



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Dangers of Landscape Bark Mulch**

The Parksville Fire Department would like residents and businesses to be aware of the danger posed by the use of mulch in landscaping. Bark mulch, commonly used as ground cover, can become a fire hazard, particularly in hot dry conditions. Mulch fires occur year-round but primarily in the summer when there is little rainfall.

Over the past two weeks, the Parksville Fire Department has seen a significant increase in the number of fires occurring in landscaping mulch. Fires starting in mulch can very quickly spread to surrounding shrubbery and then to the buildings. Factors such as below-average rainfall, extremely dry conditions, warm temperatures, and abnormal winds increase the risk of serious damage from mulch fires. Often, this burning mulch is up against the side of a residential or commercial structure, where it is likely to be unnoticed. This burning/smoldering mulch may eventually ignite the underneath of the siding, decking, plantings or such, and then spread into the structural components of the building causing extensive damage.

Another key factor in the increase of mulch fires has been the prohibition on smoking indoors which can lead to discarded lighted smoking materials, including matches, into the landscaped areas around buildings and can be the cause of ignition for many mulch fires.

With the hot, dry conditions of summer months, residents are encouraged to keep the bark mulch moist and ideally provide a minimum of an 18 inch clearance between landscaping mulched beds and combustible building materials.

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**For more information:**

Parksville Volunteer Fire Department 250 248-3242