



Frederick County, Virginia Fire and Rescue Department



PRESS RELEASE

Office of the Fire Marshal
Frederick County Fire and Rescue
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March 28, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Public Notice: Burn Ban in Effect

Due to the increased risk for wildfires due to the current extreme dry and windy conditions, Frederick County will remain under the open air burn ban that went into effect on March 20, 2024 until further notice.

The National Weather Service issued an Elevated Fire Danger warning until 9pm this evening. The same can be expected tomorrow, with the potential for a Red Flag Warning.

Today's predicted fire weather:

- High of 55 degrees
- Humidity dropping to 27% in Winchester, expecting 20%-25% at higher elevations.
- Winds out of the northwest sustained at 15mph gusting to 25mph.
- Potential for a fire to ignite and spread in wildland fuels: Fair to Good

Tomorrow's predicted fire weather:

- High Temp of 58 degrees
- Minimum humidity of 26% in Winchester, expecting 20% or below at higher elevations
- Winds from the northwest sustained at 25mph with gusts to 45mph.
- Potential for a fire to ignite and spread in wildland fuels: Good to Very Good

No person shall kindle or maintain or authorize to be kindled or maintained any open burning during this time. This prohibition includes all bonfires, ceremonial fires, camping fires, barrel fires, etc. This regulation does not include barbecue grills, smokers, or any device that emits smoke through a chimney or stack.

This action is being instituted in accordance with Chapter 45 Article II section 45-10 E of the Frederick County code on the recommendation of Frederick County Fire Rescue System Fire Marshal and Fire Chief by the County Administrator.

The Frederick County Fire and Rescue System - Office of the Fire Marshal will continue to monitor these adverse conditions daily and make recommendations to the County Administrator and the Board of Supervisors on when to lift or amend the burn ban.

Violations and Penalty – Violations of the open burning regulations may result in being charged with and convicted of a Class 1 Misdemeanor, which carries a penalty of a fine up to \$2,500.00 and up to a year in jail. Further, if convicted, the responsible party may be held liable for all damages and the costs of firefighting operations.

Safety tips during this dry period to reduce the chances of fire include:

- Do not discard cigarettes by throwing them down, use ashtrays or water to make sure they are out before disposing. Discarded cigarettes do cause fires and can be disastrous in times of drought and high fire risk.
- When pulling off the side of the road, stay off dry grass areas. Park vehicles so that the exhaust does not contact dry grass, leaves or weeds.
- During this time, do not burn household trash in barrels.
- If you cook outdoors, never leave barbeque grills or smokers unattended. Place your grill or smoker on concrete or your driveway away from combustible materials. If using charcoal or wood, make sure that the fire has been extinguished by soaking it with a garden hose before disposing of the coals.
- Move anything that will burn far away from structures, items like firewood, compost piles, brush piles, etc.