



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Weather Changes call for Private Land Fire Prevention Restrictions

Beginning Tuesday July 1, 2009 at 6:00 a.m. lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry will be placed under a regulated closure; regulating the use of fire activities or activities that could cause a fire. These prevention measures will affect Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Morrow, Wasco, and Wheeler counties.

OPEN FIRES are prohibited including: campfires, charcoal fires, cooking fires and warming fires, except at approved designated locations. Portable cooking stoves using liquefied or bottled fuels are allowed as well as burning conducted in compliance with the conditions of a current and valid burning permit issued pursuant to ORS 477.515.

USE OF FIREWORKS is prohibited.

SMOKING is prohibited while traveling, except in vehicles on improved roads.

NON-INDUSTRIAL CHAINSAW USE is prohibited between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Chainsaw use is permitted at all other hours if the following fire fighting equipment is present with each operating saw: one axe, one shovel, and one operational 8 ounce or larger fire extinguisher. In addition, a fire watch is required at least one hour following the use of each saw. Example: if you have three saws in use and they all shut down at the same time watch each for one hour total. If you have three saws in use and they each shut down at different times, each saw must have a one hour watch from when it shut down; which will total more than one hour for all three saws.

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Use of **MOTORIZED VEHICLES** including motorcycles and all terrain vehicles is prohibited except on improved roads or for the commercial culture and harvest of agricultural crops. Improved road means “a road maintained for the use of passenger cars and which is clear of flammable debris.”

For all **motor vehicles**, possession of the following fire fighting equipment is required while traveling in a motorized vehicle, except on federal and state highways, county roads and driveways: one shovel and one gallon of water or one 2½ pound or larger fire extinguisher, except all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles which must be equipped with an approved spark arrestor.

MOWING of dried and cured grass with power driven equipment is prohibited between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., except for the commercial culture and harvest of agricultural crops.

CUTTING, GRINDING and **WELDING** of metal is prohibited between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Cutting, grinding and welding of metal is permitted at all other hours, if conducted in a cleared area and if a water supply is present.

BLASTING is prohibited.

Any **ELECTRIC FENCE** controller in use shall be: 1) Listed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory or be certified by the Department of Consumer and Business Services; and 2) Operated in compliance with manufacturer’s instructions.

“Forest fuels are rapidly drying out,” said Kevin Benton, Protection Unit Forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry. “If a fire were to start it could spread quickly and be difficult to catch, potentially causing damage to property and resources. This time of year regulation of fire activities or activities that could start a fire is one of the best preventative measures we can take.”

If a valid burning permit has been issued, pursuant to ORS 477.515, fire officials ask residents to take great care when having that fire.

Restrictions vary from private lands to federally owned public lands so contact your local fire agency for current fire restriction information.

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Campfires ***are not allowed on lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry in the Central Oregon District***, however, if you will be where a campfire is allowed following are important steps to know:

To build a safe campfire:

- Do not build it under a tree.
- Have a bucket of water, a shovel, and an axe.
- Clear an area 10 feet down to mineral soil clear of forest litter / debris (pine cones, needles, twigs, grass).
- Do not dig a pit. Fire can burn underground through the roots.
- Archeologists also recommend not digging a pit to preserve any possible cultural sites.
- Build a 3 foot rock ring with the rocks touching so fire won't escape.
- Chop your firewood to fit into the rock ring and stack your extra fire wood outside the 10 foot cleared area.
- Never leave your campfire unattended.

To put your campfire dead out:

- Make sure your campfire is dead out before leaving the area at any time.
- Slowly pour water on the campfire and stir with the shovel.
- Do not cover the fire with dirt, this could "cap" the fire and cause it to smolder.
- There can be heat and no smoke so feel over the campfire for heat; if you feel heat, keep using the water and stirring with the shovel until the fire is dead out.

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