



United States Department of Agriculture



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NEWS RELEASE

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Take a preventative approach to campfire safety

JOHN DAY, PENDLETON, and BAKER CITY, Ore. (June 9, 2022) – As weather conditions get warmer and drier, National Forest officials would like to remind the public to use safety precautions when building campfires.

All campfires should be in a fire pit surrounded by dirt, rock, or commercial rings, in areas cleared of all flammable material within a three-foot radius from the edge of the pit, and free of overhanging material. Forest visitors should also carry a shovel and at least one gallon of water while building and tending campfires. These guidelines apply to the use of charcoal briquettes as well.

While lightning is the leading cause of wildfires in Blue Mountains forests, human-caused fires are preventable. Human-caused fires are also unpredictable and can stretch firefighting resources thin, especially when lightning-caused fires require firefighters' attention at the same time. By following tried and true campfire safety practices now, we can all do our part to prevent wildfires this summer and fall.

As fire danger levels increase, the National Forests will implement Public Use Restrictions, also known as PURs, which limit the use of campfires, chainsaws, smoking, and off-road motorized travel. PURs will be implemented in phases, based on increased fire danger, hot and dry weather conditions, and concern for public safety.

Forest officials recommend the following campfire safety precautions:

- Always abide by local campfire laws.
- Only adults should build and maintain campfires.
- Find a shady spot away from dry logs, overhanging branches, bushes, needles, or leaves.
- Use existing fire-rings where it is safe to do so. Don't build fire-rings in roads. (Note: within the Grande Ronde Scenic Waterway, campfires must be contained in a fireproof container (i.e., "fire pan") with sides of

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a height sufficient to contain all ash and debris, and all ashes and debris must be removed from the river corridor. Do not use or construct fire pits or rock fire rings within the Scenic Waterway.)

- Keep campfire rings small and use wood no bigger than the ring.
- Keep tents and other burnable materials away from the fire.
- Never leave a campfire unattended. Those leaving campfires unattended can be billed for the cost of fire suppression.
- Drown the campfire with water and stir charred material.
- When leaving, make sure your fire is DEAD OUT. Very carefully feel all sticks and charred remains. Make sure no roots are smoldering. If it's too hot to touch, it's too hot to leave.
- Find more campfire safety information at <https://smokeybear.com/en/prevention-how-tos/campfire-safety>

For more information on Public Use Restrictions and fire danger levels, please contact your local Forest Service office or visit one of the following websites:

- Blue Mountains Interagency Dispatch Center: <http://bmidc.org/restrictions.shtml>
- John Day Interagency Dispatch Center: <http://bicc-jdidc.org/jdidc/intelreport.shtml>
- Blue Mountains Fire Information Blog: <http://bluemountainfireinfo.blogspot.com>

Malheur National Forest:

Website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/malheur>

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www.facebook.com/MalheurNationalForest

Twitter: @MalheurNF

Umatilla National Forest:

Toll-Free (877) 958-9663

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UmatillaNF

Twitter: @UmatillaNF

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest:

Website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/wallowa-whitman/>

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