

Wildfire Suppression



The Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) is responsible for the suppression of wildfire on all state and private land. Most counties have two or

three rangers and a county forester. Each team is equipped with fire fighting equipment. Rangers and foresters tailor their education and suppression efforts to the specific moisture levels, vegetation, fire history, and population of each region.

Each county provides wildfire safety and/or Smokey Bear programs at the request of local civic groups. Arkansas Firewise educational programs are used as part of safety events and presentations.

Visit arkansasforestry.org or call 501-296-1940 for information on rangers, foresters, safety programs, burn bans and wildfire activity.

Wildfire and Fire Crews



In 2012, 2,148 wildfires burned 34,434 acres of Arkansas land.

Over the last five years, the state has seen yearly averages of 1,554 fires burning

more than 24,178 acres. By working together, we can reduce the wildfire threat to homes.

Fire departments are an integral part of fire support, suppression and prevention. They are usually the first on scene at a wildfire site.

AFC crews are dispatched when fires are outside city limits or involve thick vegetation. The sooner fires are reported, the quicker firefighters and AFC crews can respond and reduce wildfire risk to lives, homes and property.



Don't be careless:

- Be aware of burn bans and Red Flag Warnings.
- Burning is strongly discouraged on days where humidity levels have dropped below 30% and winds are gusty.
- Be mindful that sparks from lawn mowers, dragging chains, and hay baling equipment can start a wildfire.
- Never discard cigarettes from vehicles.
- Never park vehicles where grass or other vegetation can touch the exhaust system.
- The greatest defense against wildfire is defensible space. A lean, clean and green landscape provides a fire barrier between your property and surrounding vegetation.



The Arkansas Firewise Team

The Firewise team is available to visit fire departments, civic, volunteer and professional groups, churches and neighborhood associations. The team can answer questions, offer suggestions and provide education and personal assistance through the Firewise process.

Arkansas Forestry Commission
3821 W. Roosevelt Road
Little Rock, AR 72204
Phone: 501-296-1940
Fax: 501-296-1949

The Arkansas Forestry Commission offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability; and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



www.arkansasfirewise.com
www.arkansasforestry.org

The Arkansas Firewise program is an initiative of the Arkansas Forestry Commission to educate homeowners and firefighters about wildfire safety. Arkansas Firewise works to make wildfire awareness and prevention a priority for Arkansans. Firewise provides presentations, training sessions, home risk assessment surveys, Community Wildfire Preparedness Plans, and one-on-one help for communities and homeowners.

Look inside:

- Arkansas Wildfire Statistics
- Wildfire Safety Strategies
- Wildfire and Arkansas Fire Crews
- Fire Response Contact Information
- Grant Opportunities



To report a wildfire, call 1-800-468-8834.

To report a controlled burn, call 1-800-830-8015.



Arkansas Wildfire Causes

| Wildfire Statistics, 2012 | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Burning Debris | 28.7% |
| Arson | 24.6% |
| Misc. | 16.3% |
| Lightning | 15.1% |
| Equipment Use | 10.7% |
| Smokers | 2.0% |
| Children | 1.3% |
| Campfire | 0.7% |
| Railroad | 0.6% |

Burning debris includes trash, leaves, brush and other yard waste. Arson fires are those lit intentionally. Most burning debris fires take place near homes, not in the middle of the woods. Most wildfires happen closer than people think.

Arkansas Fire Seasons

Arkansas has two major wildfire seasons. They may differ by region, weather, and vegetation. The fire seasons are February to April and August to November.

Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) crews are on elevated alert during those periods. County offices, county 911 dispatch centers, and a 24-hour AFC Dispatch center in Malvern are prepared to fight fire. Additional single engine air tanker planes are brought in during fire seasons to help with fire detection and to help provide water supply to isolated fires.

Arkansas Fire Weather

The two primary fire seasons are tied to low humidity levels and a lack of moisture in vegetation. Extreme fire conditions can arrive with any bad drought or extended period of high temperatures, however, fire patterns tell us that these two time periods are most at risk.

The 24-hour AFC dispatch center number is 1-800-468-8834.

Protecting Homes



The greatest protection that a home can have from wildfire is lean, clean, and green defensible space. Defensible space is the area 30 to 300 feet around a home. Debris in this area is the most likely cause of a fire spreading to a structure.

Arkansas wildfires usually consist of surface level flames. Fire from a wooded area seldom spreads directly to a home. Instead, fire catches in some flammable object or vegetation inside a home's defensible space and spreads to the home. The area directly surrounding a home should be thought of as a fire barrier. Everything in this space should be made as fire resistant as possible. Consider the lean, clean, and green guidelines below:

- **Create a lean space:** Prune shrubs and cut back tree branches, especially those within 15 feet of the roof. Cut back limbs that allow trees to touch the home or other trees. Don't rid the yard of trees and landscaping, but keep everything trimmed and neat.
- **Create a clean space:** Remove dead plant material including limbs, sticks, twigs, leaves, dry grass and firewood from within 30 feet of homes. This area includes the roof, deck, vents, flower beds, tool sheds and outbuildings, as well as carports and dog kennels. Annual raking and mowing is not only for aesthetic appeal, it also keeps a space clean so fire cannot spread easily.
- **Create a green space:** Maintain a well-watered yard (fire will move faster in dry, dead grass) and plant fire-resistant vegetation that stays healthy and green for most of the year.

Wildfire Safety Strategies

Fire-resistant construction tips

- Use heat resistant materials such as cement, plaster, stucco, brick masonry, steel and fire-proof siding.
- Use Class A roofing materials and shingles constructed of metal, cement, slate or ceramic tile instead of wood.
- Use double-paned glass.
- Create multiple ways in and out of the property for easy water access.
- Clearly mark the address outside so emergency personnel can find the house.

Fire-resistant landscaping tips

- Plant shrubs and flowers so they do not touch the house.
- Trim trees with 6 to 10 feet of clearance from the ground.
- Keep grass cut short and leaves raked.
- Use terracing in areas with severe slopes.
- Create fire breaks with stones, pea gravel or secondary flower gardens.

Grant Opportunities

Communities interested in receiving Firewise grant money should contact the Arkansas Firewise Team at 501-296-1940. Any community group may become Firewise, however all grant money is filtered through the area fire department. Recognition requirements are:

- Identify a wildfire threat for the community.
- Complete training and conduct risk assessments for residences in the wildland/urban interface.
- Create a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan.
- Invest \$2 per capita in Firewise projects including community education efforts and wildfire mitigation projects on private or civic spaces.
- Submit a report to the Arkansas Firewise Team.