



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wildfire Prevention Month

Jackson, Miss. – March is Wildfire Prevention Month in Mississippi. Historically, March has one of the highest wildfire occurrence rates of the year due to the weather transition from winter to spring, dry vegetation, and windy conditions. From July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015 the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) responded to and suppressed 1,756 wildfires that burned 23,396 acres. Wildfire activity destroyed or damaged 39 residences, outbuildings, and commercial structures. However, MFC firefighters were able to save 2,049 residences, outbuildings, and commercial structures threatened by wildfire activity. From July 13, 2015 - October 31, 2015 the MFC responded to and suppressed an additional 1,195 wildfires that burned 14,144 acres. As a result of this increase in wildfire activity, Governor Bryant enacted the first Statewide Burn Ban issued in Mississippi since 2010.

Nine out of ten wildfires are preventable and caused by people. Please do your part to help prevent wildfires by following the tips below for recreational burning:

- **First, call the MFC [Central Dispatch Center](#) for your area** to obtain a burning permit.
- Always find out if there is a burn ban in effect for your area before burning. To see a complete list of burn bans, click [here](#).
- Check the local weather forecast - do not engage in any outdoor burning on dry, windy days.
- Choose a safe burn site for recreational burning - keep the campfire small, and only burn untreated wood debris (waste, plastic, rubber tires, and other manufactured products may not be burned). Click [here](#) to view the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality standards regarding outdoor burning.
- The ground around the burn site should be clear of vegetation that could catch fire and surrounded by gravel or dirt (at least ten feet in all directions).
- Never leave an outdoor fire unattended. Always have water on hand to put out the fire and stay until the fire is completely extinguished.
- To report a wildfire, dial 911 or call the [Central Dispatch Center](#) for your area.

There are approximately 19.8 million forested acres in Mississippi. The forestry and forest products industry has a \$12.3 billion economic impact on the state of Mississippi and represents almost 70,000 jobs. The Mississippi Forestry Commission suppresses wildfire activity across the state, but it is also the shared responsibility of Mississippi's citizens to help protect our valuable forestland and natural resources by using caution and preventing wildfire occurrences.

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Resources:

[Wildfire Prevention Month Proclamation](#)

[MFC Website](#)

[Central Dispatch Center](#)

[Active Burn Ban Link](#)

[Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Open Burning Standards](#)