

Answers to Climate Action FAQs

Q: Are there discounts available for residents on locally grown food?

A: Many local producers do offer a discount to locals, and many also offer ‘gate’ prices when you come to their location rather than buying through a storefront or at the Farmers’ Market.

Q: Why do some of my recyclables need to be taken to the landfill or bottle depot? Why can’t I put everything in my curbside collection?

A: The stewardship body for paper and packaging recycling, Recycle BC, sets all standards regarding what materials can be put into the curbside collection recycling. These standards are set for a number of reasons, including the limitations of the mechanical sorters used at the recycling processing facilities.

Each time a non-permitted material is placed into curbside recycling, the entire batch is considered “contaminated” by Recycle BC, and may be disposed of as garbage. Additionally, the District becomes subject to fines for having high levels of contamination in our residential recycling. By keeping your recyclables sorted according to the guidelines established by Recycle BC, you help keep waste out of the landfill and minimize the District’s costs associated with recycling.

Q: Why doesn’t Summerland have roll-out collection bins for garbage, recycling, and yard waste?

A: Bins for curbside collection are coming to Summerland in 2018. Stay tuned to www.summerland.ca and the monthly newsletter for details.

Q: What can be done about chemicals being flushed down sinks/toilets into our water system?

A: Summerland’s Sanitary Sewer Regulation prohibits the discharge of chemicals into our water system (see Section 2 of the bylaw [here](#)). If it is found that a resident is dumping anything harmful to the system as laid out in the bylaw, they can be ticketed. Summerland also has the backing of the BC Ministry of Environment for enforcement.

Our system has some safeguards through dilution into large tanks, removal of any floating or sinking substance, as well as foul air extraction for volatiles. Many compounds are also readily digestible by the microorganisms or can be oxidized by our UV system. Any inherently toxic compounds in sufficient quantity will quickly affect our microorganisms and will be detected before it ever gets out to the receiving environment. We regularly hold plant tours and discuss this topic.

All chemicals, paints, fertilizers, etc. should be disposed of at the Summerland landfill. Expired prescription medications should be taken to a pharmacy for safe disposal.

Q: What heating alternatives exist to wood burning stoves?

A: There are several options for changing out older smoky wood stoves for cleaner heating options including heat pumps, gas or pellet stoves and cleaner burning wood stoves. FortisBC offers a suite of rebates for upgrading your heating source – details can be found on their website. The District of Summerland has also advocated for the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen to take on the administrative role for providing grants through the Province’s Wood Stove Exchange Program to member municipalities, including Summerland.

Q: What can be done about reducing pesticide use?

A: “Pesticides” is typically an umbrella term for insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc., each of which has different uses, formulas, and a different fate in the environment. When used properly, pesticides can play a valuable role in controlling weeds, insects, and other pests. On the other hand, they can harm wildlife if the user does not follow label directions. Wildlife includes non-target birds, mammals, fish, aquatic invertebrates, insect pollinators, and plants. Chronic exposure to certain types of pesticides has also been linked to illnesses in humans.

In many cases, pesticide use can be reduced without crop or monetary losses. The US EPA has published tips for pesticide use by residents, farmers, and Certified Pesticide Applicators, as well as resources for reducing pesticide effects on wildlife [here](#). By following these recommendations and educating ourselves and our communities about how to use pesticides effectively, we can all contribute to reducing the ill effects of pesticides on our environment.

Q: Can I put solar panels on the roof of my property? What about ground-mounted or otherwise?

A: Summerland is undergoing a comprehensive review of our Net Metering program, including the regulations surrounding where solar panels can be placed on private properties. Under Summerland’s current zoning bylaw, Section 7.11 Renewable Energy Systems and Infrastructure:

7.11.3 Solar Energy Devices:

(a) In residential and commercial zones, solar energy devices shall be permitted provided that the solar energy device shall:

- (i) be attached to a principal or Accessory Building; and
- (ii) not extend beyond the outermost edge of the roof.

(b) In agricultural, industrial and institutional zones, solar energy devices shall be permitted provided that:

- (i) the device is located on or within the either principal or Accessory Building in which case the device shall not extend beyond the outermost edge of the roof; or
- (ii) as a standalone Structure subject to the zoning requirements for the principal Building on the Lot where the device is located.

Q: How can I get a rain barrel for my property?

A: Rain barrels are usually readily available through hardware stores or via online order from a plastics manufacturer. It’s important to buy one where the spigot is not too high up the barrel so water isn’t wasted. Check out other tips & tricks for success with rain barrels [here](#).

The RDOS also has a very interesting video series regarding water conservation available [here](#).

Q: Does Summerland have a community garden?

A: The District of Summerland does not operate or oversee any community gardens; however, there are community gardens on private property in Summerland, including at the Alliance Church.

Q: Why was my recycling tagged and left behind?

A: Recycling that contains materials prohibited from the curbside collection (such as glass, soft plastics, styrofoam, electronics, household hazardous waste, toys, clothes, and general garbage) will be tagged and left behind. To ensure your recycling only contains acceptable materials, please review the [Curbside Collection Calendar](#) or [Recycle BC](#).

Q: What items can I recycle in Summerland, and where?

A: A large number of items can be recycled, including paper, packaging, electronics, paints, wood waste, appliances, batteries, and many others. Visit [Recyclable Materials in Summerland](#) or [the Recycling Council of BC](#) for more information.

Q: Why can't I separate my household organics for composting?

A: At this time, only yard waste is able to be composted in the District of Summerland. Residents are encouraged to compost their household organics in a responsible manner. Information on how to effectively compost can be found from many sources, including the Compost Council of Canada <http://www.compost.org/English/backyard.html>

For garden and yard waste, there are 10 curbside pickup dates per year ([Curbside Collection Calendar](#)). Yard waste may be placed in plastic containers, steel containers, or kraft paper yard bags. Clear plastic bags are not accepted. Branches or prunings must be bundled together up to 1 metre in length, tie with twine or string.

If you are using containers, they must have a "Yard Waste Only" sticker on the outside, which are available for free at Municipal Hall or at the Works and Utilities Department. Using a container will save you the cost of purchasing kraft paper bags.

There is no limit to the number of bags/containers placed at the curb, maximum weight 25kg per bag or container. Additionally, up to 500 kg of separated yard & garden waste can be brought to the landfill for no charge.

The District of Summerland's compost is available for purchase for 2 cents per kilogram (minimum charge \$2.00). More information can be found here: [Summerland Compost Sales Information](#).