

PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY

January 10, 2020

VICTORIA – Be advised that the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development (the “**Ministry**”) plans on conducting aerial gunning activities into 2020, as part of their wolf cull program.

The discharging of firearms from an airborne commercial helicopter poses a direct safety risk to flight crew, passengers, the general public, and the airworthiness of the machine.

Further, the weapons are being discharged over dual-use public lands where other members of the public often frequent through backcountry exploration and recreation. Firing at a moving target (in this case a running wolf) results in certain ballistic concerns with over penetration and the ability of the shooter to confirm safe backdrops. A bullet that misses, ricochets, or over penetrates the intended target has the potential of travelling miles in various directions, depending on the site-specific circumstances. This poses a direct risk to public safety.

Additionally, accidental damage to a helicopter in flight endangers the pilot, passenger, and potentially the public if a crash took place.

There are various pieces of federal and provincial legislation that deal with both air safety, weapons, and certain hunting actions. There is no legislation that explicitly authorizes aerial gunning activities. In fact, the contrary appears to be present when federal and provincial statutes are read harmoniously.

As the responsible ministers, you are here advised that serious air safety and public safety concerns are present should civilian contractors, with questionable qualifications, be continually allowed to discharge firearms from commercial aircraft.

The public is hereby advised to be extremely cautious within the Peace Region when engaging in backcountry exploration or recreation in January – March 2020 and to contact your local police department if you feel in danger.