

**Outdoor Activity Guidelines  
For the Very High Rating**

Open Burning	Use fire tools and monitor the fire at all times. Restrict burning to early morning and late evening hours when typically winds are lower and humidity is higher. <i>Examples</i> <u>Campfires</u> : Clear area around fire. <u>Brush, Field, Ditch, Haystack</u> : Clear fuel from the area surrounding the burn site.
Off-Road Motorized Travel	Carry fire extinguishers and fire tools. Pay attention to fire hazards posed by exhaust systems and catalytic converters.
Smoking	Restrict smoking to areas free of combustible materials. Use ashtrays and proper disposal containers.
Fireworks	Carry fire extinguishers and fire tools. Restrict use to late afternoon and evening hours when typically winds are lower and humidity is higher, or as outlined by restrictions from local authorities. Consumer fireworks are legal from June 27-July 5 and December 26-January 1.
Equipment Operations	Carry fire extinguishers and fire tools, as recommended. <i>Examples</i> <u>Farming</u> : Conduct frequent inspections of farm machinery to reduce debris accumulation. <u>Petroleum Industry</u> : Confine blasting for seismic exploration by 10 feet or more of soil. Inspect and properly maintain equipment. <u>Welding</u> : Use spark arresters as recommended and keep a 10-foot radius surrounding a welding site cleared of combustible material. <u>Railroads</u> : Conduct weekly inspection of exhaust arrester systems and brakes.
Exclusions	Fire operations by trained fire professionals.

**Outdoor Activity Guidelines  
For the Extreme Fire Danger Rating**

Open Burning	Open burning is prohibited. Open burning does not include fires in enclosed chambers that pass through a chimney or a stack and utilized on a flat surface.
Off-Road Motorized Travel	Off-road motorized travel is prohibited except for persons engaged in a trade, business or occupation where it is required. Fire extinguishers and fire tools are required.
Smoking	Restrict smoking to inside of vehicles, places of habitation and areas cleared to mineral soil. Use ashtray and proper disposal containers.
Fireworks	Use of fireworks by individuals is prohibited. Consumer fireworks are legal from June 27-July 5 and December 26-January 1.
Equipment Operations	<u>Farming</u> : Conduct frequent inspections of farm machinery to reduce debris accumulation. Remain at the work site one-half hour after operations are completed. <u>Petroleum Industry</u> : Confine blasting for seismic exploration by 10 feet or more of soil. Inspect and properly maintain equipment. Monitor burning of by-products. Remain at the work site one-half hour after operations are completed. <u>Welding</u> : Use spark arresters, as required, and keep a 10-foot radius surrounding a welding site cleared of combustible materials. Water tanks with 100 gallons and 100 feet of hose are required. <u>Railroads</u> : Conduct weekly inspections of exhaust arrester systems and brakes.
Exclusions	Fire operations by trained fire professionals.

# North Dakota Rural Fire Danger Guide



**Daily Fire Danger Rating**

[www.weather.gov/bis](http://www.weather.gov/bis) or  
[www.weather.gov/fgf](http://www.weather.gov/fgf)

[www.nd.gov/des](http://www.nd.gov/des)

*This brochure is a collaborative project of the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, your local emergency manager, the ND Forest Service, the State Fire Marshal, and the ND Fire Council.*

## Outdoor Activity Guidelines

Rating	Fire Danger Description
Low	Low rate of spread for any fires that ignite.
Moderate	Some potential for moderate rate of spread for fires that ignite.
High	Potential for moderate to occasional high rate of spread for fires that ignite. Active burning conditions.
Very High	Potential for rapid spreading and erratic behavior for fires that ignite. Dangerous burning conditions.
Extreme	Potential for larger fires and extreme fire behavior for fires that ignite. Critical burning conditions exist.

By law, landowners, equipment operators, and outdoor enthusiasts are required to use firebreaks and proper precautions during all open burning situations. The following charts list other outdoor activity guidelines for the five fire danger ratings.

**First offense of a burn ban is a Class B misdemeanor: up to 30 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.**

### **Outdoor Activity Guidelines For the Low, Moderate and High Fire Danger Ratings**

	<i>Examples</i>
Open Burning	<u>Campfires</u> : Clear the area around the fire. <u>Brush, Field, Ditch Haystack Fires</u> : Clear fuel from the area surrounding the burn site.
Off-Road Motorized Travel	Pay attention to fire hazards posed by exhaust systems and catalytic converters.
Smoking	Use ashtrays and other proper containers.
Fireworks	Avoid fire potential by following safety guidelines for projected aerial devices. Consumer fireworks are legal from June 27-July 5 and December 26-January 1.
Equipment Operations	Conduct routine maintenance to reduce conditions that may cause a fire.
Exclusions	Fire operations by trained fire professionals.

**Contact your local fire department or emergency manager for additional information.**

The USFS issues the North Dakota Fire Danger Rating each morning (6:45 CST) during fire season; typically from April 1 to October 31. **It is critical that you verify the current rating and local burn bans/restrictions BEFORE burning and participating in outdoor activities.** Information about current fire danger ratings is available through county sheriff offices, the National Weather Service ([www.weather.gov/bis](http://www.weather.gov/bis) or [www.weather.gov/fgf](http://www.weather.gov/fgf)), or the ND Department of Emergency Services ([www.nd.gov/des](http://www.nd.gov/des)).

When the fire danger rating reaches the very high or extreme categories, certain guidelines for outdoor activities are recommended to reduce the chance of life-threatening or property-damaging rural fires.

During severe, extended dry conditions or drought, the governor may issue a proclamation mandating these guidelines. Fines and other penalties may be assessed for failing to comply.

Local governments may institute a burn ban regardless of the fire danger rating.

In North Dakota, it's common practice during spring and fall to burn fields, trees, and debris in agricultural and rural settings. It's also common practice for outdoor enthusiasts to build campfires while enjoying the state's outdoor recreational opportunities. Equipment operators also increase their activities during warmer months.

Each year, approximately 500 rural fires grow out of control, endangering people and wildlife, and causing damage to nearby acreage, buildings, and other property. Inadequate control and burning during elevated fire danger conditions cause the majority of these fires.

The **North Dakota Rural Fire Danger Guide**, designed for landowners, equipment operators, and outdoor enthusiasts, outlines procedures that will greatly reduce the chance that rural fires will threaten lives and property.

### Fire Danger Rating

The Fire Danger Rating, issued by the Fire Sciences Lab of the US Forest Service (USFS), serves as a guide to reduce the number of uncontrollable outdoor fires. The rating is a forecast of the potential for non-agricultural grasslands to carry fire should a fire ignite. It gives an indication of the potential for fire growth and spread for any fire that ignites.

There are five ratings: **low, moderate, high, very high and extreme**. Any fires that ignite are more likely to grow in size on higher rating days.

The USFS calculates the Fire Danger Rating using grassland fuel moisture, forecast temperature, humidity, and wind speed.

The National Weather Service issues Fire Weather Forecasts and Red Flag Warnings that refer to weather conditions which could sustain extensive rural fire activity. These forecasts and warnings are used to alert land management agencies and land users when dangerous burning conditions exist.