



Planning Procedure for Wildfire Interface Considerations

Wildfire Act/Regulation

The *Wildfire Act* is the governing legislation in BC, established specifically for wildfire protection. Section 7 requires a person conducting an industrial activity or a prescribed activity on forest or grass land, or within 1km of forest or grass land, to conduct fire hazard assessments and abate as needed or prescribed.

The *Wildfire Regulation* implements and interprets the Wildfire Act. Section 11 and 12 set out the prescribed activities and the circumstances where fire hazards created by an industrial activity must be abated and defines time limits and abatement levels that must be followed for interface and non-interface areas.

A Guide to Fuel Hazard Assessment and Abatement in BC (April 2012) provides a default procedure for determining the fire hazard created by carrying out an industrial or prescribed activity on forest land, and the degree of abatement needed to reduce fire hazard if the hazard has been increased by the activity.

A Guide to Fuel Hazard Assessment and Abatement in BC

A Guide to Fuel Hazard Assessment and Abatement in BC (April 2012) is not a legal document but provides helpful interpretation and guidance as related to the Wildfire Act and the Wildfire Regulation. It includes definitions as follows:

Interface:

An area inside, or within 2 km of, the boundaries of

- (i) a fire protection district in a regional district;
- (ii) an improvement district;
- (iii) a water improvement district; or
- (iv) a prescribed organization.

Items (ii) to (iv) are contained in the definition of "local government" under paragraphs (d) to (f) of section 1 of the Wildfire Act.

For the purposes of complying with subsection 11(2)(a) of the Regulation, the British Columbia Fire Risk Map as it relates to hazard abatement, updated from time to time, may be used by persons to determine the relative proximity of their industrial activity to the Interface, however, it is the responsibility of industry to determine the exact proximity of their operations to interface in close adjacency situations.



Wildland Urban Interface

Outside of Interface areas (non-interface areas), legal hazard abatement requirements apply as set out by the Wildfire Regulation. WUI mapping has been created by Wildfire Management Branch to reflect areas of concern in non-interface areas. WUI mapping is based on known structure densities and is not live; new or unknown structures may not be reflected in the WUI mapping. In WUI, BCTS' goal is to avoid increasing wildfire risk to structures and private land due to BCTS activities.

Procedure

1. BCTS staff will determine if proposed development is within Interface.
 - ☐ use the British Columbia Fire Risk Map to determine if the proposed activities are within Interface <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/wildfire-management/prevention/for-industry-commercial-operators/hazard-assessment-abatement/haz-assess-abate-fire-risk>
 - available as a geodatabase at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/wildfire-management/prevention/for-industry-commercial-operators/hazard-assessment-abatement>
 - **NOTE: there are known errors with this map (i.e. the Cluculz Lake Fire Protection District is not considered). As noted in the definition of Interface, it is our responsibility to determine the proximity of our activities to interface areas.**
2. BCTS staff will use the 'Wildland Urban Interface 2015' layer (available in the Resources map window – Planning Staff View) to determine if the proposed development is within the Wildland Urban Interface buffer (WUI).
3. BCTS will advise Contractors if proposed development is within Interface (legal requirements) or WUI (BMPs/guidance).
4. If any structures are identified that are not included in an Interface or WUI polygon, GPS the structure and consider applying the guidance for WUI to the structure, in order to avoid increasing wildfire risk. Ensure the structure location is tracked in the BCTS spatial layers and provide the information to the Forest District/Wildfire Management Branch.
5. BCTS staff will provide guidance to MP Contractors where appropriate
 - ☐ Where proposed development is within Interface areas, hazard must be mitigated as per the Hazard Abatement Guidelines
 - ☐ Where proposed development is within WUI, implement strategies to avoid increasing wildfire risk to property owners due to BCTS activities (including harvesting, road building and Silviculture activities)
6. Hazard Abatement Strategies are to be selected in consideration of the existing stand attributes, the proximity to private land, and other management requirements (i.e. Riparian retention, WTRA targets, Archaeological sites). Hazard abatement strategies may include:
 - ☐ Consider risk based on stand characteristics
 - PI(Sb) stands with understory of Black Spruce / immature pine is relatively high risk due to ladder fuels and high levels of fine fuels
 - Wet and rich sites tend to have a lesser fire hazard



- ☐ Design the block in consideration of fire hazards
 - Ensure that flexibility available in riparian retention is considered – i.e. achieve the required BA implement by focusing retention on live structure and removing dead trees.
 - Consider WTRA placement to reduce fire hazard while meeting other objectives. i.e. do not leave WTRA with dead pine adjacent to private property.
 - ☐ Implement 'clean logging' standards
 - The standard TSL clause is included in TSLs, using 15cm diameter as the maximum size to be left.
 - ☐ Reduce fine fuels and ladder fuels
 - Note that Coarse Woody Debris is not detrimental in typical quantities
 - avoid retention of black spruce (ladder fuel)
 - reduce dispersed retention
 - require 'debris free buffers' (30-50m) along standing timber to prevent potential fire spread
 - Skidding along the edge can reduce the fine fuels present
 - Consider broadcast burning
 - ☐ Create fuel breaks
 - Avoid monocultures and uniform stands
 - Consider the use of deciduous as a fire break. The FSP allows for deciduous to be considered non-competing in certain situations
 - Consider establishing fuel breaks in standing timber. i.e. implement a 5m wide fuel break every 200m in retention
 - ☐ Discuss options and specific circumstances with Protection – there may be funding available for high priority projects
4. BCTS staff member to advise the appropriate Planning staff of the outcomes for discussion with Private landowners / stakeholders where appropriate.
 5. BCTS pre-works associated with harvesting, road construction, and road deactivation projects will confirm the Interface / WUI considerations pertaining to the development area.
 6. Multi-phase contractors are responsible to ensure their staff are knowledgeable of: the BCTS planning process pertaining Wildfire Interface.
 7. Upon completion of planned development, the multi-phase contractor / signing forester preparing related site plans must complete an associated site plan check list, indicating the Interface / WUI considerations. Where warranted (and in co-ordination with the BCTS representative), appropriate text and mitigative measures must be included in the site plan.