



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

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**FALL FIRE SEASON STARTS FRIDAY, OCT. 1, 2010
Eastern Panhandle Outdoor Burning Ban Still in Effect**

Charleston, W. Va. – West Virginia’s fall forest fire season starts Oct. 1 and runs through Dec. 31. During the months of October, November and December, all outdoor burning is prohibited from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. throughout the state.

However, for the eight counties of the state’s Eastern Panhandle an outdoor burning ban is still in effect and supersedes the legislated fall fire season requirements. Those eight counties where all outdoor burning is prohibited are Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan and Pendleton. This ban, issued by Gov. Joe Manchin in early September, prohibits all fires built for camping, the burning of debris and for warming purposes. Severe lack of rain and drought conditions prompted the governor’s proclamation.

“I have many reasons to be concerned going into this fall fire season,” said Director/State Forester Randy Dye. “We have severe drought conditions and thus extreme fire danger in the Eastern Panhandle. Other areas of the state are also dry, and when you add moderate to high winds, warm temperatures and low humidity levels to the equation a very bad fire season is a real possibility.”

Residents in counties outside the Eastern Panhandle may burn vegetative materials, including brush, leaves and limbs, but only after 4 p.m. Anyone who conducts outdoor burning must supervise the fire until it is completely extinguished, create a 10-foot perimeter around the fire and complete all burning before 7 a.m. Dye suggests keeping a rake, shovel and water source nearby in case a fire does escape, but he warns that if a fire breaks out into the woods, you should call 911 immediately.

In the case of an escaped fire, the person who set it is liable for the costs of fighting the fire, and also may face a misdemeanor charge and a fine up to \$300. Landowners whose property is damaged by another person’s fire may seek damages from the person who set the fire in civil court.

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Regional Offices
Farmington 304.825.6983
Beckley 304.256.6775
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“Payment for reimbursement for suppression costs is not an empty threat,” Dye said. “This past April we had a landowner who accidentally allowed his fire to escape and it went on to burn acreage on 25 different landowners’ properties.”

The landowner, who Dye declined to name, paid nearly \$10,000 for the costs associated with extinguishing the fire. Ten local Volunteer Fire Departments responded to the fire and six Division of Forestry personnel were required to lead on-site suppression activities.

Already the state has seen 62 forest fires since July 1 and more than 200 acres burned.

For more information about the state’s outdoor burning laws and the ban in the Eastern Panhandle, visit the Division of Forestry’s website at www.wvforestry.com.

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