

**For Immediate Release
Sept. 6, 2024**

Contact: Jarrod Clay, State Fire Marshal
jarrod.clay@com.ohio.gov

Aaron Kloss, ODNR Division of Forestry
aaron.kloss@dnr.ohio.gov

State Fire Marshal Orders Ban on Open Burning for Certain Ohio Regions

Fire Marshal, Department of Natural Resources, Wayne National Forest urge caution due to extremely dry conditions

Columbus, Ohio – In response to extremely dry conditions in various areas of the state, Ohio Fire Marshal Kevin Reardon has ordered a regional Ban on Open Burning effective immediately. The ban impacts any county in Ohio identified by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as being in the “Extreme Drought” or “Exceptional Drought” categories as identified by the [United States Drought Monitoring System](#).

The Ban on Open Burning ordered today, Sept. 6, 2024, includes the following Ohio counties: Athens, Belmont, Carroll, Fairfield, Fayette, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Jefferson, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Tuscarawas, Vinton, and Washington. Additional counties may be added upon designation of “Extreme Drought” or “Exceptional Drought” conditions issued by NOAA and/or the USDA within such counties or added by written directive of the State Fire Marshal.

Examples of outdoor activities prohibited by this order in the ban area include the following: lighting or maintaining an fire of any type at any location, smoking (including cigarettes or similar devices, and as part of a cooking process), non-electric cooking (regardless of fuel source), using or discharging any type of fireworks, throwing down/discarding lighted or smoldering material (including matches or cigarettes), campfires, bonfires, live fire training events, flame effect(s) based displays or exhibitions (including sky lanterns and cold spark machines), and using spark causing devices for recreational purposes.

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code ([R.C. §3737.82](#), [R.C. §3737.22\(A\)\(1\)](#) and [R.C. 3737.22\(A\)\(2\)](#)), and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) [1301:7-7-03\(G\)\(1\)\(b\)](#), [Ohio Fire Code \(OFC\)](#) 307.1.2, the Division of State Fire Marshal issues the following Ban on Open Burning Order.

[Click here to access the order.](#)

“Fire safety is a responsibility we all share,” said Ohio State Fire Marshal Kevin Reardon. “It’s critical that Ohioans understand and appreciate the significant risks associated with fires,



Connect with us!
com.ohio.gov

especially during the current drought conditions. Together we can protect our communities and environment.”

The Ohio Department of Commerce’s [Division of State Fire Marshal](#), Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) [Division of Forestry](#), and the [Wayne National Forest](#) urge all Ohioans to take special precautions due to the dry weather, whether they are in a county impacted by the Ban on Open Burning or not.

“All Ohioans, particularly homeowners, farmers, and woodland owners, should be cautious during this dry period,” said ODNR Division of Forestry Fire Prevention Manager Aaron Kloss. “Most of the plant materials in Ohio that can fuel wildfires are currently dry and will stay this way until we have significant rainfall. Current dry weather patterns with warm temperatures, low humidities, and wind are increasing the risk of wildland fires in Ohio.”

Dry grasses, shrubs, dead leaves, and fallen pine needles are all examples of plant materials that can fuel wildfires. Even if rain is in the forecast, it will require an extended period of soaking rains to reduce the elevated threat of wildfires throughout the state. Spring and fall are the typical wildfire seasons in Ohio; however, the current weather situation and resulting wildfire fuel situation is not typical. Warm, dry windy days in the fall, combined with abundant dead leaves falling and herbaceous plants entering dormancy and drying out, typically create situations conducive to wildfire igniting and spreading.

“Familiar things like vehicle exhaust pipes or open flames could quickly ignite dry fuels,” said Wayne National Forest Supervisor Lee Stewart. “We’re asking the public to be careful with outdoor fire. If you’re outdoors this season, please be observant and report smoke or flames to emergency authorities right away. Our fire and law enforcement personnel are ready to serve and respond when needed.”

Residents can take measures to prevent accidental wildfires including, avoiding burning trash and debris, keeping grass trimmed, not discarding cigarettes and other smoking materials outside, postponing fireworks, and avoiding open cooking fires or campfires. Additionally, farmers should regularly check their equipment for any irregularities that can lead to a brush or crop field fire.

Anyone who sees any signs of wildfire should call their local fire department immediately to report it. Accurate and timely reporting of wildfire responses by Ohio fire departments is important for a rapid response to the incident.

###

The Division of State Fire Marshal is part of the Ohio Department of Commerce. The department is Ohio’s chief regulatory agency, focused on promoting prosperity and protecting what matters most to Ohioans. We ensure businesses follow the laws that help them create jobs and keep Ohioans safe. To learn more about what we do, visit our website at com.ohio.gov.





