

# Fire Danger Guide Suggestions and Restrictions

## Definitions

During severe, extended dry conditions, or drought the Governor may issue a proclamation mandating these restrictions. Fines and other penalties may be assessed for failing to comply. Local governments may institute burn bans and reference these restrictions regardless of fire danger and independent of a Governor's proclamation. Local bans may be more restrictive but not less than what is identified in the state proclamation for the same area.

**It is critical that you verify the current rating and local burn bans/restrictions BEFORE burning and participating in outdoor activities.** Many counties have reporting requirements prior to burning. Information about current fire danger ratings is available through county sheriff offices, the National Weather Service ([www.weather.gov/bis/fire](http://www.weather.gov/bis/fire) or [www.weather.gov/fgf/fire](http://www.weather.gov/fgf/fire)), or the ND Department of Emergency Services ([www.nd.gov/des](http://www.nd.gov/des)).

**Restrictions are mandatory when a proclamation is active and highly advised when not.**

Fire Danger	Activity Category							The US Forest Service issues the North Dakota Fire Danger Rating each morning (6:45 CST) during fire season; typically from April 1 to October 31. The USFS calculates the Fire Danger Rating using grassland fuel moisture, forecast temperature, humidity, and wind speed.
	Open Burning	Recreation Fire	Fireworks	Device Controlled	Smoking	Equipment/Vehicles		
Low	S1	S1	S1	S1	S1	S1	Suggested Actions - Consider these precautions when a fire proclamation or burn ban is active.  S 1 - Monitor activity. S 2 - Have basic hand tools available for quick response. S 3 - Have extinguisher or water available on site. S 4 - Fire should be contained in fire ring or organic material removed from immediate area.	
Moderate	S1 S2	S1 S4	S1	S1	S1	S1		
High		S1 S2 S3 S4	S2 S3	S1 S2 S3	S1	S2 S3	Restrictions - The restrictions below apply to the area identified in proclamation issued by the governor or local authority.  R 1 - Allowed when device is on a hard non-organic surface 15 feet away from dry vegetation. R 2 - Restricted to inside of vehicles, hard surface areas, homes, or in approved buildings. R 3 - All recreational off road travel is restricted R 4 - Off road travel is restricted to land owners and facility owners or their employees who need to maintain property, crops, and livestock.	
Very High				R1 S1	R2	R3		
Extreme				R1 S1 S3	R2	R4		
Red Flag Warning				R1 S1 S3	R2	S2 S3 S4 R4		

**Open Burning** - Any burning that takes place in an unenclosed space. Includes burning of leaves, grass clippings, garbage pits, construction debris, fallen trees, crop residue or hay land, sloughs and bonfires.

**Recreation Fire** - Fires associated with recreational activities like camping, fishing, or hunting where the purpose for the fire may be cooking, warmth, or ambiance and are under observation until extinguished.

**Device Controlled** - Manufactured device that controls or confines the fire to a degree it is safe when not under continued observation. This category includes gas, charcoal, or wood fired grills, patio fireplaces and chimineas, gas camp stoves, and smokers.

**Smoking** - Practice in which a substance is burned and the resulting smoke is breathed in. Includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and bongos for which tobacco or other substances is smoked.

**Fireworks** - A class of explosive pyrotechnic devices used for aesthetic, cultural, and religious purposes that are generally lit to explode or travel, emit sparks, or smoke. Includes, firecrackers, rockets, shells, smoke bombs, and sparklers.

**Equipment/Vehicles** - Heavy-duty vehicles wheeled or tracked and all other vehicles made to traverse land. Includes farm, construction, mining, oil extraction, cars, trucks, utility vehicles (4 wheelers), motorcycles, and motor homes.

Note: Definitions above were developed in part from the 2012 International Fire Code

## General Outdoor Activity Guidelines During Dry Conditions

### General Public

- Restrict burning to early morning and late evening hours when typically winds are lower and humidity is higher.
- Restrict smoking to areas free of combustible materials. Use ashtrays and proper disposal containers.
- Clear area around fire.
- Pay attention to fire hazards posed by exhaust systems, catalytic converters, and safety chains.
- Carry fire extinguishers and fire tools.
- Extinguish and discard smoking materials appropriately - NOT FROM VEHICLE.

### Industry and Business

- Farming: Conduct frequent inspections of farm machinery to reduce debris accumulation. Grease and maintain equipment to reduce hot spots. Consider working fields in morning and evening when winds are down and humidity is up.
- Petroleum Industry: Confine blasting for seismic exploration by 10 feet or more of soil. Inspect and properly maintain equipment. Ensure flaring pads are free from debris that may start on fire and blow off the pad.
- Welding: Use spark arresters as recommended and keep a 10-foot radius surrounding a welding site cleared of combustible material.
- Railroads: Conduct weekly inspection of exhaust arrester systems and brakes.

### Good things to know:

- 1) First offense of a burn ban is a Class B misdemeanor: Up to 30 days in jail and a \$1,500 fine.
- 2) Cities may have adopted fire code or ordinances that are more stringent. This guide is not intended replace those rules. Please consult with local fire departments or city officials and know what they are before you engage in activities.
- 3) Authorities for burn bans and penalties can be found at:

[NDCC 37-17.1-10](http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t37c17-1.pdf?20150408153934) (http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t37c17-1.pdf?20150408153934)  
[NDCC 12.1-32.01](http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t12-1c32.pdf?20150408153739) (http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t12-1c32.pdf?20150408153739)

## Protect North Dakota

In North Dakota, it is common practice during spring and fall to burn fields, trees, and debris in agricultural and rural settings. It is also common practice for outdoor enthusiasts to build campfires while enjoying the state's outdoor recreational opportunities. Equipment operators also increase their activities during warmer months.

Each year, approximately 500 rural fires grow out of control, endangering people and wildlife, and causing damage to nearby acreage, buildings, and other property. Inadequate control and burning during elevated fire danger conditions cause the majority of these fires.

The **North Dakota Fire Danger Guide** provides common sense **suggestions** for activities associated with fire danger conditions. If followed, they will greatly reduce the chance that rural fires will threaten lives and property.

It also identifies **restrictions** that are effective when the Governor has an active Fire Emergency Declaration or a local burn ban has been enacted or the National Weather Service has issued a Red Flag Warning. **It is important to know local restrictions can vary. Prior to activity, please consult with local officials or follow the link below to review local burn bans.**

<http://www.nd.gov/des/>

# North Dakota Fire Danger Guide

September 1, 2015



### Daily Fire Danger Rating

[www.weather.gov/bis](http://www.weather.gov/bis) or  
[www.weather.gov/fgf](http://www.weather.gov/fgf) or  
[www.nd.gov/des](http://www.nd.gov/des)

*This brochure is a collaborative project of the ND Department of Emergency Services, ND Emergency Management Association, ND Firefighters Association, ND Fire Chiefs Association, the ND Forest Service, and the ND State Fire Marshal.*