



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

DEEP Expects Elevated Risk of Wildfire in Connecticut over Fourth of July Holiday Weekend

Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) today reminded residents and visitors that forest fire danger levels are "High" because of the dry conditions over the past several weeks – and that special care should be taken over the holiday weekend with the use of sparklers, fireworks, and other potentially flammable materials.

"While some parts of our state had some rain in recent days, and there is a chance for some showers tomorrow (Friday), the forest fire danger will remain at High or above until we get a good statewide soaking," said DEEP Commissioner Robert Klee. "As always, Connecticut residents and visitors alike need to take precautions to prevent forest fires – especially with the forecast calling largely for hot and dry conditions to continue throughout the state over the next few days."

Commissioner Klee said that if you are enjoying the outdoors at a state park or forest, always limit your campfires to the stone or metal rings provided, and be sure your fire is doused thoroughly when done.

He also noted that recent gypsy moth defoliation has left many trees bare – especially in the Southeastern, portion of the state – allowing more sunlight to reach the forest floor and creating drier conditions that contribute to the rapid spread of fires.

DEEP reminds all state residents that if they have a permit from their local Open Burning Official allowing them to burn brush on their property, the permit is not valid if the Forest Fire Danger is rated High, Very High or Extreme and you are burning within 100 feet of a grassland or woodland. The Forest Fire Danger is posted daily on the DEEP website at [DEEP: Forest Fire Danger Report](#)

DEEP's Division of Forestry constantly monitors the danger of forest fire to help protect Connecticut's 1.8 million acres of forested land. Forest fire danger levels are classified as low, moderate, high, very high or extreme. So far in 2016, 300 acres have burned in Connecticut. The average number of acres burned per year in Connecticut is about 500.

Visit www.ct.gov/dep/forestfiredanger for the daily Forest Fire Danger level.

Anyone spotting a forest fire should go to the nearest telephone and dial 911 to report the fire as quickly as possible to the local fire department.

Forest Fire Prevention Tips

The DEEP encourages residents of Connecticut to protect their families and homes from forest fire by:

- Making a fire safe zone around your house. Clean flammable vegetation and debris from at least 30 feet around the house and any outbuildings;
- Pruning away the lower limbs of evergreens that are within the fire safe zone. Evergreens catch fire easily during dry periods and burn quickly;
- Removing any limbs which overhang the roof or chimney;
- Regularly removing leaves and needles from gutters;
- Not storing firewood in the fire safe zone;
- Using fire resistant roofing materials;
- Making sure firefighters can find and access your home. Mark your house and roads clearly and prune away limbs and trees along your driveway which do not allow fire truck access;
- Have an escape plan and practice it;
- Following state and local open burning laws;
- Staying with outside fires until they are completely safe and dead out; and
- Disposing of wood ashes in a metal bucket, soaking them with water before dumping them.

For those who enjoy the use of Connecticut's parks, forests, and open spaces, use fires with caution and follow these recommendations:

- Obey local laws regarding open fires, including campfires;
- Keep all flammable objects away from fire;
- Have firefighting tools nearby and handy;
- Carefully dispose of hot charcoal;
- Drown all fires;
- Extinguish smoking materials with caution.

For more information on fire safety, contact DEEP's Forestry Division at (860) 424-3630.