

## Wildfires

The Maryland DNR Forest Service responds to an average of 500 wildfires that burn 4,000 acres annually (ten year average). In Maryland 97% of wildfires are started by people. Debris or open air burning is the leading cause of wildfires in the state accounting for over 29% of wildfire starts.

## Open Burning Alternatives

- Recycle!
- Compost leaves and yard waste
- Many jurisdictions accept brush that is then ground into usable mulch
- Larger wood can be used as firewood

## Burning Tips

- Don't burn on windy days
- Have hand tools & water hose ready
- Never leave your fire unattended
- Burn at a safe distance from your house, shed, or other structures
- Check for additional local and state regulations



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### Forest Service County Office Phone Numbers

Allegany	301-777-2137	Howard	410-442-2080
Anne Arundel	410-360-8421	Kent	410-778-4439
Baltimore	410-665-5820	Montgomery	301-854-6060
Calvert	410-535-1303	Prince George	410-360-8421
Caroline	410-479-1623	Queen Anne	410-819-4120
Carroll	410-848-9290	St Mary's	301-880-2745
Cecil	410-287-5777	Somerset	410-651-2004
Charles	301-934-2543	Talbot	410-479-1623
Dorchester	410-228-1861	Washington	301-791-4733
Frederick	301-473-8417	Wicomico	410-543-1950
Garrett	301-334-3296	Worcester	443-235-1636
Harford	410-692-5172		

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## OPEN AIR BURNING REGULATIONS



MARYLAND  
FOREST SERVICE

## COMAR 08.07.04 Forest Fire Protection

Authority: Natural Resources Article  
§§5-209 and 5-604, Annotated Code of Maryland

### Definition

For the purpose of this regulation, Open Air Burning is defined as a fire where any material is burned in the open, except small recreational fires such as campfires.

### Application

This regulation applies to activities in woodland and within 200 feet of woodland, or activities adjacent to or within an area where flammable materials, that could ignite and carry fire to woodland, are located.

These regulations do not apply inside the limits of incorporated towns.

### Open Air Burning

A. A person may not engage in open air burning except under the following conditions:

(1) There is a natural or constructed fire break at least 10 feet wide completely around the material to be burned that is free of flammable materials;

(2) Adequate personnel and equipment are present to prevent the fire from escaping;

(3) At least one responsible person remains at the location of the fire until the last spark is out; and

(4) Burning occurs between the hours of 4 p.m. and 12 midnight E.S.T., except that when the ground is covered with snow the burning may occur at any time so long as all other requirements are met.

B. A person may engage in open air burning, or prescribed burning, which does not comply with §A of this regulation, if the person has submitted a plan for that burning to the Department for review and the Department has issued a permit for that burning. The Director, in his discretion, may require conditions in the permit which are more stringent or less stringent than the requirements in §A of this regulation.

C. In addition to the conditions and requirements in A and B of this regulation, a person engaged in open air burning shall comply with all other requirements of State and local jurisdictions.

### Burning Ban

Under prolonged or unusual conditions conducive to easy starting and spread of wildfire, the Director may declare a complete ban on all open air burning in woodland or in areas of flammable material likely to carry fire to woodland, through the state or in any specific area.

## 10 FIREWISE Tips for Homeowners

1. Address – Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road, in both directions of travel, even at night. Use at least 4-inch tall reflective numerals.
2. Yard – Maintain a green, mowed lawn at least 30 feet wide around all sides of your home.
3. Maintenance – Keep your roof, gutters, and yard free of dead leaves, twigs, and other flammable debris.
4. Access – Clear the vegetation from around your driveway to a width of at least 12 feet and a height of 14 feet, to allow emergency vehicles to reach your home.
5. Decks – Remove leaves, lumber, and other flammable debris from under and around decks. For low decks, enclose underneath the deck with lattice, backed by wire screen.
6. Landscaping – Use Firewise plants and mulches in your landscape, and avoid using evergreens and ornamental grasses within 30 feet of the home. Place landscape plants far enough apart that fire cannot spread from one to another.
7. Foundation – Clear flammable material away from the house. Keep all plants landscape plants a minimum distance of 4 feet from the house. Do not plant evergreen shrubs or ornamental grasses against the house.
8. Outbuildings – Include all outbuildings and fences in your Firewise improvements.
9. House – When the time comes to replace the siding or roof of the house, choose fire-resistant building materials such as masonry, aluminum siding, fiber cement board, and asphalt shingles.
10. Firewood – Move your firewood pile at least 30 feet from any buildings.

