

Controlled Burning Guidelines

Williams County Rural Fire Danger Guide

Outdoor Activity Guidelines For the Very High or Extreme Fire Danger Index (Stage 1 & 2 Restrictions)

Open Burning	Open burning is prohibited. Open burning does not include fires in enclosed chambers that pass through a chimney or a stack and utilized on a flat surface.
Off-Road Motorized Travel	Off-road motorized travel is prohibited except for persons engaged in a trade, business or occupation where it is required. Fire extinguishers and fire tools are required.
Smoking	Restrict smoking to inside of vehicles, places of habitation and areas cleared to mineral soil. Use ashtray and proper disposal containers.
Fireworks	Use of fireworks by individuals is prohibited. Consumer fireworks are only legal from June 27 to July 5.
Equipment Operations	Farming: Conduct frequent inspections of farm machinery to reduce debris accumulation. Remain at the work site one-half hour after operations are completed. Petroleum Industry: Confine blasting for seismic exploration by 10 feet or more of soil. Inspect and properly maintain equipment. Monitor burning of by-products. Remain at the work site one-half hour after operations are completed. Welding: Use spark arresters, as required, and keep a 10-foot radius surrounding a welding site cleared of combustible materials. Water tanks with 100 gallons and 100 feet of hose are required. Railroads: Conduct weekly inspections of exhaust arrester systems and brakes.
Exclusions	Fire operations by trained fire professionals.

Planning the Burn	Check weather and prepare your site. Grass and brush fires can get very hot and can travel very quickly. Have water sources and extinguishers handy. Shovels and pitch forks are also recommended.
Make The CALL Before you Light...	Before you light the fire, Check Weather once again and contact: Williams County Sheriff's Office: 701-577-7700—and - 911 Dispatch: 701-577-1212. Your local Fire Chief may want to be called as well—Check with your Chief.
Information needed	Let the Dispatchers know: 1) Who you are and a call back number, 2) Where you will be burning. 3) What time you plan to start the fire.
Control of the Fire	Once you call Dispatch, The Fire Department that would serve your burn location is put on notice a burn is planned to begin. Also attend your controlled burn. At anytime should you lose control of the Fire—Call 911 immediately to get help on the way.
When your have Completed your Burning	Please call Dispatch at numbers listed above and let them know you are done and the fire location is no longer attended. Periodically changes in wind may re-ignite smoldering fuel and fire response may be needed.
Thank You	Your participation in managing controlled burn is appreciated and is meant to protect you and the property around you.



Daily Rangeland Fire Index

www.crh.noaa.gov/bis/?n=fireweather

www.nd.gov/des/info/firedanger.html

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This brochure is a collaborative project of the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, Williams County Emergency Services, the ND Forest Service, the State Fire Marshal, and the ND Fire Council.

In North Dakota, it's common practice during spring and fall to burn fields, trees, and debris in agricultural and rural settings. It's also common practice for outdoor enthusiasts to build campfires while enjoying the counties 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 high fire danger conditions cause the majority of these fires.

The **North Dakota Rural Fire Danger Guide**, designed for landowners, equipment operators, and outdoor enthusiasts, outlines procedures that will greatly reduce the chance that rural fires will threaten lives and property.

Fire Danger Index

The Fire Danger Index, issued by the National Weather Service (NWS), serves as a guide to reduce the number of uncontrollable outdoor fires. The index is an indication of rural fire potential throughout the state and provides citizens with needed information about fire safety conditions.

The index contains five ratings: **low, medium, high, very high and extreme**. Fires are more likely to occur on higher index days and more likely to grow in size. The Fire Danger Index does not predict how a fire will behave; however, the indices give an indication of overall fire activity.

Normally, the NWS calculates the Fire Danger Index for each county using predicted values for temperature, humidity, wind speed, cloud cover, and vegetative greenness.

The NWS also issues Fire Weather Forecasts and Red Flag Warnings that refer to weather conditions which could sustain extensive rural fire activity. These forecasts and warnings are used to alert land management agencies and land users when dangerous burning conditions and increased rural fires exist.

When the vegetative greenness component deteriorates to the point of creating an unusual fuel condition with a high Energy Release Component (ERC), the North Dakota Fire Council will scientifically analyze this condition and recommend specific counties be placed in the extreme category, regardless of daily weather conditions including temperature, humidity, wind speed and cloud cover.

Index Rating	Fire Danger Description
Low	Weather and fuel indicators show the probability of fire occurrence is low.
Medium	Weather and fuel conditions indicate some potential for fire occurrence. Expect predictable fire behavior with moderate rates of spread.
High	Fires are active. Expect moderate and occasional high rates of spread.
Very High (Stage 1)	Fires spread rapidly and show erratic behavior. Dangerous burning conditions exist.
Extreme (Stage 2)	Potential for large fires exists. Fires spread rapidly. Extreme fire behavior is probable. Critical burning conditions exist.

Outdoor Activity Guidelines

The NWS issues the North Dakota Rangeland Fire Danger Statement each morning during fire season, typically from April 1 to October 31. Information about current fire danger indices is available through county sheriff offices, the NWS (www.crh.noaa.gov/bis/?n=fireweather) or the ND Department of Emergency Services (www.nd.gov/des/info/firedanger.html).

When the fire danger index reaches the very high or extreme categories, certain guidelines for outdoor activities are recommended to reduce the chance of life-threatening or property-damaging rural fires.

During severe, extended dry conditions or drought, the Governor may issue a proclamation mandating these guidelines. Fines and other penalties may be assessed for failing to comply.

Williams County has an Automatic Burn Ban tied to Rangeland Fire Index and National Weather Service Red Flag Warnings. Any time a Red Flag Warning is issued or the Rangeland Fire Index is Very High or Extreme a Burn Ban is in effect. The County Commission may institute a burn ban regardless of the fire danger index. Protect yourself from penalty by checking Fire Index and Weather before lighting the fire.

First offense of a burn ban is a Class B misdemeanor: up to 30 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

By law, landowners, equipment operators, and outdoor enthusiasts are required to use firebreaks and proper precautions during all open burning situations. The following two charts list other outdoor activity guidelines for the five fire danger indices.

Outdoor Activity Guidelines For the Low, Medium, and High Fire Danger Indices

	Examples
Open Burning	<u>Campfires</u> : Clear the area around the fire. <u>Brush, Field, Ditch Haystack Fires</u> : Clear fuel from the area surrounding the burn site.
Off-Road Motorized Travel	Pay attention to fire hazards posed by exhaust systems and catalytic converters.
Smoking	Use ashtrays and other proper containers.
Fireworks	Avoid fire potential by following safety guidelines for projected aerial devices. Consumer fireworks are only legal from June 27 to July 5.
Equipment Operations	Conduct routine maintenance to reduce conditions that may cause a fire.
Exclusions	Fire operations by trained fire professionals.

Contact Williams County DES for additional information.