

# Gallatin National Forest Hebgen Lake Ranger District News Release

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<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>



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## Increase in Unattended Campfires on Forest

An increasing number of campfires have been found unattended and some have even escaped fire rings on the Hebgen Lake Ranger District recently. Warm windy days, dry trees, grasses and shrubs can cause an unattended campfire to escape easily.

According to Ken Coffin, Acting Hebgen Lake District Ranger, "Our cold wet start to the summer is over and the remainder of the summer is expected to be dry and warm. Anyone building campfires, whether in a developed recreation area or in the back country, really need to be vigilant in making sure camp fires are dead out when you leave your camp."

Under federal regulations, it is unlawful to leave a campfire without completely extinguishing it, and if it escapes or has been built without the area being cleared of vegetation, a person can also be fined. People violating these regulations can be fined up to \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization and in addition, charged with the cost of any fire suppression.

Even though the area has received good snow and spring rains, fire managers expect this season will still bring its share of hot, dry days and the potential for wildland fires.

Here are some important things to consider when building a campfire:

- Clear a campfire site down to bare soil.
- Build a fire ring out of rocks. Keep the fire under four feet in diameter with no less than a ten-foot clearance around it.
- Build the fire away from overhanging branches, steep slopes and dry grass.
- Never leave a campfire unattended. Even a small breeze can cause a fire to spread rapidly.
- Keep a bucket of water and a shovel near the campfire.
- When putting a campfire out, drown it with water. Stir the fire with water and dirt until all the fuel is cold to the touch. Never leave a fire until it is out cold.
- Campers are also asked to be careful with gas lanterns, barbeques, gas stoves and anything that can be a source of ignition for a wildfire.

**Don't be careless... be vigilant about preventing wildfires.**

For more information on wildfire safety contact the Hebgen Lake Ranger District by phoning (406) 823-6961 or visit the District Office at 330 Gallatin Road, West Yellowstone, MT.