



Ban on Open Burning Remains in Effect for 24 Ohio Counties

October 03, 2024

Columbus, Ohio – Despite many areas of Ohio receiving measurable rain over the past week, numerous counties throughout the state are still experiencing drought conditions. As a result, the Ban on Open Burning that was initially ordered on Sept. 6 by Ohio State Fire Marshal Kevin Reardon remains in effect for two dozen counties that have been identified by the United States Drought Monitoring System map as still being in the “Extreme Drought” or “Exceptional Drought” categories.

Under the order, if any part of a county is identified by NOAA and the USDA as being in those two categories, the entire county is included in the burn ban.

“The recent rain we have received has been a welcomed sight for many. While it has certainly helped improve drought conditions somewhat in many areas, it has simply not done enough to add much-needed moisture back into our soil in a way that would allow us to safely and responsibly lift the restrictions that have been put in place for those areas that remain within the burn ban boundaries,” said State Fire Marshal Kevin Reardon.

The U.S. Drought Monitor is produced through a partnership between the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Each week, the map is updated based on the analysis of multiple factors by drought experts. Factors included in the analysis include precipitation, streamflow, reservoir levels, temperature and evaporative demand, soil moisture, vegetative health, drought impact reports from media outlets and private citizens, and expert local input.

Drought conditions can linger for a period of time despite rain events. This is because, following months of extremely dry conditions, the soil can become extremely hard, making it difficult for moisture to be quickly absorbed during rainfall. In addition, high winds over the past week have caused more rapid evaporation of moisture on the surface, which has compounded the situation. Average statewide water tables also remain significantly below normal levels.

“We understand the inconveniences the ban is creating in many parts of the state; however, given the current dry conditions, the ban is necessary to protect Ohioans and their property,” Reardon said.

“The recent rain was helpful; we just need more of it.”

As of today, Oct. 4, the Ban on Open Burning includes the following counties: Athens, Belmont, Carroll, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Hocking, Jackson, Jefferson, Licking, Madison, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pickaway, Tuscarawas, Vinton, and Washington.

Examples of activities prohibited by this Order in the ban area include those involving the lighting or maintaining of an open fire such as:

- Any open burning of trash, debris, waste, combustibles, leaf piles or similar vegetation
- Campfires and bonfires
- Throwing down or discarding lit or smoldering material, such as matches or cigarettes
- Using or discharging any type of fireworks
- Live-fire training events
- Flame effect(s) based displays or exhibitions, including sky lanterns and cold spark machines
- Using spark- or heat-producing devices for recreational purposes

Acceptable open flame-related activities include indoor cooking, outdoor cooking with electric stoves/cooking elements or propane/liquid fueled cooking as permitted in this Order, and use of non-flame based heating or electrical devices.

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code ([R.C.](#)) [§3737.82](#), [R.C. §3737.22\(A\)\(1\)](#) and [R.C. 3737.22\(A\)\(2\)](#), and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) [1301:7-7-03\(G\)\(1\)\(b\)](#), [Ohio Fire Code \(OFC\)](#) 307.1.2. [Click here to access the updated order](#). This order supersedes and replaces SFM’s Sept. 27, 2024, Ban on Open Burning Order.

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Kevin Reardon, Ohio State Fire Marshal, Ohio Department of Commerce

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