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## Fire Danger Raised to **HIGH** in Missoula Area— Outdoor Burning is Closed

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**Missoula, Montana** – Due to increasing temperatures and drying vegetation, fire protection agencies have raised the fire danger in Missoula County to **HIGH**, effective Monday, July 18, 2022. When fire danger is high, dry grasses and needles ignite easily and fires can spread rapidly and may be difficult to control. Unattended campfires are likely to escape, and high intensity burning is likely to occur on slopes and concentrated grassy areas.

According to Colt Mortenson, Lolo National Forest Fire Staff Officer, “Spring and early summer rains have provided us with plenty of grasses and ‘flashy’ fuels that are now starting to dry and cure, increasing the likelihood of a fire start growing quickly and becoming a much more complex, larger wildfire.”

With such a situation, it is imperative that residents and visitors alike exercise caution when outdoors. On average, three out of every four wildfires in Missoula County are human caused. Please keep Smokey Bear and Missoula County fire protection agencies happy by doing your part to prevent a wildfire start. Enjoy our wonderful outdoors but attend your campfire and use established fire rings. Drown your campfire with water, stir the coals and embers, then drown again and make sure the campfire is cool to the touch before leaving it. If it is too hot to touch, it is too hot to leave. Recreational fires are illegal within Missoula City limits, and there are areas in Montana that are currently in fire restrictions, so be sure to know the rules and restrictions where you are playing. Visit [www.MTFireInfo.org](http://www.MTFireInfo.org) for more information on fire restrictions across Montana.

Equipment and vehicle sparks were a primary cause of wildfires in 2021, so also be careful when mowing your lawn or field, haying, or dragging a trailer. Low mower and haying blades can hit rocks and cause sparks while trailer chains that are too long can drag on roadways and produce hundreds of sparks. Cut when conditions are cooler and there is no wind, and always have a fire extinguisher or water, and tools nearby. Make sure safety chains are crossed and a minimum of five inches from the ground.

Please also do not burn any debris piles. Outdoor burning season is closed in Missoula County, so your burn permit is invalid. Visit [MCFPA.org](http://MCFPA.org) to learn more about outdoor burning seasons, rules, and fire prevention tips.



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