

Media Advisory

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SC Forestry Commission to issue statewide burning ban

Restriction on all outdoor burning goes into effect at 7 a.m. Friday

COLUMBIA—The South Carolina Forestry Commission is issuing a State Forester’s Burning Ban for all counties, effective at 7 a.m. Friday, April 17.

A State Forester’s Burning Ban prohibits all outdoor burning, including yard debris burning, prescribed burning, campfires, bonfires and other recreational fires in all unincorporated areas of the state.

Forestry Commission officials cite a particularly dangerous mix of elevated wildfire risk factors through the weekend that warrant limiting all ignitions in the interest of public safety.

Rapidly escalating drought conditions across the state, a critical decrease in relative humidities over the next several days and gusty winds that are expected to accompany an approaching cold front will combine to create extreme fire danger.

"When it's this dry – energy release component values are at high-to-critical levels – we're just as likely, if not more, to see wildfires that are fuel-driven rather than wind-driven. Add the other volatile conditions of increased wind and lower relative humidity, and it becomes an especially precarious situation," said SCFC Fire Chief Darryl Jones. "These conditions not only increase the likelihood of wildfires igniting easily and spreading rapidly, but would also make them more difficult for firefighters to control."

While the ban does not apply to fires used for the preparation of food or fires used in appropriate enclosures (portable outdoor fireplaces, chimineas or permanent fire pits constructed of stone, masonry, metal or other noncombustible material that conforms with all applicable South Carolina fire codes), Forestry Commission officials urge the utmost caution burning outdoors under these exemptions.

Likewise, citizens should exercise extreme vigilance operating any equipment that could create sparks, avoid parking on dry grass and refrain from using fireworks.

The ban will stay in effect until further notice, which will come in the form of an official announcement from the Forestry Commission.

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As the only state agency responsible for wildfire suppression in all unincorporated areas of the state, the South Carolina Forestry Commission protects nearly 13 million acres from wildland fire. More than 500 county, municipal and volunteer fire departments operate more than 1,100 fire stations in South Carolina. The Forestry Commission cooperates with these departments to prevent and control structural and wildland fires, employing highly trained firefighters and specialized equipment when fires burn into forested areas that are difficult to reach.



DID YOU KNOW...?

Escaped debris burns are the No. 1 cause of wildfires in South Carolina. They account for more wildfire ignitions – including lightning, arson and equipment use – than all other causes combined.