



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fall Forest Fire Hazard Season Begins *Citizens asked to help prevent wildfires*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 30, 2011) – The Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) is once again preparing for an active wildfire season. The fall forest fire hazard season begins Oct. 1 and runs through Dec. 15. During this time, it is illegal to burn anything within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland between the daylight hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

“Battling wildfires has been all the more difficult in recent years as the division has been doing more with less,” said Leah MacSwords, director of the Division of Forestry. “The ability to respond to wildfires and protect the surrounding forests and the safety of our communities is still our number one priority. Our partnerships with local fire departments to protect citizens and property from wildfires are even more critical this fire season.”

Forestry officials say that public efforts can go a long way in reducing the occurrence of wildfire. Taking extra precautions with debris fires and campfires, as well as being alert to forest arson can eliminate the majority of wildfires that occur in Kentucky.

To help prevent wildfires, KDF recommends the following precautions:

- Be aware of all outdoor burning restrictions, including forest fire hazard seasons, air pollution regulations, restrictions imposed by local ordinances and county burn bans.

- Avoid burning debris during fire hazard seasons and during times of dry, windy conditions. Outdoor burning is illegal between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. in or within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland during forest fire hazard seasons.
- Extinguish all campfires and debris piles completely. Never leave a fire unattended and always extinguish fires if conditions become too windy. The smallest spark can lead to a dangerous wildfire.
- Extinguish smoking materials properly. Put out cigarettes, cigars, or pipes only in cleared areas free of vegetation or debris. A carelessly discarded cigarette can start a wildfire that could blacken thousands of acres.
- Avoid parking cars, trucks, or recreational vehicles on dry vegetation. The exhaust system on a vehicle can reach a temperature of more than 1,000 degrees, which is hot enough to start a wildfire during our current dry season.
- Incorporate “Firewise” practices around homes and communities in forested areas. Firewise practices range from creating a defensible space by removing leaves, debris and firewood to ensuring access for safety personnel and equipment in rural or isolated areas.
- Report suspicious acts of arson to the nearest Kentucky State Police post or call the Target Arson Hotline at 1-800-27-ARSON.

For more information about how you can prevent wildfires, contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry at 1-800-866-0555 or visit the division’s website at <http://forestry.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

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Editor’s note: *The mission of the Kentucky Division of Forestry is to protect and enhance the forest resources of the Commonwealth. The agency is responsible for preventing and suppressing wildfires on state and private lands as well as providing assistance to landowners and communities for the purpose of sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of our forests and to meet the needs of present and future generations.*