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Fire Danger Lowered to **Moderate** in Missoula Area Outdoor Burning Remains Closed in Missoula County

September 28, 2020 -- Missoula, Montana – In response to recent moisture received, Missoula County Fire Protection agencies are lowering the Missoula area fire danger rating to **Moderate**, effective immediately. In moderate fire danger, fires can start from most accidental causes, but the average fire is of moderate intensity. Fires will still spread rapidly in open grasslands on windy days and timber fires will spread slowly to moderately fast, but in heavy concentrations of fuel they can still burn very hot. It is important to note that the danger of fire is *still present* and with a dry, warming trend entering the Missoula area this week and remaining for the extended outlook, fall burning will remain closed. The Missoula County Fire Protection Association (MCFPA), composed of all Missoula area fire protection agencies, will continue to monitor local fire danger indices, weather, and resource availability and will open fall burning when appropriate. All outdoor burning in Missoula County is by permit only, and the General Burning Season (burning of yard debris/untreated vegetative waste generated onsite) is closed until March 1, 2021. When fall burning opens, the only burning that will be permitted is **prescribed wildland** and **essential agriculture burning**. Within Missoula City limits, parcels must be at least one acre or more in size to be eligible for an outdoor burn permit and recreational fires are banned year-round, with exceptions for barbecues. Visit **MissoulaCounty.us** or **MCFPA.org** for more information on outdoor burning seasons, permits, and current restrictions.

As fall wraps us in her colorful embrace and fire danger arrows swing left, fire protection agencies urge residents and visitors to not get complacent and act like fire season is over. Abandoned campfires are a leading cause of wildfire in the Missoula area—especially in the fall with hunters scattered afield. For all those planning to head out into our public lands this autumn, be sure to check for local fire restrictions at [FireRestrictions.us/mt](https://www.firerestrictions.us/mt) and put those campfires dead out! Please don't park in dry grass and cross your trailer chains to avoid dragging and creating sparks. When target shooting, choose an area free of vegetation or lots of rocks and don't shoot on windy days. Avoid steel core/tip/jacketed bullets and remember that the use of exploding targets is prohibited on public lands. One less spark is one less wildfire!

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