



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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Press Release

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Fall Forest Fire Hazard Season Now Underway *Seasonal Restrictions On Outdoor Burning Are Back In Effect*

Frankfort, Ky. (September 30, 2016) – The Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) is once again preparing for an active wildfire season. Each year, there is nearly 1, 500 wildfires in the state of Kentucky based on the 10-year average.

Wildfires in Kentucky threaten and cause damage to homes, private property, trees and landscapes. More importantly, lives are placed at risk. Not only the lives of people where the wildfires occur but the lives of the firefighters as well. What most people don't know is the majority of these fires are preventable. Most of Kentucky's wildfires are the result of arson and careless open-burning (burning of trash, debris and brush). Both of these causes are human activity and not nature. If people start wildfires, people can prevent them.

One law designed to prevent wildfires is the restriction of open burning within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland between the daylight hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. during the Fall and Spring Forest Fire Hazard Seasons which run from October 1 to December 15 and from February 15 to April 30 respectively.

Division Director Bill Steele says the most widely available fuel for fires in Kentucky is hardwood leaf litter. "Unlike western fires that burn on the ground and in the canopy, Kentucky's fires usually stay on the forest floor and burn only what is already down," Steele said. "Beginning in October, fresh new dead leaf litter begins to fall in the forest."

During the Oct – Dec fire hazard season, Kentucky typically sees lower relative humidity (RH) numbers than in summer and winds become erratic due to the coming seasonal change (when RH numbers get below 25%, very bad fires can occur).

By restricting burning until after 6 p.m. during the fall and spring, the law is having people wait until the humidity is higher and winds are lower making a fire outdoors more manageable and less likely to escape. People need to remember that they must always take proper precautions to not have a fire escape and as always arson is never acceptable. In fact it is a felony.

Residents should call the Division of Air Quality at 1-502-782-6592 to learn about other specific regulations before burning anything.

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