



Date: August 3, 2006
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BILLINGS -- Stage 2 fire restrictions will go into effect on Friday, August 4, in Big Horn County and the Beartooth Ranger District of the Custer National Forest. Stage 2 restrictions are already in effect in Sweetgrass, Carbon, Musselshell, Stillwater and Yellowstone counties.

Counties currently under Stage 1 restrictions include: Blaine, Choteau, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Petroleum, Phillips, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley and Wheatland.

Fire restrictions do not apply in incorporated towns.

Stage 2 restrictions prohibit any open burning, including campfires. Smoking is allowed only in areas cleared of all flammable materials. Motorized vehicles must stay on designated roads and trails. Operating an internal combustion engine, welding, or using explosives is prohibited between 1 p.m. and 1 a.m.

An exemption for agriculture harvesting is in effect, but those taking advantage of this exemption are urged to have equipment, including spark arrestors, in good working order.

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Under Stage 1 restrictions, fires are permitted only within developed recreation sites, and smoking is allowed only in areas cleared of flammable materials. Exemptions for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 include fires fueled solely by liquid petroleum or LPG, or other activities for which there is a permit or written authorization. However, an exemption does not absolve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for any fire started by the exempted activity. Anyone who causes a wildland fire intentionally or through negligence will be held accountable for damage and suppression costs.

Even in areas not under Stage 1 or Stage 2 restrictions, a permit is required for any open burning other than campfires. Additional restrictions may also exist in certain areas. Before burning such things as slash piles, ditches, or fields, please contact your local fire department or sheriff's office for more information and to obtain any necessary permits.

For more information about fire prevention, please contact the Custer National Forest at 406-657-6200; Bureau of Land Management at 406-896-5013; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation at 406-247-4400; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 406-247-2940; Carbon County at 406-446-1595; Stillwater County at 406-321-0204; Sweet Grass County at 406-932-5143; or your local fire department or sheriff's office.

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