



NEWS RELEASE

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VIRGINIA'S ACTIVE FALL FIRE SEASON CONCLUDES

Stay vigilant this holiday season

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – During this year's fall fire season, wildfires burned more than 2,650 acres and damaged nine homes and structures across the Commonwealth. Suppression efforts by the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) and our firefighter partners are credited with saving more than 150 homes and other buildings, with an estimated protected value of more than \$25 million.

Although the fall fire season has ended, the threat of wildfire is always present. The leading cause of wildfires this year was once again escaped debris burning. Don't let a careless mistake ruin the holidays for you, your neighbors and your community.

"This has been a busy year for wildfire in Virginia," said VDOF Director of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. "Virginia's leading cause of wildfires remains debris-burning fire escapes. VDOF supports careful outdoor burning completed in a safe and lawful manner. Always monitor the weather and take extra precautions with any outdoor fire to ensure it remains under control. Wildfires can start at any time. All it takes is one escaped ember."

Follow these tips when burning debris:

- Avoid burning on dry, windy days
- Keep your burn 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, drown again, ensure it's cool)
- Consider a "green" alternative to burning yard debris: compost your organic yard waste for your garden or yard

VDOF also reminds those with live Christmas trees to follow safe practices on placing and caring for your tree. Learn more at [nfpa.org](https://www.nfpa.org)

Virginia's spring fire season (and 4 p.m. burn law) begins Feb. 15.

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About the Virginia Department of Forestry

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$21 billion annually.

Headquartered in Charlottesville, the agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. VDOF is an equal opportunity provider.