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Fire Restrictions move from Stage 2 to Stage 1 September 18th

MESA COUNTY, Colo – The Mesa County Sheriff, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Grand Junction Field Office, and the Colorado National Monument are reducing fire restrictions from Stage 2 to Stage 1 effective at 12:01 a.m. Friday, September 18th, 2020. This applies to all of Mesa County, including the Colorado National Monument and BLM administered public lands. Land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, including the Grand Mesa and Uncompahgre National Forests, remains in Stage 1 Fire Restrictions.

Recent rain combined with shorter days and longer cooler nights have improved the extreme fire danger enough to support moving from Stage 2 Fire Restrictions to Stage 1. Agencies implement fire restrictions based on specific criteria to include the moisture content of vegetation, weather outlooks, human risk factors, and firefighting resource availability. Mesa County recently received 1.0 to 1.25 inches of precipitation. As we move into fall, the longer nights provide a better opportunity for vegetation moisture levels to recover.

Allowed under Stage 1 not previously allowed under Stage 2:

- The use of charcoal grills
- Campfires inside designated and developed fire pits or fire rings
- Smoking outside in an area free of combustible materials

While last week's storms have helped ease fire danger, it was not a fire-season ending event. Mesa County is experiencing extreme drought conditions with no forecasted relief anytime soon. The potential still exists for dangerous wildfires this fall. Community members are asked to continue to be vigilant and remain cautious when using fire outdoors, especially in heavily grassy areas. The public can help significantly reduce human-caused fires by being proactive with activities that could ignite a wildfire.

Preventing wildfires:

- Never leave a fire unattended
- Extinguish fire pits and campfires in designated fire rings and ensure they are completely out and cold to the touch
- Properly dispose of cigarettes
- When pulling a trailer, make sure the chains and other metal parts aren't dragging
- Check your tire pressure and brakes. An exposed wheel rim or too thin brake pads can cause sparks.

A reminder, fireworks are never permitted on public land. Wood fires are never permitted anywhere on the Colorado National Monument.

Conditions will continue to be monitored, and restrictions will be adjusted accordingly should it change.



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What Stage I Fire Restrictions Mean

Fireworks are not allowed under Stage I Fire Restrictions. Professional fireworks shows may be allowed through the permitting process.

Campfires are ONLY allowed in designated and developed fire pits or fire rings.

Smoking in open areas is not allowed EXCEPT within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area of at least six feet diameter that is barren or cleared of all combustible material.

While the restrictions do not impact most shooting sports, explosive targets are prohibited.

Open Burning

The open burning of yard waste or fields is prohibited EXCEPT for agricultural burns with a Sheriff Issued Burn Permit. The Sheriff's Fire Marshal will conduct an onsite inspection of each planned burn BEFORE a Permit is issued to ensure all safety precautions are met. If they are not met, and conditions do not allow for a safe burn a permit will NOT be issued and any agricultural burn will be in violation of the fire restrictions in place. Applications for a Sheriff issued burn permit can be found [here](#).

Federal Lands

The use of fireworks, flares, or other incendiary devices, including exploding targets, are always prohibited on federal lands. Wood fires are never permitted anywhere on the Colorado National Monument.

Penalties

Causing a fire during fire restrictions can be a class 6 felony and can be punishable by fines up to \$100,000 and/or imprisonment up to 18 months. Other possible charges include Fourth Degree Arson (M2) and Intentionally Setting a Wildfire (F3). You may also be held financially responsible for damage caused.

View Interactive Fire Restrictions Map at bit.ly/Fire_Restrictions



Stage 1 Fire Restrictions Fact Sheet



Allowed



Fires in permanent fire pits, fire rings at private residences or within developed recreational sites such as a campground, or picnic area.



Fire features, chimineas and tiki torches at private residences supervised by a responsible adult.



Fires contained within liquid fueled or gas fueled stoves, lanterns, or heating devices.



Agricultural burns with SHERIFF'S OFFICE ISSUED PERMIT ONLY! Mesa County Fire Marshal will do a safety inspection prior to issuing permit.

Only PERMITTED PROFESSIONAL FIREWORKS displays are allowed.



NOT Allowed



The personal use of all fireworks are prohibited during fire restrictions.



Any fire or campfire, not within a permanently constructed fire grate in a developed park, campground, private residence, or picnic area.



Smoking, EXCEPT within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area of at least six feet diameter that is barren or cleared of all combustible material.

Operating or using any internal combustion engine, such as chainsaws, without a spark-arresting device properly installed, maintained, and in effective working order.



Welding or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame EXCEPT in cleared areas of at least 10 ft in diameter and in possession of a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher.

Target shooting with explosive targets is not permitted.