

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Eldorado National Forest

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Eldorado National Forest Fire Restrictions Begin July 1

Placerville CA ...Special fire restrictions will be implemented in the Eldorado National Forest beginning July 1, about a month earlier than normal. Eldorado National Forest Supervisor Ramiro Villalvazo will be signing a Forest Order that restricts campfires and charcoal barbeques only to designated developed campgrounds and facilities on the Eldorado that have a campground host and a water system until the end of fire season. The fire restrictions affect the entire Eldorado National Forest including wilderness areas.

“Below normal annual precipitation this spring has left the Forest drier and more susceptible to wildfire,” said Eldorado National Forest Management Officer Bob Patton. “The current drying trend is heading us in the direction we went in 2001 and 2004 when we had fires that exceeded 10,000 acres in size. The hundreds of fires currently burning in California as a result of the last lightning storm sends a clear message that with the unusually dry forest conditions we need to reduce the risk of new fire ignitions. The cooperation and vigilance of our forest visitors is going to be a key element in keeping the forest safe this season by reducing the chances of a wildfire.”

The restrictions also prohibit other fire related activities: operating internal combustion engines off of forest development roads and trails, the use of fireworks (which are never allowed in a national forest); most smoking activities; welding; and using explosives.

The following acts are prohibited within the Eldorado National Forest beginning on July 1 until a longterm change in weather patterns occurs.

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, or stove fire, except within the stoves and fire rings provided in the designated recreation sites shown on Exhibit A. *A complete list of these recreation sites can be obtained on the Eldorado National Forest web site at www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/.*
2. Possessing, discharging or using any kind of firework or other pyrotechnic device.
3. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, within the designated exempt sites shown on Exhibit A, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.

4. Operating an internal combustion engine off National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails, except for boats or dredges on a water surface.
5. Welding, or operating acetylene or other torch with an open flame.
6. Using an explosive.

The following persons are exempt from this order:

1. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.
2. Persons with a permit from the Forest Service specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission. Persons with a valid Wilderness Permit or valid California Campfire Permit are NOT exempt from the prohibitions listed above. Persons with a valid California campfire permit, or a valid Wilderness Permit, may use a portable stove, barbeque, or lantern that uses gas, jellied petroleum, or pressurized liquid fuel.
3. Persons with a valid Forest Product Removal Permits (firewood permit) from the Eldorado National Forest may cut firewood provided that the cutting of the firewood is done in compliance with the terms of the permit.

Forest Service fire prevention personnel will patrol the Forest daily looking for unsafe situations. The prohibitions carry penalties that can include fines and imprisonment. Violation of the prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.