



# NEWS RELEASE

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## VIRGINIA ENTERS SPRING FIRE SEASON

*Statewide 4 p.m. burning law in effect Feb. 15 through April 30*

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA** – The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) joins fire departments across Virginia to announce spring fire season and raise awareness of the statewide burning law, in effect from Feb. 15 through April 30. The law prohibits outdoor burning before 4 p.m. when the fire is within 300 feet of the woods or dry grass.

Violation of the burning law is a Class-3 misdemeanor and punishable with a fine up to \$500. Those who allow a fire to escape may be liable for suppression costs and any resulting property damage.

The burning law applies to all open-air fires such as debris burning, campfires and charcoal grills like those found in park settings. This law does not apply to charcoal or gas-fired barbecue grills. Some exceptions to the law are made for campfires at Virginia State Parks. To learn more about Virginia's 4 p.m. burning law and fire prevention, visit DOF's website <https://dof.virginia.gov/wildland-prescribed-fire/fire-laws/4-pm-burning-law/>.

"Last fall, Virginia experienced extreme fire activity that provided a stark reminder of the importance of safe burning practices," said DOF Chief of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. "Simple safety measures are easy to follow and significantly reduce the likelihood of an escaped fire, the number one cause of wildfires."

Although Virginia also has a wildfire season in the fall, more than 60 percent of the Commonwealth's annual average of 700 wildfires occur in the spring. Rising temperatures, dry and windy weather, and abundant fuels such as frost-killed vegetation and dead leaves, increase the potential for wildfires and make them harder to extinguish.

**Please note:** In addition to the statewide 4 p.m. burning law, individual cities and counties may have specific burn laws, bans or restrictions. Check with local officials in your area before burning. Keep these things in mind this spring fire season:

- Burning is allowed between 4 p.m. and midnight as long as proper precautions are taken
- Never leave a fire unattended
- Avoid burning during dry and windy conditions
- No fire may be started, and no fuels can be added to a fire after midnight
- Have a shovel, rake and a charged hose on hand to control the fire
- Call 911 if a fire escapes your control

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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 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.*

DOF joins fire departments across Virginia to announce spring fire season and the statewide burning law, in effect Feb. 15 – April 30