

Media Release-06.29.18-Stage II Fire Restrictions Implemented in Eagle County

Eagle County CO. — With Colorado facing extremely dangerous fire conditions, Eagle County Sheriff James Van Beek, in collaboration with local fire authorities, the White River National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management, has decided to enact Stage II fire restrictions in Eagle County. All law enforcement and fire agencies throughout Eagle County would like to thank everyone for their compliance, and cooperation with our current fire restrictions.

These restrictions will take effect on Saturday, June 30th at 12:01 a.m. and ban any open fire. In addition, professional firework displays planned for July 3rd in Avon and July 4th in Gypsum, Beaver Creek and Vail have been canceled due to extreme fire conditions. However, minus the fireworks, the holiday celebrations will continue as planned.

Stage II fire restrictions prohibit:

- Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire, charcoal grill, any type of charcoal fueled broiler, tiki torch, wood burning stove, shepherders stove, or open fire of any type. These restrictions include developed camping and picnic grounds and private property. Fire devices using pressurized liquid or gas with shutoff valves are permitted when used in an area at least three feet or more from flammable material such as grasses, debris or pine needles. Fireplaces and wood burning stoves inside structures equipped with ember or spark arresters attached to chimneys are also exempted.
- Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle, trailer, building or tent;
- Using an explosive requiring fuse or blasting caps, fireworks, rockets, firearms, exploding targets and tracers or incendiary ammunition;
- Operating a chainsaw, cutoff saw, or any other mechanical equipment without an approved spark arrestor and without chemical pressurized fire extinguisher (8 oz. capability by weight or larger and kept with the operator) and without one “O” or larger round point shovel with an overall length of at least 36 inches that is readily available for use;
- Welding, or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame (except with a current permit, contract or letter of authorization and the welding area must be barren or cleared of all flammable material for 10 feet on all sides of the equipment);
- Operating or using any internal combustion engine without a spark arresting device properly installed, maintained and in effective working order meeting either:
 - A. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Standard 5100-1a; or
 - B. Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) recommended practice J335(b) and J350(a).

The following persons are exempt from this order:

- Persons with a permit or letter of authorization specifically authorizing the prohibited act or omission.
- Any federal, state, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.

Violation of federal fire restrictions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$100,000 or imprisonment for not more than 12 months or both. Those found responsible for starting wildfires will also face restitution costs of suppressing the fire.

We want to remind our community, as well as visitors to the area, that they are our first line of defense in preventing wildland fires. Thank you everyone for doing your part to keep Eagle County safe and beautiful. We wish you a happy Independence Day holiday.

The National Weather Service has issued a Red Flag Warning for Eagle County, which remains in effect through Friday and may continue into next week. A Red Flag Warning means that critical fire weather conditions are either occurring now, or will shortly. A combination of strong winds, low relative humidity, and warm temperatures can contribute to extreme fire behavior.

A comprehensive listing of fire restrictions throughout the state and other fire related emergency information can be found online at www.coemergency.com . Information on current wildfires in Colorado and around the country is available at www.inciweb.org .

The Eagle County Sheriff's Office is urging people living in and near fire-prone areas to be prepared for the worst by protecting their property through clearing brush and removing dead branches, along with many other steps that are outlined at www.firewise.org. In addition, residents should prepare emergency evacuation plans and make sure they have their most valuable and important possessions prepared in the event they are required to immediately leave the area.

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