



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Weather Changes call for Private Land Fire Prevention Restrictions

Beginning Monday July 2, 2007 at 12:01 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.

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.”

All **motor vehicles** must be equipped with one gallon of water or one operational 2 ½ pound or larger fire extinguisher, one axe, and one shovel, except when traveling on state and county roads.

All **motorcycles and all terrain vehicles** must be equipped with one operational 2 ½ pound or larger fire extinguisher, except when traveling on state and county roads.

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.

BLASING is prohibited.

To-date wildland firefighters with the Central Oregon District of the Oregon Department of Forestry have responded to 60 fires totaling approximately 1020 acres; 18 of these were lightning and 42 have been human caused.

“There are two main reasons for the increase in fire restrictions,” said Travis Medema, Central Oregon District Forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry. “Forest fuel conditions are below average; meaning dead and down as well as live vegetation are drying out and will burn more quickly if a fire starts, and with the expected July heat forest and wildland urban interface conditions warrant caution with fire. We are also concerned with the number of human caused fire starts we have already seen this season; one way to reduce the number of human caused fires is by limiting fire use during this critical time of the year.”

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

Fire managers have noticed a sudden increase in escaped campfires on forested lands and would like to caution all forest users to take caution when having a campfire if one is allowed.

Again 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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