



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Pacific Northwest Region

Umatilla National Forest
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NEWS RELEASE

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Umatilla National Forest Moves to Phase A Public Use Restrictions

PENDLETON, Ore. (July 3, 2025) — Due to increased fire danger and dry weather conditions, Phase A of the Public Use Restrictions (PURS) for smoking, off-road travel, and chainsaw use will go into effect on the Umatilla National Forest at 12:01 a.m. (pacific time) on Friday, July 4, 2025.

Phase A is the first level of restrictions, generally implemented when the fire danger is moderate to high. PURS are phased in collectively, as conditions warrant, and may differ from Forest to Forest. Restrictions under Phase A for Umatilla National Forest include:

- Chainsaws may be operated only between the hours of 8 p.m. and 1 p.m. local time. A one-hour fire watch is required after saw operations cease. Saw operators are required to have an axe (minimum 2 lb. head, 26" length), shovel (8" wide, 26" length), and fire extinguisher (minimum ABC 8 oz.) in their possession. **Chainsaw operation associated with commercial and personal use firewood permits are regulated under the conditions of the permit and are not impacted by this public use restriction.
- Smoking is allowed only in enclosed vehicles, buildings or cleared areas at least three feet in diameter.
- No off-road/off-trail vehicle travel or travel on roads not cleared of standing grass or other flammable material; no vehicle travel on those Forest Service roads where access has been impeded or blocked by earthen berm, logs, boulders, barrier, barricade or gate, or as otherwise identified in the Fire Order. Except for the purpose of traveling to and from a dispersed campsite with 300 feet of open and developed road. Vehicles must be parked in an area devoid of any vegetation and flammable material.

The public is also encouraged to practice safe campfire principles when recreating in dispersed and developed campsites. Forest officials recommend the following campfire safety precautions:

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- Campfires should be in fire pits surrounded by dirt, rock, or commercial rings and in areas not conducive to rapid fire spread. All flammable material shall be cleared within a 3-foot radius from the edge of the pit and free of overhanging material. Use existing pits wherever possible. (Note: within the Grande Ronde Scenic Waterway, campfires must be contained in a fireproof container (i.e., "fire pan") with sides of 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.)
- Wood burning stoves should be equipped with a chimney at least 5-feet in length with a spark arresting screen consisting of ¼ inch mesh hardware cloth. All combustible material should be removed within a 3-foot radius of the perimeter of stoves.
- Campfires must be attended at all times and completely extinguished prior to leaving.
- Persons with campfires should carry a tool that can serve as a shovel and one gallon of water in their possession. The intent of this recommendation is to ensure individuals with a campfire have the tools necessary to completely extinguish their campfire.

The public's awareness of the increasing fire danger and cooperation is essential to a safe fire season. Recreationists, firewood cutters, hunters, and other forest users can all help by adhering to restrictions, operating safely and cautiously, and keeping up to date on the latest orders and regulations.

Regulated closures may be in effect on State and private lands protected by Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) in northeast and central Oregon. Please check with your local Oregon Department of Forestry office for PURs on lands protected by ODF. For more complete information, contact a local Oregon Department of Forestry office or visit one of the interagency dispatch centers' webpages:

- Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch webpage: www.bmidc.org
- John Day Interagency Dispatch webpage: <http://bicc-jdidc.org/index.shtml>

Similar restrictions may also be in effect on State and private lands protected by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WA-DNR). More information can be found on the WA-DNR website at: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/>.

For more information about the Umatilla National Forest's Public Use Restrictions, please contact the Umatilla National Forest Information Hotline at 1-877-958-9663, visit our website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r06/umatilla>, or visit the Blue Mountain Fire Blog at <http://bluemountainfireinfo.blogspot.com/>.

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