

1. Why do we have a burning ban?

The Department of Natural Resources requested that the Governor issue a burning ban for 75 counties in Michigan that have persistent drought conditions, and, based on weather forecasts, expect little or no precipitation for several days. These factors create very dangerous fire conditions in our state. Today, 52 counties are still under a burning ban.

2. Why weren't all counties included?

There are counties through Michigan's southern areas that have received sufficient rainfall and are not experiencing drought conditions.

3. The ban applies to all forests or forest lands. Does this mean just state forests?

No, the ban includes all public and private forests and forest lands. Forest land is defined as any land capable of growing trees.

4. If my family is going to a state park on vacation, can we have a campfire?

Yes, campfires will be allowed at most state parks and recreation areas, and campers must have campfires only in the designated fire ring on their designated campsite. There are some state parks that have rustic, unsupervised areas for camping. Those areas will not be allowed to have campfires. If you are planning on staying at a rustic cabin at a state park, please check with the park in advance about campfire guidelines for the cabin. Campers should check at the state park for guidelines for campfires. We will post a list of the rustic, unsupervised areas on the DNR Web site soon.

5. I am going camping at a state forest campground, can I have a campfire?

No. While state forest campgrounds have designated campsites and fire rings, they are not supervised. The burn ban prohibits campfires in state forest campgrounds or similar rustic, unsupervised campgrounds. You also cannot have a campfire if you are dispersed camping in a state, federal or private forest area.

6. If I am going camping at a private campground, can I have a campfire?

Yes, you can have a campfire at a private campground as long as the owner provides continuous supervision of the facility and your campsite has a designated fire ring that is metal or masonry.

7. We live in the country and like to have a fire in our backyard at night. Is that now illegal?

As long as you have your fire in a container that is either metal or masonry or in a fire ring, you are not violating the ban. You should take precautions to have a garden hose ready to extinguish any coals or embers that escape the ring. Do not use dirt to cover up your fire at the end of the night. Dirt will not completely extinguish your fire, and may even insulate the coals and embers. Always completely wet down your fire with water.

8. I'm a smoker. How does this affect me?

If you work in an office building and take your smoke breaks outside, you will not be violating the burn ban unless your office is located next to forest lands. You may smoke at your home or in your vehicle. We urge you not to discard cigarette or cigar butts outside while driving – many grass fires start that way. (Plus, it is a violation of the state's litter law.) You will not be able to smoke on any forest lands, including privately owned property.

9. When will the ban be lifted?

The Governor will issue another proclamation lifting the ban when the state receives adequate rainfall to alleviate the drought conditions. There is no set timetable for the ban, and it will depend completely on the weather over the next few weeks.

10. I own 40 acres up north and want to go burn brush there this weekend. Can I?

No. Burning brush, leaves, branches, refuse, stumps, grass, stubble, crop residue or any flammable materials is a violation of the ban. Persons who violate the ban will be charged with a misdemeanor. Persons found responsible for starting a wildland fire can be held liable for **all** suppression costs.