



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

For Immediate Release: Feb. 23, 2009

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Outdoor burning restrictions start March 1
No burning allowed from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily until May 31

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Officials at the Division of Forestry remind West Virginia residents that the spring forest fire season begins Sunday, March 1. Starting Sunday, no outdoor fires will be allowed during the daytime hours of 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fires to burn brush or other vegetative debris may only be started after 4 p.m. and must be extinguished by 7 a.m. Outdoor burning is restricted to evening hours when cooler temperatures, increased humidity and calmer winds reduce the likelihood of fires spreading.

Fire Staff Assistant Ben Webster says that since Jan. 1, the state has already had nearly 100 fires that have burned approximately 800 acres. “We’ve seen quite a few fires so far this year despite the snow and rain most of the state has received. Half of those were the direct result of fires where people started to burn debris that later were allowed to escape and burn multiple acres.”

Webster says that almost all forest fires in West Virginia can be prevented, especially if residents use common sense. “If an area is extremely dry, wait until rain has fallen before burning outdoors, and never start a fire on a windy day.” He recommends keeping a rake, shovel and water hose nearby in case the fire does escape, and urges people to call 911 if they can’t easily extinguish the escaped blaze. Webster says that any violation of the outdoor-burning restrictions, including allowing a fire to escape containment, may result in a misdemeanor charge, a fine of up to \$300 plus liability for costs of fighting the fire and the damage caused by the fire to property.

Other requirements for burning outdoors include clearing a safety strip of at least 10 feet around burning materials and attending the fire at all times until it is fully extinguished.

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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