



State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTS & LANDS

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To: Forest Fire Wardens, Deputy Wardens, Special Deputy Wardens, Fire Departments
From: Steven Sherman, Chief, NH Forest Protection Bureau
Date: September 21, 2025
Subject: State Prohibition on Kindling Open Fires and Smoking in and near woodlands

On Monday, September 22, 2025, the Governor's Proclamation prohibiting open fires and smoking in and near woodlands will take effect. This was done because of the fire conditions we have and will continue to have well into Fall. The drought conditions are severe across the state and wildfire indices are at the point where mop-up operations are extensive and the potential for large fire activity exists.

What prohibitions are contained in the Proclamation?

...it shall be unlawful for any person in the State to

- Kindle any open fire, including fires built for camping, the burning of debris, or warming, but the following shall be excluded from these restrictions:
 - Training fires conducted under the direct control and supervision of qualified instructors at a training facility operated by a fire department or government entity; *Provided*, that a permit for such training fires is obtained from the Division of Forests and Lands prior to burning.
 - Category I "campfires" contained within fire resistive rings at public or private campgrounds that have permanent staff on site; *Provided*, that a permit for such Category I fires is obtained from the Division of Forests and Lands prior to burning.
 - Liquid fueled gas grills, lanterns or liquid-fueled gas fire stoves.
- smoking a pipe, cigar and/or cigarette outdoors in or near woodlands, or on public trails.

What this means is:

- Category I fires are prohibited everywhere, except in a campground which has been inspected, meets the campground campfire specifications, and has a seasonal fire permit
- Category 2, 3, and 4 fires are banned everywhere, public and private lands
- No smoking is allowed in or near woodlands or on public trails

Also to note: The online fire permit system has been shut down until weather conditions improve.

What Wardens NEED to do:

- Post the Proclamation Signs in public places and at access points to public lands in your town. **A copy of the sign is attached to this letter for you to print and post or contact your Forest Ranger for signs.**
- Contact public and private campgrounds to discuss fire prevention measures, staffing at campgrounds, and ensure all extra campground requirements are still in place for each campfire.
- Advise Seasonal Fire Permit Holders of the prohibition. The Online Fire Permit System allows you to email and text your permittees and advise them of current burning restrictions.
 - Select Email/Text Permittees
 - Enter the date range: 01/01/2025 – 12/31/2025
 - Select Permit Type: Seasonal
 - Click the “Find Permittees” button
 - Click the “Select All” button
 - Click either the “Email Permittees” or “Text Permittees” button. **You will need to do each individually if you want to email and text the permittees**

What you need to know for enforcement:

- **227-L:15 Prohibiting Smoking or Kindling of Fires; Penalty**
 - Anyone violating the Proclamation is guilty of a violation under RSA 227-L:15
 - Wardens can issue a Written Warning (DNCR Form 5801) for 227-L:15, Prohibition Smoking or Kindling
 - You can also call the Forest Ranger to follow up with enforcement action. Rangers can issue a warning, violation or Administrative summons with fine amounts from \$124.00 up to \$1,000.00
- **227-L:17 Permits; Damages; Penalties**
 - This can be used specifically for someone burning without a permit
 - Wardens can issue a Written Warning (DNCR Form 5801) for 227-L:17, which has a quick check box on the front of the Warning Form
 - You can also call the Forest Ranger to follow up with enforcement action. Rangers can issue a warning, misdemeanor, violation or Administrative summons with fine amounts up to \$1,200.00
- Definition of Woodlands is found in RSA 227-G:2, XIX. **"Woodland" includes cut-over land, slash, and such other land as bears a sufficient amount of wood growth, wood, weeds, grass, or other growth as to be likely to be burned.**

Payment for time spent by the Warden and Deputies on fire prevention, preparedness, enforcement and suppression are covered under RSA 227-L:22 Municipal Fire Control Payments and will follow the normal billing procedures with the state cost sharing 50/50 with the municipality. The payment of on-duty personnel is not a billable cost.

This Proclamation will remain in effect until the conditions improve, at which time we will advise Wardens. The next weeks and maybe even months may be challenging for all of us. Currently the forecast predictions are for October to continue with above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. We may see some days with precipitation which will offer short term relief (days), but it will take significant rainfall events to change the overall situation. Please continue to communicate your needs to your Forest Ranger and we will do our best to assist you.

