



# News Release

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## BURN WITH CAUTION AFTER OCTOBER 1

Fall is in the air, and if outdoor burning is on your to-do list, the Georgia Forestry Commission has some reminders about fire safety and the law.

"Georgia's annual burn ban for north Georgia counties will be lifted on October first," said Alan Dozier, Chief of Protection for the Georgia Forestry Commission. "Because escaped burning is our number one cause of wildfire, residents throughout the state are required to get a burn permit before lighting outdoor debris piles."

Dozier explained that when weather conditions are favorable, burn permits for natural, hand-piled vegetation are easily obtained at [GaTrees.org](http://GaTrees.org), the Georgia Forestry Commission website. With a few clicks, users can find out about local weather conditions for burning and receive a permit number that is good for the day it is issued. Permits granted after dark are valid the following day. In addition to the website, permits are also issued by phone at 1-877-OK-2-BURN.

"The leaves are already falling and a lot of people have yard waste to burn," said Dozier, "but more than ever, safety has got to be our top concern this fall." Dozier said that most of Georgia is in a severe drought, so permits will be contingent upon the latest weather conditions. Wildfire risk is considered by forestry experts to be above normal this fall.

"If you do burn, make sure you have the right tools on hand to react to an emergency," Dozier said. "That includes a shovel, a hose, and a cell phone to call 9-1-1 as quickly as possible." Dozier noted that it is unlawful to burn man-made materials such as tires, shingles, plastics, lumber and household garbage, and that residents seeking permits for larger area or agriculture burns should contact their local Georgia Forestry Commission office. All burns must be extinguished by dark.

Fifty-four Georgia counties, primarily in the northern part of the state, are under an annual May 1 through September 30 burn ban, due to air quality concerns and regulations of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Division. During the summer months in Georgia, the ozone in the air we breathe can reach unhealthy levels. The Georgia EPD has identified open burning as a significant contributor of the pollutants that form ozone. Counties under summer burn restrictions are: Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Butts, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Columbia, Coweta, Crawford, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gordon, Gwinnett, Hall, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Paulding, Peach, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Richmond, Rockdale, Spalding, Troup, Twiggs, Upson, Walker and Walton.

For more information about safe burning, burn permits and services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit [GaTrees.org](http://GaTrees.org).