



West Virginia Division of Forestry
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Joe Manchin III, Governor
Randy Dye, Director/State Forester

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Spring Forest Fire Season Begins March 1 **Outdoor burning restricted from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Officials at the West Virginia Division of Forestry remind residents that from March 1 through May 31, outdoor burning is prohibited between the hours of 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. During this three-month period, known as the spring forest fire season, outdoor burning is permitted only in the evening and at night, between the hours of 4 p.m. and 7 a.m., when the chances of a fire escaping are reduced due to cooler temperatures, increased humidity and calmer winds.

Director/State Forester Randy Dye said that escaped debris burning and arson were the leading causes of forest fires last year in West Virginia. “Arson was the cause of 32 percent of all the fires and escaped debris fires caused another 32 percent,” Dye said. “If our residents will be careful with their fires and report suspected arsonists, nearly all of the state’s forest fires can be prevented and we can save thousands of acres of forestland from severe damage to our trees, soil, streams and wildlife habitat.”

Other causes of fires were equipment use (17%), children (3%), smokers (2%), campfires (2%), railroads (2%) and lightning (2%). Seven percent of fires were deemed to be caused by miscellaneous events and another one percent is still under investigation.

Besides the daytime burning restrictions, other outdoor burning laws are in effect during this time:

- All outdoor fires must have a safety strip for a minimum distance of 10 feet around the materials being burned. This strip must be cleared down to the mineral soil to lessen the chances of an errant spark escaping into the woods and starting a forest fire.
- All fires must be totally extinguished and not left unattended for any period of time. Anyone caught breaking the law can be charged with a misdemeanor, fined up to \$300, and held liable for costs of fighting the fire and any damage the fire may have caused to others’ property.

Forestry officials suggest in addition to obeying the state’s forest fires laws that residents should never burn anything on a windy day, make sure the area they are burning in is clear of flammable materials, and have tools, such as a rake, shovel, or water hose handy in case the fire does escape.

For more information about the spring forest fire season, visit the Division of Forestry’s Web site at www.wvforestry.com.

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