

Public Service Announcement



## Debris Clean Up Safety Tips

Provided by your

Local Emergency Management Office

### Debris Clean Up Safety Tips

Mild spring weather can have a down side after a hard winter. On sunny days people tend to take advantage and do outside chores, which may include burning debris left by last winter's ice storm. These fires can be, and often are dangerous, even deadly.

During a two-day period of good weather, two separate deaths resulted from debris fires. A man died after his clothing caught on fire, and a fatal heart attack came from efforts to put out a debris fire that had spread to a house. A third death came not long afterward. On the other side of the state, an uncontrolled debris fire caused a gas line to explode, killing the man tending the fire.

These tragedies point to a larger problem, warn officials of the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Kentucky Division of Forestry. Wildfires large and small tend to follow storms that leave woody debris. Uncontrolled burning of debris has caused many injuries and ruined many acres that are not publicized like the high-profile cases described above.

"In early spring," said Leah MacSwords, director of the Kentucky Division of Forestry, "most vegetation is dead, brown and highly combustible. There is also very little green vegetation to serve as a barrier for spreading wildfire. We try to remind people of these conditions and we strongly discourage them from conducting any type of outdoor burning."

As the weather warms and recovery from the ice storm progresses, remember the do's and don'ts of debris burning:

#### When...

- When the weather's wrong, don't burn. If it's windy, sparks can fly. If it's dry, flames can spread.
- When a burn ban is in effect, heed it. Kentucky is under a burn ban each year in the driest months. Sites within 150 feet of wooded areas are allowed fires only in evening hours, between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The yearly ban periods are Oct. 1 through Dec. 15 and (now in effect) Feb.15 through April 30. Also, check local ordinances for any special restrictions.

#### What...

- Have the proper equipment ready. Be ready to drown the fire with water from an adequate source or bury it with a shovel.

- If possible, have additional assistance with you.

How...

- Before burning contact your local fire department and advise them of your intent.
- Choose a burn location that is not under trees or other overhead hazards.
- Be sure it is not near utility lines, some of which may be buried out of sight.
- Separate debris into small, manageable burn piles.
- Locate burn piles an adequate distance from one another, and from structures.
- Make sure a radius of at least 10 feet is cleared around a burn.
- Stay with the fire. Watch continuously until it is completely out.
- If the wind rises or the fire seems to be spreading, put it out immediately.

For more information visit the Kentucky Division of Forestry's website, [forestry.ky.gov/](http://forestry.ky.gov/)

or call the local office of the Kentucky Division of Forestry:

Northern District - Morehead	1-800-866-0052
Kentucky River District - Hazard	1-800-866-0503
Southeast District - Pineville	1-800-866-0504
Central District - Elizabethtown	1-800-550-6601
Green River District - Madisonville	1-800-866-0770
Western District - Mayfield	1-800-866-0802
Bluegrass District - Frankfort	1-800-866-0876
South-Central District - Campbellsville	1-800-866-1007
Eastern District - Betsy Layne	1-800-866-0048