

It's official: Fire season has started, summer burning bans in place

Rapidly drying conditions in northwest forests have caused Oregon Department of Forestry officials to impose public restrictions in northwest Oregon. The restrictions prohibit the non-industrial use of chainsaws and ban all campfires.

Fire officials urge everyone using forested areas to avoid activities that could cause a wildfire. According to Rolf Erlandson, Protection Supervisor at Columbia City, the woods are drying rapidly and the potential for a large fire exists.

County funds for dust abatement have run out for summer of 2002

Washington County's cost-sharing dust abatement program operated by the Department of Land Use and Transportation, has expended the \$40,000 available for this year. The program, which assists rural residents in their fight against traffic-generated dust on county-maintained gravel roads, reimburses applicants 50-percent of the cost of the work.

To qualify for the program, applicants obtain a free dust abatement permit from the county prior to treating the road, then furnish a receipt that indicates proof of payment. After verification that the product has been placed, applicants are reimbursed.

Interested parties should

"With our recent hot weather, forest areas are getting very dry. Its time for us to tighten restrictions to prevent recreation-related fires."

The following restrictions are now in effect for lands in Washington, Yamhill, Tillamook, Clatsop, Columbia and parts of Multnomah County protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry:

1. No smoking while traveling, except in vehicles on improved roads, in boats on the water and at designated locations.

2. No open fires are allowed, including campfires, charcoal fires, cooking fires and warming fires, except at designated locations. Portable cooking stoves using liquefied or bottled fuels are allowed.

3. Chainsaw use is prohibited between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

4. Motorized vehicles, including motorcycles and all terrain vehicles are prohibited, except on improved roads.

5. Fireworks are prohibited.

6. Cutting, grinding and welding of metal is prohibited.

7. Possession of one shovel and one gallon of water is required while traveling, except on state and county roads.

These restrictions are in addition to fire season regulations already in effect on commercial logging operations. Cable yarding, power saws, hauling and other spark emitting operations

are restricted under what are known as Industrial Fire Precaution Levels. A current information recording on Industrial Fire Precaution Levels and local fire season regulations for the public may be obtained by calling 503-397-2636.

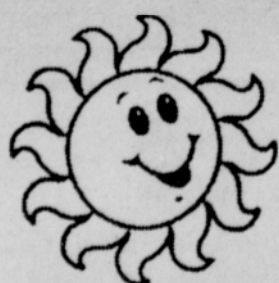
Once fire season has been declared, the burning ban is also applied in the Vernonia, Mist-Birkenfeld and Banks Rural Fire Protection Districts.

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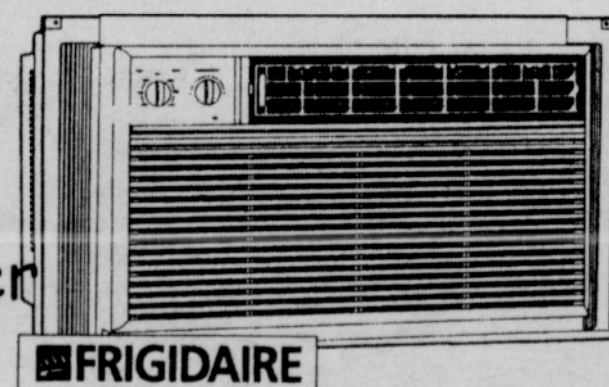
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