

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CVRD continues wood smoke reduction rebate program for 2024

DUNCAN, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is offering a series of rebates valued up to \$2,350 to help residents invest in healthier home heating options.

The Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program (Program) is funded by the BC Lung Association (BC Lung) and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV). The Program provides financial assistance to help residents purchase healthier home-heating options to reduce smoke pollution and improve air quality in the Cowichan Valley.

This year, the Program offers two types of incentives, one for replacing *and* one for removing wood-burning appliances with the Exchange Initiative and the Bounty Program.

Exchange Initiative

The Wood-Burning Appliance Exchange Program offers financial incentives for replacing wood-burning appliances with more efficient and healthier home heating appliances. Residents looking to upgrade their home heating systems are eligible for rebates up to \$2,350 depending on the appliance type.

In addition, the Program also allows residents in rural areas to keep their old wood-burning appliances for emergency use when applying for a heat pump rebate. “Given the frequency and intensity of winter storms, residents in rural areas have expressed concern over frequent power outages if a heat pump were to be their only heat source,” said Keith Lawrence, Senior Environmental Analyst at the CVRD. “Allowing these residents to keep their old wood-burning appliance for emergency use encourages the use of the heat-pump rebate.”

Wood-Burning Appliance Bounty Initiative

The CVRD is now offering a separate incentive for residents to remove existing non-EPA or CSA-certified wood-burning appliances without requiring the installation of a new heating appliance. The \$300 one-time incentive is limited to one per household and only applies to installed, working-order appliances. Eligible residents are required to dismantle their old appliance before recycling it at a CVRD Recycling Centre free of charge.

Program Benefits

“With the cost of living increasing, it is important that we make healthier home heating options more accessible to ensure that the program benefits a wider audience,” said Aaron Stone, Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

Beyond accessibility, the benefits of the 2024 program are shared by individuals and the community as a whole by:

1. Reducing Wood Smoke Pollution

Transitioning to a more efficient home heating system reduces fine particulate matter released into the atmosphere from wood burning. “This is especially important due to the Cowichan Valley’s unique topography,” said Clayton Postings, General Manager of the Strategic Services Division

at the CVRD. “Living in a low-lying valley with surrounding mountains limits the amount of wind required to mix atmospheric air, which can cause smoke to persist for days.”

2. Improving Health for You and Your Community

Upgrading your home heating system can benefit the health of everyone in your neighbourhood. “The steps we take to collectively improve our local air quality can support the health of our community,” said Dr. Shannon Waters, Medical Health Officer for the Cowichan Valley Region. “While it is difficult to reduce all sources of wood smoke, due to events such as summer wildfires, improving air quality when we can in the winter and choosing a more efficient-home heating appliance will benefit people living with COPD and asthma.”

3. Saving Time and Money

While switching to a heat pump saves the time of hauling, chopping and stacking wood, upgrading to a new wood-burning appliance also has its benefits by capturing more heat using less wood. Residents may also find a reduction in their annual home insurance bill when removing or upgrading wood-burning appliances. For additional information on how to get the most heat from your wood while creating as little smoke as possible, see the Fraser Basin Council’s [Tips for a Cleaner Burn video](#).

For more information about the CVRD Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program and how to apply, visit www.cvrld.ca/Woodstove. To learn more about stacking other home heating appliance rebates, visit [Better Homes BC](#) and the [Canada Greener Homes Grant](#) or contact a home energy coach for free at 1-844-881-9790.

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