



News Release

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LIFTING OF BURN BAN PROMPTS SAFETY WARNINGS

Georgians in 54 northern counties will soon be permitted to resume outdoor burning as the annual summer burn ban is lifted on October 1. Burning restrictions are mandated by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division from May through September, when the potential for high ozone and unhealthy air quality increases due to elevated temperatures and stagnant air.

"The destruction caused by western wildfires is still fresh in everyone's minds," said Frank Sorrells, Chief of Forest Protection for the Georgia Forestry Commission. "As residents start burning leaves, limbs and other natural vegetation, we want to make sure that safety comes first."

Sorrells said there may be local ordinances that continue to restrict open burning in some communities and residents should contact their local Georgia Forestry Commission office or local fire department for more information. However, the 54 counties whose burning restrictions will be lifted on October 1 are: Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Butts, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Columbia, Coweta, Crawford, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gordon, Gwinnett, Hall, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Paulding, Peach, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Richmond, Rockdale, Spalding, Troup, Twiggs, Upson, Walker and Walton.

Before lighting a yard debris fire, residents are reminded that they must get a burn permit from the Georgia Forestry by visiting GaTrees.org or calling 1-888-OK-2-BURN. For other types of burning call your local Georgia Forestry Commission office.

"Escaped debris is the number one cause of wildfire in Georgia, with more than 5,000 fires occurring every year in our state," said Sorrells. "People planning burns need to have tools on hand to stop fire from spreading, including water, shovels, and a phone to call 9-1-1. Flames move fast, so calling for help is always the right thing to do."

Sorrells added that wildfires put both residents' and firefighters' lives at risk, and urged extreme caution as leaves begin falling and people work on fall cleanup activities outside. Only natural, hand-piled vegetation may be burned; it is unlawful to burn man-made materials such as tires, shingles and plastics.

"We've seen a lot of devastation from fire this year," said Sorrells. "By using common sense and following some proven guidelines, we can keep the South safe from similar disasters."

For more information on safe burning, burn permits and services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit GaTrees.org.

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