighting equipment;
- (e) the overall fire danger; or
- (f) the fire danger in a particular area of the County.

# Must Comply with Fire Ban

27 When a fire ban has been declared, a person must not build, ignite, or allow an outdoor fire contrary to any restriction set out in the declaration of the fire ban.

# Owner Must Extinguish Fires

28 When a fire ban has been declared, the Chief Commissioner or a bylaw enforcement officer may direct a person who builds, ignites, or allows a fire, or a property owner who has a fire on that property owner's land, to extinguish the fire, and that person or property owner must comply with the direction given.

## Fire Permit Conditions

29 Each fire permit issued by the Chief Commissioner must include a condition that the holder of the permit must, prior to commencing the burn or igniting the outdoor fire, determine if a fire ban has been declared.

# Advertising a Fire Ban

- 30 The Chief Commissioner may advertise a fire ban in any manner the Chief Commissioner determines to be the most effective, including:
  - (a) on the County's website or a dedicated telephone line;
  - (b) on the County's social media accounts;
  - (c) SMS, email, or other electronic alerts;
  - (d) advertisement in a newspaper or in newspapers with distribution in the County;
  - (e) radio advertisement; or
  - (f) any combination of one or more of the above.

# Evidence of Knowledge

31 Evidence that the declaration of a fire ban has been advertised in any manner described in a fire permit or in this bylaw will be proof, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that a person has knowledge of the fire ban.

### **PART V – SPECIAL PROVISIONS**

# Smudge Fire Provisions

32 The following conditions and exceptions apply to any person who builds, ignites, or allows a smudge fire, and to the property owner on whose land a smudge fire is burning:

- (a) Attendance and supervision by a person 18 years of age or older is not required;
- (b) A smudge fire is only allowed on a parcel of land that is 2 acres or larger;
- (c) Only fresh and clean straw, fresh and clean hay, or fresh and clean grass may be burned;
- (d) A smudge fire must be contained in a non-combustible container or receptacle;
- (e) A smudge fire may not be burned in the urban service area, or within a hamlet.

## Burn Barrel Provisions

- 33 The following conditions apply to any person who builds, ignites, or allows a burn barrel fire, and the property owner on whose land a burn barrel fire is burning:
  - (a) A person may burn prohibited materials in a burn barrel, except:
    - i. Items made of or containing rubber, plastic, metal, or tar;
    - ii. Manure
    - iii. Animal Carcasses; and
    - iv. Anything that, when burned, produces dark, toxic, or noxious smoke or produces strong odors;
  - (b) A burn barrel fire may not be burned in the urban service area, or within a hamlet;
  - (c) The burn barrel fire must be contained in a container that:
    - i. Is structurally sound;
    - ii. Is non-combustible;
    - iii. Has draft and smoke vents; and
    - iv. Has a heavy gauge metal mesh screen completely covering the top, with holes smaller than 13 millimetres in any dimension.
- 34 A burn barrel fire must be:
  - (a) a minimum of 3 metres from any building, property line, or combustible material; and
  - (b) attended and supervised at all times, until the fire is extinguished and the ashes are cold, by a person 18 years of age or older

### **PART VI - OFFENCES**

### Offences

35 A person who contravenes or fails to comply with a provision of this bylaw is guilty of an offence.

### **PART VII – ENFORCEMENT**

# Continuing Offences

36 If an offence is of a continuing nature, each day or part thereof that a person fails to comply with the requirements of this bylaw constitutes a new offence.

# Burden of Proof

37 The onus of proving a person has a valid and subsisting fire permit is on the person alleging the permit's existence.

### Obstruction

38 Any person who interferes with or obstructs a bylaw enforcement officer in the execution of the bylaw enforcement officer's duties under this bylaw is guilty of an offence.

## False Information

- 39 Any person who provides false information to a bylaw enforcement officer is guilty of an offence.
- 40 A person who provides false or misleading information on a fire permit application is guilty of an offence.

