



NEWS RELEASE

October 14, 2022

Contact: Chad Briggs
Chad.Briggs@DOF.Virginia.gov
(434) 989-5035

FALL WILDFIRE SEASON IS HERE

Leading source of wildfires in Virginia: Burning yard debris

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – Virginia’s fall wildfire season begins Oct. 15. The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) reminds everyone to be extra careful when burning yard debris, or enjoying a campfire or backyard fire pit.

VDOF has forestry staff assigned to every county across the state who work with local fire departments to provide emergency response to protect people, property and our natural resources. While there is no statewide 4 p.m. burn ban this fall, be sure to always check with local fire officials in your area for possible regional restrictions or bans.

In Virginia, debris burning is the leading cause of wildfires. This time of year, burning leaves, branches and other yard waste is common. Dry grass and leaves, low humidity and windy conditions create favorable conditions for wildfires.

When planning to burn yard debris, always keep safety in mind:

- Avoid burning on dry, windy days
- Keep your pile small
- Have a rake or shovel on hand
- Keep a charged water hose nearby
- Have a phone ready to call 911 if a fire escapes your control
- Stay with your fire until it’s completely out (drown, stir, ensure it’s cool)
- Consider a “green” alternative to burning yard debris: compost your organic yard waste for your garden or yard

“Virginia’s fall wildfire season runs from mid-October through November,” said VDOF Director of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. “As we see all too often with natural disasters and emergencies, the time to prepare is long before a crisis hits. Create a plan now that you can quickly put into action if you need it.”

When thinking about fire safety, follow three simple words: Ready, Set, Go.

Ready: Create a family disaster plan.

- Discuss your evacuation plan with your family and practice it.
- Assemble an emergency kit.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers.
- Arrange a meeting place for your family if you get separated.

Set: Be prepared. Monitor weather conditions and the news.

- If a wildfire threatens, put your plan into motion.
- Alert family members and neighbors of approaching danger.
- Pack your vehicle (prescriptions, change of clothing, important documents, etc.).
- If time, prepare your home by turning off gas or propane and turning on lawn sprinklers.

Go: Leave if asked to evacuate.

- Have different travel routes to your pre-planned meeting place.
- Take your emergency kit, cell phones and chargers.
- Bring a three-day supply of food and water.

To learn more about protecting your home and family in the event of a wildfire, visit wildlandfirersg.org or [VDOF's website](#).

###