



News Release

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GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION REGULATES OUTDOOR BURNING IN DROUGHT

Georgia's historic drought is impacting residents' lifestyles and practices, especially those in the northern half of the state. As the state agency responsible for the stewardship of forest resources and the protection of people and property from the dangers of wildfire, the Georgia Forestry Commission manages the issuance of burn permits. Concerns for water conservation and fire safety, along with the seasonal need for site preparation and land clearing burns, have prompted the agency to enhance its burn permit system.

"People in northern Georgia who need to conduct outdoor burning should check the GFC website for a current weather report on their specific area," said Alan Dozier, Chief of Fire Protection for the GFC. "In the Level 4 drought area, burning will only be permitted when wind speeds are below 12 miles per hour or relative humidity is above 30%. The Georgia Forestry Commission retains the authority to approve or deny all burn permit requests that are outside of these parameters, based on the judgment of local forest rangers." Dozier said these conservative parameters will protect against escaped fires and conserve firefighting resources. GFC Rangers draw water from ponds and streams wherever possible instead of using water from municipal sources, he said.

By visiting the Georgia Forestry Commission website at www.gatrees.org, residents can find a detailed weather forecast for their area, which is updated every morning by GFC meteorologists. If conditions are safe, a burn permit can be secured online, by calling 1-877-OK-2-BURN, or by contacting their county Forest Ranger directly. Illegal burning without a permit is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or a year imprisonment.

"Some counties have instituted complete burn bans," Dozier said, "and the GFC honors those decisions. The safety of every Georgian and the protection of our natural resources are critical to us all. Together we can successfully manage these extraordinary conditions."

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