New burn permit rules in place for 2024

New rules regarding campfires took effect in October 2023. Upon last year's enactment of LD 24 by the Maine Legislature, any campfire larger than three feet in height and three feet in diameter not purposed for debris disposal now requires a permit.

Permits for burning brush and wood debris are unaffected and still required under the existing regulations. The new law also makes any outdoor burning unlawful during red flag warning days – permits are only valid when the daily fire danger rating is low or moderate.

Maine residents and visitors planning fires larger than the dimensions specified above, often referred to as "bonfires," will be required to obtain burn permits. These permits are available free of charge and can be obtained online at the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's online portal.

The new rules aim to mitigate the risk of larger campfires getting out of control and causing wildfires, which burned 318 acres through 496 wildfires last year in Maine. So far this year, 160 wildfires have consumed 97 acres across the state – most have occurred in the southern half of Maine.

Maine residents and visitors are encouraged to check with their town hall, local fire service or the Maine Forest Service before burning. Maine's Wildfire Danger Report is also a useful online tool that helps identify which areas are highly susceptible to wildfires. The state tracks every wildfire through the Wildfire Occurrence Dashboard.

Other tips to preventing wildfires shared by the Forest Service include being mindful of weather conditions – particularly higher wind days – and using only easily controlled locations for burning. Most importantly, never use flammable gas-propellants.

Woodstove and fireplace ashes should be cooled before disposing of them. A tightly covered metal container is recommended for disposal and should be kept at least 10 feet away from homes and any other buildings. Never empty the ashes directly into a trash can.

5 Levels of Fire Danger

EXTREME

MODERATE

VERY HIGH

LOW

HIGH

NO PERMITS ALLOWED   PERMITS ALLOWED