

Definitions of different levels of fire dangers

Low Fire Danger – color code is green



- Fuels do not ignite readily from small firebrands, although a more intense heat source such as lightning may start many fires in duff or punky wood.
- Fires in open cured grassland may burn freely a few hours after rain, but woods fire spread slowly by creeping or smoldering, and burn in irregular fingers.
- There is little danger of spotting.

Moderate Fire Danger – color code is blue



- Fires can start from most accidental causes, but with the exception of lightning fires in some areas, the number of starts is generally low.
- Fires in open-cured grassland will burn briskly and spread rapidly on windy days. Wood fires spread slowly to moderately fast.
- The average fire is of moderate intensity, although heavy concentrations of fuel, especially draped fuel, may burn hot. Short-distance spotting may occur, but is not persistent.
- Fires are not likely to become serious, and control is relatively easy.

High Fire Danger – color code is yellow



- All fine dead fuels ignite readily and fires start easily from any cause.
- Unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape.
- Fires spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common.
- High intensity burning may develop on slopes, or in concentrations of fine fuel.
- Fire may become serious and their control difficult unless they are hit hard and fast while small.

Very High Fire Danger – color code is orange



- Fires start easily from all causes, and immediately after ignition, spread rapidly and increase quickly in intensity.
- Spot fires are a constant danger.
- Fires burning in light fuels may quickly develop high-intensity characteristics; such as, long-distance spotting and fire whirlwinds, when they burn into heavier fuels.
- Direct attack at the head of such fires is rarely possible after they have been burning more than a few minutes.

Extreme Fire Danger – color code is red



- Fires under extreme conditions start quickly, spread furiously, and burn intensely.
- All fires are potentially serious.
- Development into high-intensity burning will usually be faster & occur from smaller fires than in the very high danger class (item 4).
- Direct attack is rarely possible, and may be dangerous, except immediately after ignition.
- Fires that develop headway in heavy slash or in conifer stands may be unmanageable while the extreme burning condition lasts.
- Under these conditions, the only effective and safe control action is on the flanks until the weather changes or the fuel supply lessens.

For more information

- [Fire Restriction Definitions](#)
- [Videos about fire safety and fire restrictions](#)
- [Eastern Area Coordination Center](#)
- [National Interagency Coordination Center](#)