

Campfires halted in part of Canada for pandemic: How do they impact the coronavirus?

By Mark Price

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Countless things have been banned due to the coronavirus outbreak — from weddings to cafe seating — but the newest addition to the growing list might be a head scratcher: Campfires.

Multiple cities and districts in western Canada announced Friday they are banning campfires, but not because of social distancing infractions during weenie roasts.

It's the smoke that is a threat, the Regional District of Central Okanagan said in a news release.

“The ban will remain in effect until further notice to support COVID-19 health efforts by reducing potential air pollution,” the release said. “Evidence has shown that exposure to air pollution can increase susceptibility to respiratory viral infections by decreasing immune function.”

Open burning has also been banned in the region and officials even went as far as to remind motorists “not to throw cigarettes or other smoking materials from their vehicle.”

Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a potentially fatal respiratory disease that has infected more than a quarter of a million people in the United States and Canada, according to the latest data from Johns Hopkins University.

It's highly contagious, leading to the banning of activities that bring people together in crowds, including religious ceremonies, recreational activities and funerals.

Seniors with severe medical conditions — such as heart disease, lung disease and diabetes — are at the biggest risk for developing serious COVID-19 illness, the CDC says.