



## Fire Safety Alert

Please take **ALL** precautions — do not take any short cuts.

Just placing debris in a barrel is not enough as one homeowner found out. The debris in the barrel pictured above did not have a wire screen on top; the grass was not cleared from around the barrel; it was too close to the woods, AND it was left unattended on a windy day.

## Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!



## Additional Resources

To learn more about protecting your home, property and family, contact your local fire department or the Virginia Department of Forestry.

Additional information available at:

[www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)

<http://www.smokeybear.com/debris-burning.asp>

<http://www.southernforests.org/fire/wui/home/tips-for-safe-debris-burning>



# SAFE DEBRIS BURNING

*What do you have to lose?*

## For More Information

For more information about VDOF services or programs, please contact your local Virginia Department of Forestry office or visit:

[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

**Western Region Office, Salem:**

Phone: (540) 387-5461

**Central Region Office, Charlottesville:**

Phone: (434) 977-5193

**Eastern Region Office, Providence Forge:**

Phone: (804) 966-5092



**Virginia Department of Forestry**

900 Natural Resources Drive, Suite 800  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
Phone: (434) 977-6555

[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

VDOF P00133; 09/2015



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Virginia Department of Forestry

## What Do You Have To Lose?

In Virginia, 95 percent of all wildfires are human caused; escaped debris burning is the No. 1 cause of those wildfires!



Wildfires result in millions of dollars of damage or lost resources, property and lives. Most people never intend to start a wildfire, but even the best of intentions can produce disastrous results when safety precautions aren't taken.

Safe disposal of household trash, leaves, brush piles and construction debris can eliminate a major wildfire threat.

This pamphlet provides some of the basic guidelines for outdoor burning.



## Do You Have to Burn?

### Consider Alternatives to Burning

Some types of debris, such as leaves, grass and stubble, may be of more value if they are not burned.

Composting can yield valuable organic matter that can be used to enrich the soil, while helping extend the useful life of our landfills. Household trash, such as metal and glass that can't be composted, can be hauled away to a recycling center or to the landfill.

### Build a Shelter for Wildlife

If you enjoy seeing wildlife around your property, you will find that a brush pile is a fundamental attractant.

By layering branches and twigs in various orientations on top of small logs, you will provide shelter, nesting areas and "homes" for many species of wildlife.

Build brush piles in your woods where they blend naturally into a wooded landscape. Brush piles should be located at least 30 feet from any structure.

## If You Must Burn... Burn Responsibly!

Obey all local and state laws or restrictions. The more common laws affecting debris burning are:

1. You cannot burn before 4 p.m. from February 15<sup>th</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> if within 300 feet of the woods or dry grass that can carry the fire to the woods.
2. You must take proper care and precautions to prevent the fire from escaping.
3. You shall not leave the fire unattended and must totally extinguish the fire before leaving.

## Safety Tips

1. Avoid burning on dry, windy days.
2. Burn small piles, gradually adding to the fire as it burns down. Large piles of burning debris generate intense heat capable of carrying burning embers up and across control lines.
3. Clear all dry grass and weeds from around your pile or burn barrel.
4. Burn in a covered receptacle.
5. Have water, a rake and shovel handy.



**CALL 911 if your fire should escape. Do NOT attempt to suppress the fire if it cannot be done EASILY with the tools and water you have. Any delay in calling 911 may be disastrous.**