## Enforcement Measures

- 41 Nothing in this bylaw precludes a bylaw enforcement officer or a peace officer from taking any enforcement measure available in another bylaw or enactment, in addition to issuing a municipal tag or violation ticket for an offence.
- 42 A bylaw enforcement officer is a designated officer of the municipality with the power to conduct inspections, take enforcement action, and order any person to remedy a contravention pursuant to the Municipal Government Act, or as provided for and in accordance with any other enactment or bylaw.

### Municipal Tag

- 43 A bylaw enforcement officer may issue and serve a municipal tag on any person the officer has reasonable and probable grounds to believe has contravened a provision of this bylaw by:
  - (a) personally serving the municipal tag on the person; or
  - (b) mailing a copy of the municipal tag by pre-paid post to the address provided by a person on a fire permit application, or a person's last known postal address.

- 44 A municipal tag shall be in a form approved by the Chief Commissioner and shall state:
  - (a) the name of the person to whom the municipal tag is issued;
  - (b) the particulars of the contravention of the bylaw;
  - (c) the specified penalty for the offence as set out in Schedule "A";
  - (d) that the specified penalty must be paid within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the municipal tag in order to avoid prosecution; and
  - (e) any other information as may be required by the Chief Commissioner.

## Violation Ticket

- 45 If a municipal tag has been issued and the specified penalty on the municipal tag has not been paid within the prescribed time, a peace officer may issue a violation ticket to the person to whom the municipal tag was issued.
- 46 A peace officer may, in the officer's sole discretion, elect to issue and serve a violation ticket without first issuing a municipal tag.
- 47 A peace officer is authorized to issue a violation ticket under Part 2 or Part 3 of the Provincial Offences Procedure Act to any person the peace officer believes on reasonable and probable grounds has committed an offence under this bylaw.
- 48 If a violation ticket is issued it must be in the prescribed form and must:
  - (a) state the specified penalty for the offence as set out in Schedule "A" of this bylaw; or
  - (b) require the person to appear in Provincial Court with or without the alternative of making a voluntary payment.

### **Penalties**

49 Any person guilty of an offence under this bylaw is liable on summary conviction to a penalty in an amount not less than the amount specified in Schedule "A" of this bylaw, or if not prescribed in Schedule "A", not more than \$10,000, and any other penalties as may be prescribed in default of payment in relation to proceedings taken under Part 2 or Part 3 of the Provincial Offences Procedure Act.

### PART VIII - DECISIONS AND APPEALS

### Decisions

- 50 The following matters are within the Chief Commissioner's discretion, subject to any appeal or review provided for in this bylaw or to a court:
  - (a) Prescribing the application, renewal, variation, and other forms required for this bylaw;
  - (b) The decision to issue, decline to issue, or to revoke a fire permit;
  - (c) Determining and imposing conditions and restrictions on a fire permit;
  - (d) Determining whether to declare and whether to cancel a fire ban;
  - (e) Determining the conditions and restrictions on burning during a fire ban;
  - (f) Amending or revoking a fire permit; and
  - (g) Determining the manner of advertising a fire ban.
- 51 Decisions made by the Chief Commissioner, in the exercise of the Chief Commissioner's discretion under this bylaw, to issue a fire permit, and the conditions and restrictions on the fire permit, shall be in writing and delivered:
  - (a) by personal service to the fire permit applicant; or
  - (b) by ordinary mail to the fire permit applicant at the residential address provided in the fire permit application; or
  - (c) by means of any electronic system that allows the fire permit applicant to both apply and to receive the Chief Commissioner's decision.

### **Appeals**

- 52 An appeal to the County's General Appeals and Review Committee lies from the Chief Commissioner's decisions on the following matters:
  - (a) to decline to issue or to revoke a fire permit; or
  - (b) to impose conditions or restrictions on a fire permit.
- 53 A person must deliver notice in writing to the Chief Commissioner of an appeal not later than seven (7) days after the date on which the person was served notice of the Chief Commissioner's decision.

