

Fire season here, burning banned

The Oregon Department of Forestry has officially declared fire season effective 12:01 am on Tuesday, July 5th in northwest Oregon. This area includes state protected forest lands in Columbia, Washington, Multnomah, Tillamook, Yamhill and Clatsop Counties.

According to Mike Simek, Protection Unit Forester at Columbia City, woods workers are required to have fire prevention and fire fighting equipment at their operation site and provide a watchman on each operation after equipment is shut down. Fire season rules also prohibit smoking while in or traveling through any operation area and prohibit the use of any fuse or caps for blasting on forest land. In addition, Columbia County Fire Agencies have closed burning of yard debris, domestic waste and other types of open burning, including burning in burn barrels. Simek indicates that burning prior to fire season needs to be thoroughly checked to ensure that all heat is gone and the burn area is dead out. "These areas may look cool, but a strong wind can quickly bring the fire back to life," reports Simek.

He explains that closed fire season is declared each year based on weather conditions and fire danger. As forest vegetation dries due to

warmer temperatures and less rain, fire danger increases. Extra precautions need to be taken by forest users and workers to prevent fires from starting.

Simek says that with the warm, sunny conditions of the past few weeks, forested areas are getting drier. We've received below normal rainfall this spring but the moisture we have seen has really caused grasses and other vegetation to grow. With the hot weather we are having now, those flashy fuels are drying very fast, causing fire danger to increase rapidly.

Forest users may obtain information by calling 503-397-2636 during regular working hours. After hours a recording will provide information concerning closures and restrictions.



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If you're interested, be at one of the following locations at the times indicated on the second Thursday of any month:

Rainier Fire Department	211 West Second St.	9:00 to 10:00 AM
Clatskanie City Hall	95 N. Nehalem	10:30 to 11:30 AM
Vernonia School District 47J	475 Bridge St.	1:00 to 2:00 PM

(Each location has handicap access)

For additional information, call:

Oregon State Employment Department (397-4995)
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