

State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources



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Division of Forestry urges caution when burning

(Palmer, AK) – In light of numerous escaped fires in recent weeks, the Alaska Division of Forestry urges the public to use caution when burning debris from spring yard cleanup or construction projects and using burn barrels. Even though permits for open burning and the use of burn barrels are not required until April 1, anyone burning debris or using a burn barrel is responsible for maintaining control of the fire and can be held accountable if the fire escapes.

Forestry and local emergency services have responded to numerous escaped fires in the Matanuska Valley over the last few weeks. Lack of snow cover and unseasonably warm temperatures this winter in much of Southcentral Alaska have left grass and other dry fuels exposed.

Please adhere to the following safe burning requirements:

- Burn only one debris pile at a time and keep the pile small and manageable, feeding the pile as you burn.
- Construct a fire break 10 feet wide down to mineral soil around debris piles and at least 6 feet wide around burn barrels before lighting the fire.
- Don't burn during windy periods.
- Never leave a fire of any kind unattended until it is completely out.
- Have sufficient tools and water on site to control the fire.
- Do not burn debris piles or burn barrels within 30 feet of structures or under utility lines.
- Call 911 immediately if there is a wildland fire emergency.

Recent escaped fires were all due to at least one of these safe burning requirements not being followed.

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