
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

October 22, 2021

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
and Rural Development

Thompson Okanagan Wildfire Motorized Vehicle Restrictions

Motor Vehicle Closures are in place for the following wildfire areas in the Thompson Okanagan Region. This is pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation under Section 109 of the *Wildlife Act*.

Fire	Fire number	closure area (ha)
Sparks Lake	K21001	105,131
Momich Lake	K21658	28,651
Tremont Creek	K21849	74,509
Two Mile Road	K42078	4,724
Bunting Road	K41561	7,167
Hunakwa/Crazy Creek complex	K41676/ K41769	8,592
Thomas Creek	K51794	16,350
Nk'Mip	K52061	20,714
July Mountain	K61882	23,316
White Rock Lake	K61884	99,409
Garrison Lake	K62088	18,328
Mckay Creek	K71030	44,784
Mowhokam Creek	V11669	8,941
Lytton complex	K71086/ K70804	96,087

Why are these motorized vehicle restrictions in place?

- Communities and forests were severely impacted by the 2021 Wildfire season with more than 550,000 ha of habitat in the Thompson Okanagan Region burnt.
- The 2021 wildfires and fire suppression activities (e.g., creation of approximately 2,900 km of fire guards) have opened up areas that were previously difficult to access.
- High road and fire guard densities, improved sight lines for hunters and predators across burnt landscapes, and concentration into remnant habitats is likely to increase vulnerability of wildlife populations.
- Unatuthorized public access can have negative effects on sensitive burned ecosystems including increased soil compaction, increased spread of invasive species, and accelerated erosion of wildfire-charred soils which impacts aquatic ecosystems and fish habitat.

Will these motor vehicle prohibitions be permanent?

- These closures are intended as a temporary measure that will be in effect while restoration activities for the fire area are being planned and initiated. Although there is

no 'sunset clause' in the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation, the intent is to repeal or replace these closures in approximately 18 months time. Where appropriate, they will be replaced with site-specific mechanisms that reflect the fire severity, the degree of recovery, and the intent of the recovery plans that will be collaboratively developed with First Nations, and informed by Stakeholders.

What types of vehicles are included in this prohibition?

- The Motor Vehicle Closure applies to all motorized vehicles including automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, motorhomes, electric bikes and all types of off-road recreational vehicles, wheeled or tracked.

Which roads and trails are included in this motor vehicle closure?

- All forest service roads except those identified in green on the motor vehicle closure maps.
- All recreation trails, and trail networks.

Which roads are not included in this motor vehicle closure?

The following roads are accessible within the closure areas:

- All public roads.
For the purposes of this closure, a public road is defined as a road that is maintained by the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.
- Forest Service roads that are explicitly identified as open and highlighted green on the motor vehicle closure maps.
Accessible Forest Service Roads are typically two-lane mainline gravel roads that provide routes through a motor vehicle closure polygon.

Can I hunt or recreate within the motor vehicle closure areas?

- Hunting is permitted within the motor vehicle closure areas.
- Motor vehicle closures can be accessed by non-motorized means for any recreational purpose (e.g. on foot, horseback or bicycle).
- As this area is sensitive to disturbance, if you do need to go into the area, please stay on existing roads and trails to minimize any disturbance.

Are there any exceptions to the current motor vehicle prohibitions?

- The order does not apply to commercial activities other than hunting.
- Individuals may use or operate a motor vehicle on private property and on roads used to access private property.

Can I get a permit to access a closure area using a motor vehicle?

- You may apply for an exemption to access a motor vehicle closed area through Front Counter BC at [General Wildlife Permit - Authorization Guidance - Natural Resource Online Services \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/soc/life/wildlife/wildlife_permit_authorization_guidance_natural_resource_online_services)

- Generally, exemptions will be considered only for disabled access, or for activities required for assessment, maintenance and public safety. For all other purposes, please contact staff at 2021Wildlife.closures@gov.bc.ca prior to submitting an application.

Will the closure be enforced?

- Enforcement patrols will ensure compliance with these prohibitions.

How can I find out more information?

More Information on the MVC, including maps, can be found:

- At www.gov.bc.ca/motorvehicleprohibitions
- By emailing 2021Wildlife.closures@gov.bc.ca
- By calling 250-362-4683. Note that this is an answering service. Staff will return your call within 2 business days.