

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TENNESSEE URGES CITIZENS TO PRACTICE SAFE DEBRIS BURNING

- State law requires burn permits Oct. 15-May 15 -

NASHVILLE - The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry is observing National Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 8-14) by reminding citizens to follow simple safety practices to prevent wildfires. The official start of wildfire season in Tennessee is Oct. 15.

"It's important, and required by law from October 15, 2017 to May 15, 2018, that citizens call for a burning permit and follow outdoor burning safety recommendations," State Forester Jere Jeter said. "Tennessee experienced a historic fall fire season last year due to exceptional drought conditions. Fortunately, that underlying condition does not exist this year, but we're not going to let our guard down. The permit system helps us communicate to the public when and where it is safe to burn and focuses attention on safety. We need all Tennesseans to volunteer to prevent wildfire."

The online burn permit system is free, fast and simple. If you are burning a leaf or brush pile that is smaller than 8 feet by 8 feet in size, log on to www.BurnSafeTN.org for approval. More than 300,000 permits are issued each year, and the online system provides a quick and efficient way to apply.

For a larger burn, apply for a free permit by calling your local Division of Forestry burn permit phone number Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Phone numbers can be found by visiting www.BurnSafeTN.org. (**directory is also attached to this release**)

Burn permits are only issued when conditions are conducive to safe burning. If you live inside city limits, there may be additional restrictions. Check with your municipality before you burn.

To learn what materials may *not* be burned, check the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Open Burning Guidelines at <https://tn.gov/environment/article/apc-open-burning>.

Burning without a permit is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by up to 30 days in jail and/or a fine. Wildfires caused by arson are a class C felony punishable by 3 to 15 years in prison and up to \$10,000 in fines. Anyone with information about suspected arson activity should call the state Fire Marshal's Arson Hotline at 1-800-762-3017. The hotline is answered 24 hours a day, and you may remain anonymous when providing information. Cash awards are offered for information leading to an arrest or conviction. To report illegal burning, please call 1-888-891-TDEC.

Visit www.BurnSafeTN.org for additional tips to burn safely and to protect your community.

The Division of Forestry promotes the wise use of forest resources by assisting landowners, fighting wildfires, providing quality seedlings, monitoring insects and diseases, improving urban forests, managing state forests, protecting water quality and collecting forest inventory data. The Division also works to promote primary and secondary forest industries to stimulate the state's economy. Visit