STATE FIRE MARSHAL ORDER

BAN ON OPEN BURNING

September 6, 2024

EFFECTIVE PERIOD:

Start: Immediate.

End: On a per county basis, the removal of all parts of the impacted Ohio county from “Extreme Drought” or Exceptional Drought” categories as determined by the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and/or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), or as otherwise designated by the State Fire Marshal of Ohio.

LOCATIONS: All outdoor areas of any county in Ohio identified by the NOAA and/or the USDA as having any portions of such county designated as being in the “Extreme Drought” or “Exceptional Drought” categories under the United States Drought Monitoring System [Located at <https://www.drought.gov/data-maps-tools/us-drought-monitor>], including the following Ohio counties: ATHENS, BELMONT, CARROLL, FAIRFIELD, FAYETTE, GALLIA, GUERNSEY, HARRISON, HIGHLAND, HOCKING, JACKSON, JEFFERSON, MEIGS, MONROE, MORGAN, MUSKINGUM, PERRY, PICKAWAY, PIKE, ROSS, SCIOTO, TUSCARAWAS, VINTON, and WASHINGTON.

Additional Ohio counties are: 1) automatically added to the scope of this list upon designation of “Extreme Drought” or “Exceptional Drought” conditions by the NOAA and/or the USDA within such counties; or 2) as added to the scope of this list by written directive of the State Fire Marshal.

STATE FIRE MARSHAL ORDER: Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) §3737.82, R.C. §3737.22(A)(1) and R.C. 3737.22(A)(2), and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 1301:7-7-03(G)(1)(b), Ohio Fire Code (OFC) 307.1.2, I, Kevin Reardon, in my official capacity as State Fire Marshal, issue the following ORDER:

- A. No person shall authorize, engage in, ignite, kindle, set, or otherwise conduct any open burning activities or recreational fire(s), or use a portable outdoor fireplace, or assist in any such activities at any outdoor location subject to this ORDER.
- B. No OFC based permit authorizing open burning, firework displays, recreational fires or the use of portable outdoor fireplaces shall be issued during any time or in any area subject to this ORDER.
- C. This ORDER may be enforced by the procedures specified in R.C. §§ 3737.41 through 3737.51 and R.C. 3737.99 and OAC 1301:7-7-01(I), OFC 109, including the

issuance of Citations (with Civil Penalties) by Certified Fire Safety Inspectors with Jurisdiction and criminal prosecution.

- D. As an exception to this ORDER, a fire code official may provide limited/temporary approvals of the usage of open flames within that official's jurisdiction for nonrecreational uses (such as blasting, welding, hot work or other employment-based uses of flames) upon written application to such officials by the person intending to conduct such activities and such activities may be conducted only upon written approval of the activities by the fire code official with jurisdiction. Any such activities must comply with all conditions of approval established by the fire code official and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations, including the Ohio Fire Code.

“Open Burning” is defined in the Ohio Fire Code as: “[t]he burning of materials wherein products of combustion are emitted directly into the ambient air without passing through a stack or chimney from an enclosed chamber. Open burning does not include road flares, smudge-pots and similar devices associated with safety or occupational uses typically considered open flames, recreational fires or use of portable outdoor fireplaces [*which are addressed separately in this Order*]. For the purpose of this definition, a chamber shall be regarded as enclosed when, during the time combustion occurs, only apertures, ducts, stacks, flues or chimneys necessary to provide combustion air and permit the escape of exhaust gas are open.

- Examples of activities prohibited by this Order in the ban area include the following outdoor activities: lighting or maintaining any fire of any type at any location, smoking (including cigarettes or similar devices, or as part of a cooking process), non-electric cooking (regardless of fuel source), using or discharging any type of fireworks, throwing down/discarding lighted or smoldering material (including matches or cigarettes), campfires, bonfires, live fire training events, flame effect(s) based displays or exhibitions (including sky lanterns and cold spark machines), and using spark causing devices for recreational purposes.
- Acceptable activities include: indoor cooking, outdoor cooking with electric stoves/cooking elements, and use of non-flame based heating or electrical devices.

Media inquiries: please contact Jarrod Clay at (614) 867-8732 or via email at jarrod.clay@com.ohio.gov .

As an additional reminder, R.C. 3737.62 states that “no person shall set, kindle, or cause to be set or kindled any fire, which through their negligence, spreads beyond its immediate confines to any structure, field, or wood lot in Ohio.” This section has a separate criminal penalty for any violations.



Kevin Reardon
State Fire Marshal