

## Press Release

From: Mountain View Fire Protection District  
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**For Immediate Release**

### **Fire Season is Upon Us; Extreme Danger Appears Imminent**

You may have noticed that with the warmer weather we are having, large columns of smoke can be seen across the skyline indicating the beginning of controlled burns has begun in earnest. As the warm weather continues, the burning of fields and ditches will increase. That also means that the likely hood of out of control fires may also increase.

Many farmers and irrigation ditch companies are getting a head start by burning weeds in the ditches and fields to prepare the soil for crop production. Burning the weeds is important, as it makes way for healthy vegetation to grow. It also allows the water to flow without restrictions in the many ditches throughout the area.

The snow that Colorado received this year has pretty much been in the mountains. While that's great for skiers in the high country, it has not been a boon for us on the plains.

"Once again, things are very dry this year. Above average temperatures and below average precipitation are predicted for our region, and that makes the fire danger outlook extreme" said Jesse Hodgson, spokesman for the Mountain View Fire Protection District.

"The next 45-60 days will prove how severe the fire danger will be this summer. If it's as hot, dry and windy as expected; the prediction is that this year will again be another year of outrageous wildland fires across the state and the country" Hodgson continued.

Firefighters have already taken the necessary steps to ensure they are ready for the imminent fire season, which has already started, and are asking people to be mindful and cautious with fires.

Those precautions include burning in the morning when the air is more stable and plan on finishing by mid-day before the winds pick up. Firefighters point out that the best time to burn is when the relative humidity is 20% or higher and winds are light. Those times are usually in the morning.

"By early afternoon usually between the hours of 2pm and 6pm weather patterns will change and the relative humidity drops. If people don't anticipate that, then their controlled burns typically become out of control and that's when we get called" Hodgson said.

Hodgson also encourages people to have enough help available with water and hand tools including shovels and rakes. He urges them to keep a couple of people on the edges to gauge the fire's size and direction.

He says it's important to call the police and fire communications centers to let them know you are planning to burn. Give the operator your address and a phone number to get in touch with you in case they receive calls that the fire may be out of control, and then they can confirm directly with you if that is, in fact, the case before dispatching the Fire Department. It is a good idea to keep a cell phone with you so dispatch can call you, or to enable you to call 911 immediately if the fire starts to get out of control.

The Boulder County Communications number is 303-441-4444 and the Weld County Communications number is: 720-652-4200, press 1 and then 4240 during business hours.

Lastly it is recommended that you keep objects clear of your burn area and set a perimeter (example: dirt) so that if the fire starts to get out of control, it will not have anywhere to go. Keep the fire "reasonable". This means don't let it get too big for the people you have available to keep it under control.

"If at any time you feel that the fire is getting out of control, please do not hesitate to call 911. We would rather get there and not be needed than be needed and not have gotten there soon enough" said Hodgson.

Mountain View Fire typically does not conduct controlled burns. The responsibility of burning is up to individual property owners.

The Air Pollution Control Division of the State of Colorado governs open burning of any material. Local County Health, Fire and Police Departments are responsible for the enforcement of laws pertaining to open burns.

Open burns are allowed in rural areas. However, you must check with your local ordinance if planning to burn within city/town limits. Most ordinances, however, do not allow burning within city/town limits. Burn permits are not always required, but you should check with your county.

Mountain View Fire does not issue burn permits. Boulder and Weld Counties are responsible for issuing the actual permit, as well as enforcing laws as they pertain to illegal burning.