



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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Recent Wildfires Signal Concern for Spring Fire Season *Outdoor Burning Restrictions Take Effect Feb. 15*

Frankfort, Ky. (Feb. 15, 2012) – Forestry officials are cautioning the public that above-average rain this winter does not necessarily mean a low-risk wildfire season. So far this year, over 50 fires have burned nearly 1,500 acres in Kentucky. According to Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) records, these numbers are higher than normal for this time of year.

“Although some predictions show a lower fire potential for Kentucky this spring, we don’t want the public to get lulled into a false sense of security,” said Leah MacSwords, KDF director and state forester. “A string of hot, dry and windy days can quickly raise the risk and result in wildfire across the Commonwealth.”

Spring wildfire season that normally peaks in March and starts subsiding in April officially begins Feb. 15 and ends April 30. 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. The law is intended to prevent forest fires by allowing outdoor burning only when conditions are less likely to cause a wildfire to spread.

“We need the public to assist us in preventing wildfires,” said MacSwords. “Simple precautions and reporting suspicious acts can make a tremendous impact on an otherwise busy and costly fire season.”

The following recommendations are offered by KDF to help in prevention efforts:

- 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.
- 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 around homes by removing leaves, debris and firewood and ensuring access for fire response personnel and equipment in rural or isolated areas.
- Report 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 Kentucky Division of Forestry, headquartered in Frankfort, manages nine district offices with forestry staff assigned to every county in Kentucky for the purpose of providing services to the citizens of the Commonwealth. The agency's mission is to protect and enhance Kentucky's forest resources through a public informed of the environmental, social and economic importance of forests.