

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Open Burning

The only real incentive there is for me to pick up fallen tree limbs and sticks at home is the anticipation of a backyard bonfire. However, the recent news stories of devastating wildfires out west should make you stop and think about how one, seemingly small fire, can quickly get out of control.

PERMITS

If you live within the city limits, a burn permit is usually needed for almost any type of fire outside. Call your local city hall or fire department for guidance on what exactly is required and to avoid fines.

Permits are also required for any fire set for a recognized agricultural or forestry purpose. These are issued by the Mississippi Forestry Commission and based on the daily fire weather forecast. Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Type of burning (agriculture or forestry)
- Number of acres
- Forestry purpose (hazard reduction, control undesirable species, control disease, site prep, wildlife mgmt. or other)
- Landowner name & person responsible for fire
- Address & telephone number
- Location of property (40, section, township and range)
- Beginning / end date and time of fire

BURN BAN

A burn ban means no outdoor burning of ANY KIND.

They are usually announced on local news and radio stations, but you can always go to the MS Forestry Commission's website for a list of burn ban areas in our state. All burn bans expire at midnight on the stated date of expiration.

During a burn ban...

- Not allowed: Campfires, bonfires, fire pits, fire rings, burn barrels, debris burning, field burning - anything with an open flame that produces an ember.
- Allowed: Propane/ gas grills, propane/ gas heaters, and charcoal grills are allowed under burn bans.

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Important Steps to Prevent Wildfires from Backyard Debris Burning:

1. Check the conditions.
Don't burn when windy or vegetation is dry.
2. Check local regulations.
3. Burn this, not that.
Most places allow burning of dry, natural vegetation grown on the property. Household trash, plastics, or tires are not good to burn and even illegal to burn in some areas.
4. Look up.
Choose a safe burning spot away from powerlines, overhanging limbs and buildings. You'll need at least 3xs the height of the pile of vertical clearance.
5. Look around.
Burn site should be surrounded by gravel or dirt of at least 10 ft. in all directions. Keep the surrounding watered down and have a shovel close by.
6. Prepare your pile.
Keep it small and manageable. Add additional debris as the fire burns down.
7. Stay with the fire until it is completely out.
Drown the fire with water, turn over the ashes with shovel, and repeat to ensure it's put out completely.

According to Smokey the Bear, 60,932 human-caused wildfires burned nearly 4 million acres last year. And you know what Smokey the Bear says...

"Only you can prevent forest fires!"

Sources:

- * <https://smokeybear.com>
- * <https://www.mfc.ms.gov>