



# NEWS RELEASE

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## VIRGINIA'S FALL FIRE SEASON BEGINS

*Dry summer across Virginia may produce busy fire season*

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA** –The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) reminds everyone that the fall fire season has arrived. From now through November, be extra careful when burning yard debris, or enjoying a campfire or backyard fire pit.

Low humidity and windy conditions, along with dry grasses and fallen leaves, combine this time of year to create favorable conditions for wildfires to spark and spread quickly. During years of dry summers — such as this one — wildfires are even more common.

“Most of Virginia had a very dry summer which causes leaves to fall earlier,” said DOF Chief of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. “Unfortunately, these factors only improve conditions for wildfires to occur. However, with basic fire safety measures, we can stop most wildfires before they start. It’s just like Smokey Bear says, ‘Only You Can Prevent Wildfires.’”

In Virginia, more than 75% of wildfires are human caused, with escaped debris burns being the leading cause. DOF has wildland firefighters assigned to every county across the Commonwealth who work with local fire departments to protect people, property and our natural resources. While the statewide 4 p.m. burn law is only in effect in the spring, be sure to always check with local fire officials in your area for possible regional restrictions or bans.

Take these simple precautions to dramatically reduce the likelihood of a debris burn escaping your control:

- **Avoid burning on dry, windy days**
- **Keep your burn pile small**
- **Have a rake or shovel and water hose on hand**
- **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**

To learn more about the fall fire season in Virginia visit [DOF’s website](#) and visit [Smokey Bear's website](#) for fire prevention tips (including safe yard debris burning) and videos.

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***About the Virginia Department of Forestry***

*The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) 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 \$23 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. DOF is an equal opportunity provider.*