- 54 The Chief Commissioner will, not later than seven (7) days after notice of an appeal was delivered to the Chief Commissioner, deliver to the General Appeals and Review Committee the records and information upon which the decision under appeal was based.
- Following the conclusion of any appeal hearing, the General Appeals and Review Committee must, within seven (7) days, either confirm, reverse, or vary the decision of the Chief Commissioner.

**Decision Final** 

56 The decision of the General Appeals and Review Committee is final, subject to judicial review by the Courts.

### **PART IX - GENERAL**

Repeal 57 Bylaws 68-2000 and 50-2003 are repealed.

Transitional 58 Nothing in this bylaw invalidates any action taken, licence or permit granted

or revoked, or offence proceeding undertaken, pursuant to Bylaw 68-2000

or Bylaw 50-2003.

FIRST READING:	
SECOND READING:	
THIRD READING:	
SIGNED THIS day of, 20	
	MAYOR
	DIRECTOR LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL SERVICES

# SCHEDULE "A" Bylaw 4-2021 OUTDOOR FIRE BYLAW SPECIFIED PENALTIES

Section	Offence	First Offence	Second Offence Within two year period	Third or more Offences Within two year period
7	Build, ignite or allow an outdoor fire without a fire permit	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
8	Build, ignite, or allow an outdoor fire contrary to conditions or restriction in a fire permit	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
10	Property owner fails to ensure there is a fire permit for a fire on the owner's property	\$175	\$350	\$700
12(a)	Failure to contain a permit-exempt fire within an approved container or pit	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
12(b)	Failure to keep a permit-exempt fire the required distance from combustible materials, property line, tree, hedge, fence, roadway, or overhead power line	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
12(c)	Failure to ensure permit-exempt fire is supervised at all times by a person 18 or older	\$100	\$200	\$500
12(c)	Failure to ensure a permit-exempt fire is supervised at all times	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
13	Failure to ensure a means of extinguishing a fire is present	\$150	\$300	\$600
14	Burn a prohibited material	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
18	Failure to provide records or information as part of a fire permit application	\$100	\$200	\$500
27	Build, ignite, or allow a fire contrary to a restriction in a fire ban	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
28	Failure to extinguish an outdoor fire during a fire ban, when directed to do so by the Chief Commissioner or a bylaw enforcement officer	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,000
32(b)	Smudge fire on a parcel of land that is less than 2 acres	\$100	\$200	\$500
32(c)	Smudge fire burning a material other than fresh, clean straw, hay, or grass	\$100	\$200	\$500
32(d)	Smudge fire not contained in a non- combustible container	\$100	\$200	\$500
32(e)	Smudge fire in the urban service area or a hamlet	\$250	\$500	\$1000

33(b)	Burn barrel fire in the urban service area or a hamlet	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
33(c)	Burn barrel fire not contained in an acceptable container	\$100	\$200	\$500
34(a)	Burn barrel fire within 3 metres of a building, property line, or combustible materials	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
34(b)	Burn barrel fire not supervised by a person 18 years of age or older	\$100	\$200	\$500
34(b)	Burn barrel fire not supervised at all times	\$250	\$500	\$1,000
38	Obstruct or interfere with bylaw enforcement officer in execution of duties	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,000
39	Provide false information to a bylaw enforcement officer	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,000
40	Provide false or misleading information on a fire permit application	\$250	\$500	\$1,000

# SCHEDULE "B" Bylaw 4-2021 OUTDOOR FIRE BYLAW PROHIBITED MATERIALS

- 1. The following materials are prohibited materials:
  - (a) Straw;
  - (b) Hay;
  - (c) Painted, stained, or treated wood;
  - (d) Construction material or demolition debris;
  - (e) Items made of or containing rubber, plastic, metal, or tar;
  - (f) Manure;
  - (g) Paper;
  - (h) Cardboard;
  - (i) Grass, weeds, leaves, and tree prunings;
  - (j) Organic household waste;
  - (k) Animal Carcasses;
  - (I) Anything that, when burned, produces dark, toxic, or noxious smoke or produces strong odors.