

# State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources



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## Wildland fire prevention and preparedness week is May 14-20

(Fairbanks, AK) – With the winter snow pack melted away, temperatures on the rise and fuels quickly drying out, wildland fire season has arrived in Alaska.

Governor Bill Walker has issued a proclamation declaring May 14-20 to be Wildland Fire Prevention and Preparedness Week in Alaska and is asking Alaskans to do their part to prevent wildfires and prepare against them.

“Wildland fires can start unpredictably and spread at a rapid pace, endangering the lives and property of Alaskans,” Walker said in his proclamation.

“On average more than 1 million acres burn as a result of wildfires in Alaska each year, making public awareness of wildland fire prevention practices and preparedness measures essential for public safety,” Walker said.

The trend in recent years has been for earlier and longer fire seasons. So far this year, 75 wildfires have been reported and 2,045 acres burned. All but one of those fires have been human caused and were therefore preventable.

With hotter, drier days on the horizon, Alaskans need to be vigilant with any activity that can ignite a wildfire, whether it is debris burning, campfires, burn barrels, ATVs, target shooting, charcoal grills or the myriad other ways that wildland fires occur.

Alaskans must take personal responsibility and do their part to protect homes, families and neighborhoods from the threat of a wildfire. Remember, you are responsible for any fire you start and can be held responsible if that fire escapes as a result of negligence. Follow these steps to help reduce the chance of a wildland fire:

- Be sure to check on and adhere to local burning restrictions in your area by going to <http://forestry.alaska.gov/burn> to get a burn permit and see if burning is allowed on the day you want to burn.
- Follow the Division of Forestry’s safe burning guidelines listed on burn permits.
- Remove flammable materials like leaves, dry grass and wood piles from around your home, your roof and your rain gutters.
- Create defensible space by removing spruce trees within 15 feet of your home and pruning the limbs on trees 8 to 10 feet off the ground to reduce ladder fuels that enable fire to climb into the canopy of trees.
- Create and practice an evacuation plan for your family in the event of a wildland fire.

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