

From: **"Mochrie, Paul"**
To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**
Date: 2024-05-08 4:27:07 PM
Subject: Upcoming news release: Lockable butane lighter sales extinguished to support harm reduction (May 8, 2024)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Following your approval at this week's Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting, I am writing to inform you that the City jointly with VFRS will be issuing the below news release regarding the ban of lockable butane lighter sales.

Maria will reply to this email with the relevant Vancouver.ca link and social media links, once these are live.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

City of Vancouver
Vancouver Fire Rescue Services
News release
May 8, 2024

Lockable butane lighter sales extinguished to support harm reduction

The sale of continuous flame butane lighters and torches will soon be prohibited across Vancouver as the City aims to reduce structure fires, serious injuries and deaths.

Starting June 28, Vancouver retailers will be banned from selling lockable butane lighters and torches, with violators subject to a \$1,000 fine.

Today's Council decision follows a surge in serious incidents sparked by the improper use of these lighters in the last fifteen months.

"Our firefighters have seen far too many fires, deaths and injuries at the hands of these devices," said Karen Fry, Fire Chief and General Manager of Vancouver Fire Rescue Services. "Restricting the sale of these lockable butane lighters is a significant step in reducing harm to vulnerable groups, risks to firefighters and the loss of valuable housing."

According to Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) [2023 Annual Report](#), smoker materials are the main cause of fires in Vancouver, with 59 per cent of all fires attributed to apparatus involving an open flame, an increase of 31 per cent from the previous year.

From January 2023 to April 2024, 3,128 fires have been attributed to careless use of lockable butane lighters, 356 of which occurred in Single Residency Occupancy (SRO) buildings. These devices have also been recorded as the probable cause of 79 fire-related injuries and six fire fatalities.

On top of strict by-law enforcement, VFRS will continue to work with SRO building operators and staff to educate residents on the risks of open flames and support fire safety training.

The City will also advocate for provincial and federal regulations for safer continuous flame butane lighters and additional fire safety initiatives.

About Lockable Butane Lighters

The device soon to be prohibited for sale across Vancouver is a lighter, fuelled by butane, that can be locked to produce a continuous flame. Their design renders them susceptible to misuse, particularly if operating while impaired. Users are exposed to further danger when refilling as spilled lighter fluid can easily ignite and spread to clothing.

Butane lighters that require ongoing intervention of the user to produce a continuous flame are not being regulated as they do not pose the same public safety and fire risks.

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Media contacts:

City of Vancouver

Civic Engagement and Communications

media@vancouver.ca

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services

Captain Matthew Trudeau, Public Information Officer

matthew.trudeau@vancouver.ca

604-603-2466