



Burning Grass and Woody Debris Safely

Aviation,
Forest Fire and
Emergency
Services



The Risks

If you live in or near a forested area, you have a lot to lose if a forest fire starts near your cottage or home.

Each year in Ontario, dozens of rural residents and cottagers damage forest lands and lose valuable buildings to fires that could have been prevented. Nearly one third of these fires are caused by careless burning - over 200 fires per year.

Under the Forest Fires Prevention Act, the only material that can be burnt without a fire permit is grass, wood, brush or wood by-products.

Always consider chipping or composting first over burning brush or grass. If you must burn, make sure you know the rules for outdoor fires and follow safe practices.

Choose a Safe Time

Any fire is more likely to get out of control on a hot, dry, or windy day. Burn during the coolest, dampest and calmest time of the day - two hours before sunset, or later. Make sure fires are out two hours after sunrise, or earlier. Don't even consider burning when it's windy.

Keep Your Fire Small

Small fires can be controlled by one person using hand tools and water. Keep your pile of wood, brush, or wood by-products to be burned less than two metres in diameter and less than two metres high. An area of grass or leaves can be burned if the area is less than one hectare (2.5 acres) and the length of the flaming edge is kept to less than 30 metres (100 feet).

Choose a Safe Site

Woody debris fires often turn into forest fires when the fire escapes by running along the ground away from the pile or burn area. Burning piles must be at least two metres from other flammable material. If you are burning an area of grass or leaves, make sure the area is surrounded by a fire-proof boundary. Roads, ditches, or ploughed ground provide good barriers against fire spread.

Stay With Your Fire

If you start a fire outdoors, you must take all necessary steps to tend the fire, keep it under control, and extinguish it before leaving the site. A responsible person must be available to tend the fire at all times, even if it is contained in an incinerator. You must have adequate tools and water to control the fire if it begins to spread.

Put That Fire Out!

Every person who starts a fire is responsible to ensure it is out. Remember, coals can smoulder for hours and hot embers and sparks can be blown by the wind, easily setting fire to dry grass or twigs. Where possible, dispose of used charcoal or ashes in a pit.

Drown hot coals thoroughly, then cover them with sand or gravel.

**For more information on controlled burns in Moose Factory,
please call Moose Factory Island Fire & Rescue.**

705-658-4643