



Egremont Fire Department Inc.

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P.O. Box 232
South Egremont, MA 01258

Egremont/Mt. Washington Outdoor Fire Ban Extended Through November 30

Any Outdoor Fire Will Spread and Threaten People and Property

As drought conditions spread across Massachusetts and the wildfire risk continues to grow, Egremont/Mt. Washington Fire Chief Schneider and municipal leaders are prohibiting any outdoor fires at least until November 30, 2024

“Historically low rainfall, bright and breezy weather, and bone-dry fuel sources mean that any outdoor fire will quickly grow out of control,” said Chief Schneider. “Every firefighter battling a preventable wildfire is one who can’t respond to a house fire, car crash, or medical emergency. Help us help you. Please use caution and common sense and refrain from any outdoor activity that could spark a fire.”

Burning yard waste is already prohibited across Massachusetts through January 15 and year-round in some communities under 310 CMR 7.07, the Open Burning regulation. Today’s order additionally restricts the outdoor use of fire pits, chimineas, candles, cooking/heating equipment, and other ignition sources under Section 10.10.2 of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code. The Code grants fire officials the authority to prohibit any and all open flames and other ignition sources under certain hazardous conditions, including extreme drought.

Any requests for permits for outdoor fires, hot work such as cutting/grinding, and other activity will be decided in light of the ongoing fire risk.

All of Massachusetts, including Egremont/ Mt. Washington, is facing an unprecedented fall wildfire season. Statewide, fires in October rose 1,200% above the historical average, and the 133 fires reported in the first week of November represent more than six times the average for the entire month. Many have damaged homes and other properties. According to Chief Schneider, the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services, and the Department of Conservation & Recreation’s Bureau of Forest Fire Control & Forestry, almost all of these fires start with human activity and can be prevented by limiting outdoor activity that involves open flames, sparks and embers, hot engines or gasoline from power equipment, and other ignition sources.

Months without meaningful rainfall, abundant dead leaves and vegetation, bright sunshine, and gusty winds make the current and expected weather conditions ripe for a wildfire in every city and town in Massachusetts. At the same time, static water sources like lakes and ponds are supplying less water and water pressure to extinguish these fires. Because about 45% of Massachusetts homes are in or near wooded areas, almost any significant wildfire will threaten residential areas.

“The faster we hear about a fire, the better chance we have of safely extinguishing it,” said Chief Schneider. “If you see smoke or flames, please call 9-1-1 right away so we can protect you, your neighbors, and our community.”

Respectfully,



Joseph Schneider
Egremont/Mt. Washington Fire Chief

