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MDC Reminds People Outdoors to Celebrate Safely

JUNE 30TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reminds people in the outdoors to be extremely careful with fireworks, campfires, and other sources of fire that could cause a wildfire.

FIREWORKS

Don't light fireworks in any areas where the sparks could ignite dry grass, leaves, or other potential fire fuel. Always have an approved fire extinguisher and an available water supply to douse sparks or flames. Wet the area around where fireworks are being discharged. Check with local ordinances and authorities for bans on fireworks and open burning.

OUTDOOR BURNING

Don't burn during wrong conditions. Dry grass, high temperatures, low humidity, and wind make fire nearly impossible to control. Check with local fire departments regarding burn bans that may be in place. A person who starts a fire for any reason is responsible for any damage it may cause.

DRIVING OFF ROAD

Wildfires can start when dry fuel, such as grass, comes in contact with catalytic converters. Think twice before driving into and across a grassy field. Never park over tall, dry grass or piles of leaves that can touch the underside of a vehicle. When driving vehicles off road, regularly inspect the undercarriage to ensure that fuel and brake lines are intact and no oil leaks are apparent. Always carry an approved fire extinguisher on

vehicles that are used off road. Check for the presence of spark arresters on ATV exhausts.

MAKING A CAMPFIRE

Clear a generous zone around fire rings. Store unused firewood a good distance from a campfire. Never use gasoline, kerosene, or other flammable liquid to start a fire. Keep campfires small and controllable. Keep fire-extinguishing materials, such as a rake, shovel, and bucket of water, close.

NEVER LEAVE A CAMPFIRE UNATTENDED

Extinguish campfires each night and before leaving camp, even if it's just for a few moments. Extinguish cigarettes completely and safely and dispose of them responsibly by burning them in a controlled campfire or packing them out.

CALL FOR HELP

Call 911 at the first sign of a fire getting out of control.

REPORT FOREST ARSON

Wildfires are sometimes set by vandals. Help stop arson by calling 800-392-1111 and reporting any potential arson activities. Callers will remain anonymous and rewards are possible.

MANAGED FIRE

Fire used in the wrong way can create disasters. Used in the right way, fire can help create habitat for wildlife. For more information on using prescribed fire as a land-management tool, visit mdc.mo.gov and search "prescribed fire."

Photo courtesy of Kay Stevenson.

LAST UPDATED ON JUNE 30TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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