

Jackson County Fire District 5

Frequently Asked Questions

About Outdoor Burning & Seasonal Restrictions

Q: When Does Fire Season Begin Each Year?

A: Every year is different, it depends on the dryness and temperature. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) determines the date. Usually it's sometime in June.

Q: How Do I Keep Up-to-Date With the Burning Regulations?

A: Call the recorded message number 776-7007 year-round to see if burning is allowed. If you have questions about the different levels of restrictions during fire season, call our office at 535-4222, or check out ODF's web site:

<http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/FIELD/MED/aboutus.shtml>

Q: Can My Son Ride His Motorcycle Off-Road During Fire Season?

A: Not if the fire precaution level is elevated. There are multiple stages of fire restrictions, during some of which he may be able to ride until 1:00 pm or 10:00 am. Check with us or ODF (see above).

Q: How About a Small Summer Warming Fire in My Backyard?

A: During fire season it's possible, but call us first (535-4222) so we can make sure it's done safely, and so we can inform passers-by who may see flames and call us. We will issue you a temporary burning permit and notify ODF.

Q: Why Are Orchards Allowed to Burn During Fire Season?

A: Commercial Orchards can obtain a special permit to burn blight-damaged debris year-round. Blight is a disease that spreads quickly and can devastate an entire orchard if not completely destroyed. They still must observe air quality restrictions and notify the fire department every time they plan to burn diseased branches.

Q: Is There a Cut-Off Time for Using Tractors and Chainsaws?

A: Yes, when Fire Danger is "High" or "Extreme," the Department of Forestry sets restriction levels that escalate according to the heat and dryness. When fire season is declared, these activities are not restricted at all. Later in the summer, as danger worsens, using motorized equipment in combustible vegetation is allowed only until 1:00 pm or after 8:00 pm, then until 10:00 am and after 8:00 pm, then not at all. Call us at 535-4222 or go online to <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/FIELD/MED/aboutus.shtml> to find out current restrictions.

Q: What is the "AQMA?"

A: "Air Quality Maintenance Area." This is a boundary line determined by Jackson County Department of Air Quality inside which additional restrictions on outdoor burning are in place. This was instituted in response to the seriously unsafe air quality problems the Rogue Valley experienced many years ago. You probably know that only those Jackson County residents living within the AQMA / I&M boundaries must have their auto emissions tested before licensing their vehicles. Well, residents inside the AQMA also cannot burn outdoors between November 1st and February 28th. If you're really not sure whether you're in or out of the AQMA, call 774-8207 to see. Look on the County's web site to find more information:
<http://www.co.jackson.or.us/>

Q: What If I Live Outside the AQMA? Do Fire Season Restrictions Apply to Me?

A: Yes they do. No burning during Fire Season, period. The difference for you is that you can burn between November 1st and February 28th, when most of the Rogue Valley cannot.

Q: If it Rains in August, Does That Mean the Fire Restrictions are Eased?

A: Nothing changes until ODF says it does. They may decide to allow mowing, chainsaw use, etc. for at least part of the day, but we have to wait for them to tell us. They will not allow open burning in any case in August, sorry.

Q: When Does Fire Season End? When Can We Burn Again?

A: Again, it's different every year, depending on the dryness. Usually it's mid-to-late October. Just keep checking the ODF's web site: <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/FIELD/MED/aboutus.shtml> or call us (535-4222). Remember, the only residential open burning allowed in the autumn is **after** fire season ends and **before** November 1st, (due to air quality regulations), and only if the air quality Ventilation Index is above 400 (call 776-7007 to find out the daily Ventilation Index.) Quite often the October 'burning window' is less than a week. Between March 1st and October 31st, you can burn outdoors as long as the Ventilation Index is above 400.

Q: What's a Ventilation Index?

A: It's the [National Weather Service's](#) measurement of the air's ability to "clean" itself, determined by analyzing information from a weather balloon sent up early each morning from the National Weather Service in Medford (located by the airport). A measurement of 0-199 = poor ventilation, 200-400 = fair, 401-599 = good, 600+ = very good.

Q: I live in Talent - Why can't I burn debris anymore?

A: In 2006 The Talent City Council banned outdoor burning within the city limits. This applies to open piles as well as burn barrels, but does not ban recreational and cooking fires. Contact City Hall at 535-1566 for more information on this city ordinance.

About Fire District 5

Q: Do You Give Away Free Child Safety Seats?

A: No, but the Jackson County Child Safety Seat Coalition has made arrangements to provide affordable seats for those who need help. Call them at 774-6809.

Q: Do You Give Away Free Smoke Alarms?

A: We provide smoke alarms at no charge to district residents who cannot afford them. If you already have an alarm and need it checked or installed, give us a call (535-4222) and we'll be happy to come out and help you.

Q: How Do I Become a Firefighter?

A: Jackson County Fire District 5 occasionally hires entry-level Firefighters, but openings are infrequent. We maintain a Hiring Register that is updated every two years per Civil Service Rules. The best way to get a "foot in the door" is to call Division Chief Darin Welburn (535-4222) and talk about becoming a Volunteer Firefighter. He'll explain what is entailed and answer your questions.

Q: Can I Drop in With My Children to See the Fire Trucks?

A: Absolutely, the kids will love it! If you're dropping in after business hours or on the weekend, you'll have to ring the buzzer at the front door. Unless the crews are out of quarters on a call, they'll bring you in and show you around!

Q: We Have a Locked Gate With an Electronic Code. Shouldn't You Have Our Code In Case of an Emergency?

A: Locked gates have become so numerous in the rural areas that it is impossible for us to keep track of codes and keys for them all. We suggest residents purchase a locked "Knox Box" to store their key or code inside. The box mounts on or near your gate and we retain the key to open it in case of a fire or medical emergency at your residence. Contact Division Chief Darin Welburn (535-4222) for a packet of information about purchasing either a residential or commercial Knox Box.

Q: Where Do We Get Those Reflective Metal Address Signs?

A: If you live in Fire District 5, you can pick up free address signs at either fire station. You can have them made and mounted while you wait, onto a metal stake or without the stake so you can attach them to a fence, tree or existing post. The numbers are reflective so we can find your home even if there's an emergency in the middle of the night! There's never a charge for these signs, even if you need more than one.

Q: Do You Clean Chimney Flues?

A: Sorry, no. But we do loan out flue cleaning brushes at no charge. Either call or stop by, we have a variety of shapes and sizes.