



Press Release

CHANGES TO GARBAGE RULES PROTECT SAFETY OF COMMUNITY AND BEARS

Port Coquitlam, BC – JULY 14, 2009 ... Bylaw changes aimed to prevent bears from becoming habituated to garbage will take effect in Port Coquitlam on August 4. Monday night, Port Coquitlam City Council adopted changes to the Solid Waste Bylaw that will require all property owners in known problem areas to secure their garbage and other bear and wildlife attractants.

The changes are part of the City's ongoing efforts to address the community's escalating bear problem, which saw nine bears killed in Port Coquitlam last year because they became habituated to human food sources such as garbage and fallen fruit. In the past 10 weeks alone, more than 125 bears have been spotted in Port Coquitlam, one bear has been killed and three have been relocated.

"Bear sightings have been increasing substantially and the City is taking a proactive step now to protect the safety of our community," Mayor Greg Moore said. "You could also view these changes as being part of the evolution of our garbage system, which is a core City service. Port Coquitlam has always been a leader in finding better ways to manage our waste."

The bylaw changes place more responsibility on property owners for ensuring their property does not attract bears and other wildlife, including coyotes, wolves, cougars, raccoons and skunks. The changes will apply to all property owners – not just those receiving City pickup – within neighbourhoods known to attract bears.

The changes require property owners within the targeted areas to secure all wildlife attractants, such as garbage or kitchen waste, in either:

- a wildlife-resistant enclosure (fully enclosed – such as a garage or garden shed – and strong enough or designed to prevent access by bears or other wildlife), or
- a wildlife-resistant container (strong enough or designed to prevent access by bears or other wildlife). For residents who receive City collection, this means locking the carts with a Bear-Aware approved latch such as Critter Guard.

In addition to garbage and kitchen waste, wildlife attractants include food products, beverage containers, barbecue grills, compost (in piles, not composters), pet food, bird feed, diapers, grease barrels, petroleum products and chemical products.

Other bylaw changes that apply to the targeted areas include:

- garbage containers are to be set out between 5:30 to 7:30 a.m. on collection day, with all latches removed (containers to be secured again as soon as possible after collection and no later than by 7 p.m. that day),
- owners of fruit trees must immediately remove fallen fruit and pick fruit upon ripening,
- beehives, bird feeders and petroleum products (i.e. grease and motor oil) must be inaccessible to wildlife,
- outdoor refrigerators or freezers must be securely locked or inaccessible to wildlife, and
- wildlife attractants may not be put into compost piles.

A map of the targeted areas has been posted at www.portcoquitlam.ca/bears, and properties within the areas will be notified of the bylaw changes. Enforcement will initially focus on education and awareness, with the initial contact with property owners being a visit from City staff to provide information and advice on how to comply with the bylaw. Fines will only be applied in cases of ongoing non-compliance.

“Our primary goal is education – what we really want to see is fewer bears in our neighbourhoods,” said Cllr. Brad West, Chair of the Community Safety Committee that introduced the bylaw changes. “We hope that through education and working together, fines will not be necessary. We need to get a handle on this issue because it’s important for the safety of our residents.”

The bylaw changes fulfill a provincial requirement for Bear Smart Community status, which recognizes communities that are proactive about managing human/bear conflicts. The City has also implemented a Bear Aware program this year and has conducted public education campaigns throughout bear season for several years.

Other bear-detering ideas include:

- Wrap up smellier garbage items in newspaper and freeze them until garbage day.
- Sprinkle lime inside backyard composters to deter bears.
- Never approach, interact or feed bears.

Residents who are concerned about their ability to comply with the bylaw are encouraged to contact the City’s Operations Division at 604.927.5488 or 604.927.5480, or operations@portcoquitlam.ca .

For more information or to view the complete bylaw, visit www.portcoquitlam.ca/bears .

- 30 -

MEDIA CONTACT:

Igor Zahynacz, P.Eng
Director of Engineering and Operations
City of Port Coquitlam
tel.: 604-927-5453
e-mail: zahynaczi@portcoquitlam.ca
www.portcoquitlam.ca