Sincerely,



Steven Sherman

Chief, New Hampshire Forest Protection Bureau

Encl.: 1. Campground Requirements 2. Proclamation Sign for Posting



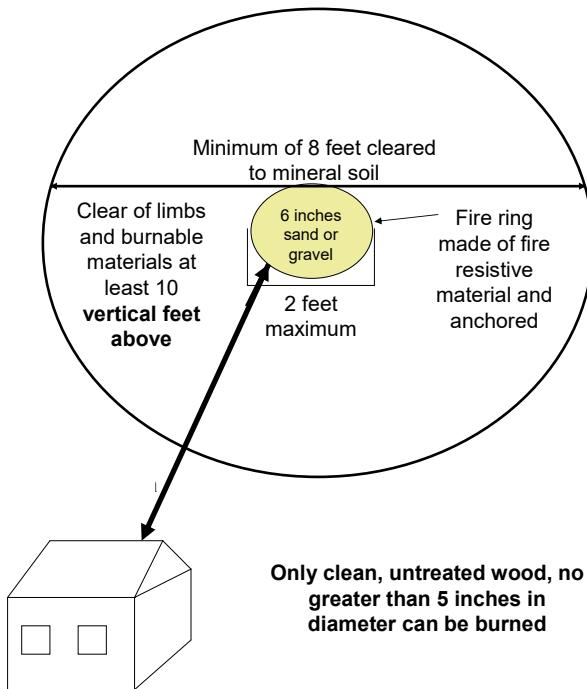
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
Division of Forests and Lands
FOREST PROTECTION BUREAU



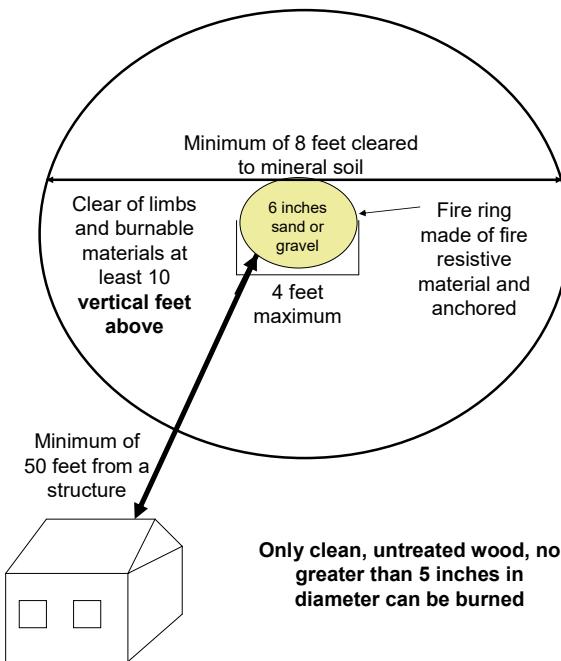
OUTDOOR FIRE REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC & PRIVATE CAMPGROUNDS

1. All outdoor fires require a written permit from the Forest Fire Warden of the town where the fire is to be kindled, any time the ground is not covered with snow. A public campground may obtain a seasonal category I or Category II fire permit for approved fireplaces present at the facility.
2. **“Category I Fire”** means a small controlled fire, such as a camp or cooking fire, no greater than 2' in diameter contained within a ring of fire resistive material or in a portable fireplace. A category I fire, conditions permitting, may be kindled with a permit at any time of day whether raining or not.
3. **“Category II Fire”** means a controlled fire, such as a camp or cooking fire, no greater than 4' in diameter contained within a ring of fire resistive material or in a portable fireplace. A category II fire, conditions permitting, may only be kindled with a permit between the hours of 5:00 pm and 9:00 am unless it is actually raining.
4. All fireplaces shall be approved by the Forest Fire Warden and meet the following recommendations:
 - A) Be on an area cleaned to mineral soil at least eight feet across. Where fires are built on the ground, there should be at least six inches of sand or gravel under the fire.
 - B) Have no limbs or other burnable material within a height of ten feet above the fireplace.
 - C) Fire placed shall be constructed so they can't be moved from their mineral soil area.
 - D) Fireplaces shall not be used for the disposal or waste or rubbish.
 - E) Fireplaces shall be cleaned and the ashes disposed of properly after insuring that they are cold to the touch.
 - F) Before additional fireplaces are added to a campground or camping area, they must be inspected and approved by the Forest Fire Warden.
6. In areas where charcoal grills are used, a well marked container for the safe disposal of ashes from these fires shall be available.
7. Fire protection and suppression equipment such as hand tools, portable pumps and an adequate water supply shall be readily available in all areas where open fires are permitted.
8. In campgrounds/camping areas where entrance and/or exit roads could limit campers' ability to flee an uncontrolled fire; the Forest Fire Warden shall make recommendations for the elimination of such condition(s) to people responsible for the area.
9. Regulations for fires in campgrounds/camping areas shall be posted and available to all campers.
10. Campground and camping area operation shall keep abreast of current fire dangers and be prepared for fire permit restrictions or bans when they are in effect.
11. Failure to comply with all applicable rules and regulations may result in the fire permit being summarily suspended.
12. **ANY** person violating the fire permit law and its provisions, and any person who willfully or recklessly kindles a fire that endangers woodlands, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to \$2,000 and/or up to one year in jail, or both.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR CAMP OR COOKING FIRES (CATEGORY I)



SPECIFICATIONS FOR CAMP OR COOKING FIRES (CATEGORY II)



DUE TO

FIRE DANGER

The Governor and Council have proclaimed that there shall be

NO OPEN FIRES NO SMOKING IN WOODLANDS

**SEE OFFICIAL
PROCLAMATION FOR DETAILS**

All Fire Permits Are Cancelled – Violators Subject to Fine of up to \$2,000.00

POSTED BY ORDER OF DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF FORESTS AND LANDS



By _____

Date _____