**Forest Agencies Urge Caution with Campfires**

**Release Date:** September 9th, 2025
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**MENDON, VT** (September 9, 2025) The U.S. Forest Service and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation are urging the public to be extremely careful with all types of outdoor fires. Fire danger conditions and fuels are significantly elevated, with most of the state being under moderate or severe drought. Though daily fire danger ratings may fluctuate, the overall situation is significantly elevated beyond what is typical for the area at this time of year.

The State and Federal agencies are working together to educate local and visiting forest users in hopes of reducing potential wildfire risk. Elevated wildfire conditions are expected to continue through the month of September and may persist through October. With the fall foliage season just around the corner the agencies are expecting increased visitation in the coming weeks and encourage situational awareness and for people to report all unattended fires by calling 911.

In recent weeks fire officials have been patrolling campsites and other recreation areas and are concerned with what they have found. Local fire resources have responded to at least 13 wildfires since August 1. In addition, firefighters have responded to dozens of abandoned campfires that were left burning after campers departed. People often think that a fire has been extinguished, but the hot embers deep in the ash bed can smolder for hours, days or even weeks if not properly extinguished.

Due to high fire danger and extended drought conditions campers are discouraged from having campfires outside of established campgrounds, including dispersed campsites and backcountry trail campsites. If you feel strongly that you must have a campfire, please keep them smaller and be extremely diligent when extinguishing them. Campers should always pour water on their campfires, stir any remaining coals thoroughly and make sure that the fire is cool to the touch before leaving it.

Over the next week, warm and dry conditions continue to be projected in the forecast. Warm afternoon temperatures, low relative humidity and gusty, dry winds encourage the spread of wildfire. Many people believe that lightning starts most wildfires. In fact, nine out of ten wildfires nationwide are started by humans.

**Some helpful wildfire prevention tips include:**

* Completely extinguish all campfires, both in established campsites and dispersed sites, as well as picnic areas. Fires should be doused with water and stirred to mix ashes and water until the ashes are cool enough to touch with the back of your hand. Remember, if it’s too hot to touch, it’s too hot to leave.  This applies to ashes from charcoal grills as well.
* Never discard ashes from campfires, charcoal grills, woodstoves, or cigarettes on vegetation or organic soils.
* Refrain from smoking in areas with flammable vegetation or organic soils. Cigarette butts and ashes should never be discarded in the forest regardless of location. If you packed it in, please pack it out.
* Do not drive off established forest roads or park on top of vegetation, as heat from mufflers and engines can ignite vegetation that touches them.
* When operating chainsaws, generators, and power equipment ensure that you have required spark arrestors and supplies (shovel, water, fire extinguisher) to deal with a fire if one should start.
* If you encounter a wildfire in the forest, please dial 911 to report the fire and be prepared to give a location of the fire and other pertinent information for first responders.
* During times of elevated fire danger or drought, please contact the Green Mountain National Forest or the Vermont Department of Forests Parks and Recreation regarding potential fire restrictions.
* Always be careful with fire.
* Make sure that all vegetation and flammable material are far away from your fire.
* And “Remember…Only You Can Prevent Wildfires.”

**Other available resources:**

Forest Service Fire Information: [https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/gmfl/fire](https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/gmfl/fire/info)

Vermont Fire Warden Directory: <https://anrweb.vt.gov/FPR/vtFPR/FireWardenDirectory.aspx>

Fire Danger Alerts: <https://anrweb.vt.gov/FPR/vtFPR/FireDangerSubscribe.aspx>

Fire Danger Forecast: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/forest/wildland-fire/monitoring-fire-danger>

Situation Up-date: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/wildfire-situation>

Drought: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?northeast>

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Vermont is marking the one- and two-year anniversaries of historic flooding in 2023 and 2024. Learn more about the impacts and ongoing recovery with the [Recovery, Rebuilding, Resilience interactive story map](https://map.vermont.gov/2025-flood-anniversary). Find ways to support the many individuals, businesses and communities who still need help at the [State’s Disaster Recovery webpage](https://disasterrecovery.vermont.gov/).