



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:

Cory Swift

Cory.Swift@DOF.Virginia.gov

(434) 365-8231

VIRGINIA IS PREPARED FOR FALL FIRE SEASON...ARE YOU?

Now through November, use extra caution and remain fire aware

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) has firefighters assigned to every county across Virginia in preparation for fall fire season, now underway. DOF firefighters remain in close coordination with local fire departments – as well as our state and federal agency partners – throughout the season, which runs now through Nov. 30.

The leading cause of wildfires in Virginia remains careless outdoor burning. Nine out of 10 wildfires are started by people, with escaped debris being the leading cause. An unattended yard debris fire or even discarded cigarette can quickly spread into dry “fuels” (dead leaves, limbs, felled trees and other debris) prevalent each fall. It only takes a few days of dry, windy conditions combined with these extra fuels for an escaped fire to turn into a significant wildfire.

“It is now fall fire season in the Commonwealth,” said Chief of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. “From now until Nov. 30, the Virginia Department of Forestry urges you to take caution when engaging in activities that involve fire, such as burning yard debris, having campfires or using fire pits. It’s important to note that in Southwest Virginia specifically, the residual debris from Hurricane Helene is still a concern as it provides additional fuel for wildfires. Also, localities may have specific restrictions or put temporary burn bans in place during fire season. Always check with local officials for burning updates in your area.”

Fall Fire Season Outlook

Thanks to a wet spring, the year-to-date precipitation totals for most of Virginia are higher than normal, however, total precipitation for August and September are below their monthly averages. Virginia’s areas of greatest drought concerns include Central Virginia and the western half of the Commonwealth. Current weather forecasts predict higher-than-normal temperatures this fall with slightly above average precipitation. Tropical weather forecasts continue to predict higher than normal activity through the end of October, however, Hurricane season has so far produced below-average precipitation.

Overall, the general prediction for Virginia’s fall fire season can be classified as “normal” for expected wildfire activity, however, weather conditions and forecasts can change quickly. A typical fall fire season in Virginia includes approximately 200 wildfires burning between 1,500-2,500 acres through November.

DOF emergency response readiness activities for the 2025 fall fire season:

- All three of the DOF’s operational regions have held readiness meetings and equipment checks for fall fire season.

- Hiring and fitness testing of the agency's 345 part-time firefighters.
- A seasonal firefighter crew of 15 began work on Oct. 1.
- Planning with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs to ensure seamless coordination at the local level should severe fire outbreaks occur.

Reduce wildfires and minimize their spread:

- Avoid having outdoor fires on dry, windy days
- Keep burn piles small and in flat areas, far from flammable vegetation
- Keep a rake/shovel and a water source nearby (e.g. hose, bucket of water)
- Have your phone ready to call 911 in case of an emergency
- Stay with your fire until it is completely out (drown, stir, ensure it's cool, repeat as necessary)
- Completely soak cigarettes before disposing of them

Visit [DOF's website](#) to learn more information about fall fire season and how you can protect yourself, your community and our forests.

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About the Virginia Department of Forestry

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$23 billion annually. Headquartered in Charlottesville, the agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. DOF is an equal opportunity provider. #TreesAreTheAnswer