



## City to Remove Driftwood from Gonzales Beach to Prevent Beach Fires

Date: Tuesday, April 27, 2010

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Even though it is illegal to have beach fires in the Capital City, the Victoria Fire Department still responds to nearly 200 calls each year to put out beach fires that get out of control or are left smoldering. These fires pose a risk to those on or near the beach. The City of Victoria will be removing driftwood from Gonzales Bay this week as part of a trial project to prevent beach fires.

City Parks staff will collect wood that is less than two metres long and 30 centimetres wide from two locations on the beach. The driftwood will then be taken to the Beacon Hill Park Maintenance Yard, where it will be chipped for re-use in City garden beds and chip trails.

To minimize any impacts to the beach, Parks staff will carefully place the collected wood into the bucket of a small tractor, to be located on two access ramps. Gonzales Beach will remain open during the work and every effort will be made to minimize any disruptions to residents, beach users and pedestrians.

The work is timed to take place prior to summer holidays - when the number of beach fires tends to peak - and when storms are less likely to bring new driftwood to shore. The removal of wood is expected to be completed by the end of the week.

Beach fires are often difficult to access due to their location, and a small or smoldering fire can be time consuming to put out, occupying emergency responders who may be needed elsewhere in the community. Beach fires can have serious impacts on natural vegetation, property and people's safety. The embers and ash left behind also create a hazard for other beach users. Preventing beach fires will ensure the beach is safe and enjoyable.

An offence under the Parks Regulation Bylaw can result in a fine of up to \$2,000.

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### **For More Information:**

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