

John Boyle
Commissioner

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Department of
Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: March 31, 2023

Alaska wildland fire season begins April 1

Burn permits are required for any open burning from April 1 – August 31

(Palmer, AK) – Alaska’s wildland fire season officially starts tomorrow and Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) burn permits are now required on all State, municipal and private lands that do not have a local burn permit program in effect. The small-scale burn permits are good for burning one brush pile, using one burn barrel or the burning of maintained lawn. Large-scale permitting is available for any burning not covered under the small-scale permit and has more stringent requirements like a site inspection, additional people, water or heavy equipment.

Brush pile burning and the use of burn barrels are two of the leading sources of human-caused wildland fires in Alaska. Each year as the snow rapidly melts, the dead grass and brush in yards and around burn barrels can dry out within just a few short hours of sunlight and become extremely flammable. In most cases, grass fires spread rapidly and can cause damage to structures, homes, equipment and other infrastructure. Unextinguished hot ember and ash piles can thaw the ground and burn down into root systems, mulch and moss – and rekindle in later weeks when hot, dry weather settles in.

“In April and May, most of the fires we respond to are started by some type of human activity. We typically don’t see lightning-caused fires until late May or early June,” said **Division of Forestry & Fire Protection Chief of Fire & Aviation Norm McDonald**. “That means most early-season fires are preventable. If people follow the safe burning guidelines on their burn permits, we as Alaskans can help each other out and prevent unintentional wildfires.”

The free DOF small-scale permits can be printed online from <https://dnr.alaska.gov/burn> (with helpful resources for learning about current conditions, burn restrictions in your area, and safe burning practices in Alaska). Burn permits are also available at local State DOF offices in Delta Junction, Fairbanks, Glennallen, Palmer, Soldotna and Tok, as well as through local fire departments. If you need a large-scale burn permit, contact your nearest DOF office: <https://forestry.alaska.gov>

The Department of Natural Resources' mission is to develop, conserve, and maximize the use of Alaska's natural resources consistent with the public interest.

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