

Media Advisory

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



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SC Forestry Commission to issue statewide burning ban

COLUMBIA—With the approach of Hurricane Florence, the South Carolina Forestry Commission will issue a State Forester’s Burning Ban for all counties, effective at 7 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 12.

A State Forester’s Burning Ban prohibits all outdoor burning, including yard debris burning, campfires and burning for forestry, wildlife or agricultural purposes in unincorporated areas. While open-fire cooking is not included in the ban, the Forestry Commission strongly advises all citizens to be extremely vigilant until the ban is lifted.

“Many people may wonder why a burning ban is necessary when about half the state is expected to receive so much rain from the hurricane,” said SCFC Fire Chief Darryl Jones. “We’re issuing the ban not solely because of elevated fire danger, but rather because so many firefighting and emergency personnel and resources are committed to hurricane-related response.”

After consultation with Gov. Henry McMaster and other emergency response organizations Tuesday, State Forester Scott Phillips declared the ban to reduce possible wildfire ignitions. The burning ban is primarily intended to ease the strain on firefighting personnel – from both the Forestry Commission and from local fire departments – many of whom were dispatched to Pee Dee and coastal regions to assist with evacuation procedures and law enforcement activities, and later, damage assessment and cleanup.

Forecasts over the next few days also call for higher-than-normal wind gusts prior to the arrival of rain, which combined with recent dry conditions create the potential for outdoor fires escaping easily and spreading rapidly.

In addition to performing its normal wildfire suppression operations, the Forestry Commission has deployed more than 30 firefighting, law enforcement and incident management personnel to support the state’s coordinated emergency response.

The ban will stay in effect until further notice, which will come in the form of an official announcement from the Forestry Commission.

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As the only state agency responsible for wildfire suppression in all unincorporated areas of the state, the South Carolina Forestry Commission protects 12.9 million acres from wildland fire. More than 500 county, municipal and volunteer fire departments operate more than 1,100 fire stations in South Carolina. The Forestry Commission cooperates with these departments to prevent and control structural and wildland fires, employing highly trained firefighters and specialized equipment when fires burn into forested areas that are difficult to reach.

Did you know...?

An astounding 98 percent of all wildland fires are caused by human activities, and escaped debris burns are responsible for nearly 50 percent of them. South Carolina Forestry Commission firefighters respond to an average of 2,500 wildland fires every year, burning about 18,000 acres annually.