

Forest Fire Risk Warning



Condition Orange – High Fire Risk . Be Prepared.

Issue date:

Given recent warm and dry weather patterns, the presence of Atlantic High Pressure systems and the impacts of resulting weather patterns on flammability of selected fuels such as Gorse and dessicated peat in both upland and lowland site types, DAFM/Forest Service advises that a High Fire Risk (Condition Orange) is deemed to exist in all areas where such hazardous fuels are available in proximity to woodland and other assets.

Pending significant rainfall, this condition will remain in place until otherwise stated by DAFM/Forest Service.

All forest owners and managers are advised to prepare for likely outbreaks of fire. Fire plans, fire suppression equipment should be made ready and other relevant contingencies such as insurance, helicopter contracts etc. should be in place.

Forest owners, farmers, rural dwellers and holiday makers are asked to be vigilant, to report any suspicious activity to the Gardai and to report all fires immediately to the Fire and Emergency Services.

The Department also recommends that forest owners, managers and investors should consider the fire mitigation measures that they can put in place to help prevent loss or damage to forest resources through fire. Examples of such measures are:

- 1. Prepare:** Have fire-fighting tools such as beaters and knapsack sprayers to hand and ready to use. If you do not live in reasonable proximity to your woodland a local caretaker or forest neighbour should be employed and should also have a copy of the fire plan with your and all the above contact numbers. Clear tracks and roads if available and ensure forest entrances and access routes are not blocked by parked vehicles or other obstacles, especially where visitors or recreational users may be present. Suitable signage to this effect should be displayed on gates or barriers.
- 2. Be Vigilant:** Forest owners should be particularly vigilant during the high risk period. Fire patrols may be warranted in known fire hotspots. Be particularly vigilant at Bank Holiday weekends where

high risk weather is forecast. Forest owners should share the burden of vigilance with neighbouring owners and other concerned parties such as local residents groups etc. Cooperation between neighbouring landowners is critical to successful fire prevention. Forest owners should discuss their concerns about fire with local landowners in advance of the fire season. Providing assistance to farmers wishing to carry out legal prescribed burning earlier in the season is a useful way of developing good working relationships with neighbours, as well as ensuring that operations are conducted safely. Forest owners should cooperate with fire planning and share the burden of fire patrols and vigilance during high risk periods.

3. Obey the Law: It is an offence to cut, grub, burn or otherwise destroy any vegetation growing on any land not then cultivated between 1st day of March and 31st day of August in any year. Report suspicious or illegal activity to Gardai immediately. Landowners wishing to carry out prescribed burning during the legal period for doing so, must notify in writing all Forest owners within one mile, and the local Garda station between 7 and 35 days in advance of the burning operation. Landowners found burning illegally could face fines, imprisonment and Single Farm Payment penalties, where applicable.

4. Report Fires Immediately: If you see a fire, do not delay; report it to the Fire and Emergency Services straight away. Do not wait for somebody else to make the call. Dial **999** or **112**. Give clear details as regards location, where at all possible using a national grid reference and any other useful information such as the size of the fire, wind direction, proximity to dwellings or forestry etc. You will not be billed by the fire service or local authority for making the call. Do not attempt to tackle fires alone or without adequate training or protective equipment.

5. Report Losses: If your plantation is damaged or destroyed, report this loss as soon as possible to the Gardai and the Forest Service. Report losses to report.fires@agriculture.gov.ie. or in writing to Forest Service, Johnstown Castle Estate, Wexford.

BE PREPARED, BE VIGILANT, STAMP OUT FOREST FIRES