



Megan Terlecky
Public Information Officer
Mesa County Sheriff's Office
(970) 986-0950 Cell
Megan.Terlecky@mesacounty.us

Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
970-462-1009 Cell
sborders@blm.gov

Grand Junction Fire Dept.
Public Information Coordinator
(970) 697-8587 Cell
GJFirePIO@gjcity.org

NEWS RELEASE

Stage 1 Fire Restrictions begin May 4th, 2018

MESA COUNTY, Colo - The Mesa County Sheriff, and the Fire Chiefs representing municipalities and fire protection districts of Mesas County are enacting Stage I Fire Restrictions effective at **12:01 a.m. Friday, May 4th, 2018**. This applies to all of Mesa County with the EXCEPTION of federal land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service.

In 2012 and 2013 Colorado saw most destructive wildfires in the state's history. The [severe to extreme drought conditions](#) Mesa County is currently experiencing are worse than the drought conditions during 2012. [The National Interagency Fire Center](#) is predicting the significant wildland fire potential for the region to be above average for the first time since 2012.

"We are going into fire restrictions very early this year due to the extreme fire danger and ongoing drought conditions. I understand the impact this will have on many people's recreation plans for the coming months and we do not make this decision without careful consideration. The conditions we are experiencing are the most dangerous fire conditions we have had in recent memory and the potential for serious wildfire is staggering," said Mesa County Sheriff Matt Lewis. "We want to ensure everyone has ample opportunity to understand these fire restrictions and adjust their plans accordingly. It is also important to clearly communicate fireworks will not be allowed under these restrictions to our residents and vendors. The danger is too great this year and there is no reason we should delay the decision to implement fire restrictions or give false expectations as people begin to plan activities."

Already the community has experienced two destructive urban interface fires with the 12 acre Rosevale Fire and the 220 acre Skipper Island Fire. Both fires spread rapidly with dry brush and strong winds fueling the fires. Thousands experienced power outages and some people lost their home. These fire conditions are just going to get worse throughout the summer.

"Something about the seriousness of the situation and how quickly fire spreads...," said Grand Junction Fire Chief Ken Watkins. "We need everyone to do their part, it's going to be a long fire season."

While federally managed lands are not currently enacting restrictions, severe drought conditions exist. The Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit asks the public to be extra cautious when recreating and target shooting in dry areas. Conditions are being monitored and fire restrictions are expected to be implemented as the drought persists.

(cont.)



Mesa County Fire Chiefs Association

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What Stage I Fire Restrictions Mean

Fireworks are not allowed under Stage I Fire Restrictions. Professional fireworks shows may be allowed through the permitting process.

Campfires are **ONLY** allowed in designated fire pits or fire rings.

Smoking in open areas is not allowed **EXCEPT** within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area of at least six feet diameter that is barren or cleared of all combustible material.

While the restrictions do not impact most shooting sports, explosive targets are prohibited.

Stage I Fire Restrictions will end open burn season for Mesa County. The open burning of yard waste or fields is prohibited **EXCEPT** for agricultural burns with a **Sheriff Issued Burn Permit**. The Sheriff's Fire Marshal will conduct an onsite inspection of each planned burn **BEFORE** a Permit is issued to ensure all safety precautions are met. If they are not met, and conditions do not allow for a safe burn a permit will **NOT** be issued and any agricultural burn will be in violation of the fire restrictions in place.

Causing or allowing a fire during fire restrictions can be a class 6 felony and can be punishable by fines up to \$100,000 and/or imprisonment up to 18 months. Other possible charges include fourth degree arson and intentionally setting a wildfire. You may also be held financially responsible for damage caused.

The use of fireworks, flares, or other incendiary devices, including exploding targets, are always **prohibited** on federal lands.

Wood fires are never permitted anywhere on the Colorado National Monument.



Mesa County Fire Chiefs Association



Stage 1 Fire Restrictions Fact Sheet

What is Allowed?



Fires in permanent fire pits at private residences or within developed recreational sites such as a campground, or picnic area.



Fire pits, Chimineas, and tiki torches at private residences or within a developed park, campground, or picnic area supervised by a responsible adult.



Fires contained within liquid fueled or gas fueled stoves, lanterns, or heating devices.



Agricultural burns with Sheriff's Office **Issued Permit Only!** Mesa County Fire Marshal will do a safety inspection prior to issuing permit.

Only permitted professional fireworks displays are allowed.

What is NOT Allowed?



The personal use of all fireworks are **PROHIBITED** during fire restrictions.



Any fire or campfire, not within a permanently constructed fire grate in a developed park, campground, private residence, or picnic area.



Smoking **EXCEPT** within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area of at least six feet diameter that is barren or cleared of all combustible material.



Explosive Targets

Operating or using any internal combustion engine without a spark-arresting device properly installed, maintained, and in effective working order such as chainsaws.

Welding or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame **EXCEPT** in cleared areas of at least 10 ft in diameter and in possession of a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher.

