

Fire Restriction Stages Explained

National Forests use fire restrictions to help prevent unwanted, human-caused fires and to limit the exposure of visitors during periods of potentially dangerous fire conditions. Implementation of fire restrictions occurs based on a combination of factors that are carefully measured. Criteria used to determine when to implement restrictions includes things such as current and predicted weather, fuel moisture, fire activity levels, and available firefighting resources.

There are different stages of fire restrictions, which become more restrictive as the stages progress from Stage 1 to Stage 3. The following is a general explanation of the restrictions in each Stage, but please check our [Forest Orders page](#) for the latest details on specific fire restrictions. As a reminder, **FIREWORKS ARE NEVER ALLOWED ON NATIONAL FORESTS.**

Stage 1 Fire Restrictions

During Stage 1, the following is prohibited at all times:

1. Igniting, building, maintaining, or using a fire, including charcoal and briquettes.
2. Smoking.

Exemptions during Stage 1:

1. Using a stove or grill that is solely fueled by pressurized liquid petroleum or pressurized liquid petroleum gas (LPG) fuels.
2. Having a campfire within a developed recreation site.
3. Smoking within an enclosed vehicle, building, or developed recreation site.

Stage 2 Fire Restrictions

During Stage 2, the following is prohibited at all times:

1. Igniting, building, maintaining, or using a fire, including charcoal and briquettes. 36 C.F.R. § 261.52(a).
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least three (3) feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of any flammable material. 36 C.F.R. § 261.52(d).

During Stage 2, the following is prohibited from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.:

1. Operating a generator, chainsaw or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine for felling, bucking, skidding, processing, road building and woodcutting during industrial operations or firewood gathering capable of igniting a fire. 36 C.F.R. §261.52(h).

2. Using an explosive. 36 C.F.R. § 261.52(b).
3. Blasting, welding, or operating any acetylene or other torch with an open flame. 36 C.F.R. § 261.52(i).

Exemptions during Stage 2:

1. Persons with a written Forest Service authorization specifically exempting them from the effect of this Order.
2. Persons using a stove or grill that is solely fueled by pressurized liquid petroleum or pressurized liquid petroleum gas (LPG) fuels.
3. Persons operating generators with an approved spark arresting device in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within 3 feet of the generator.
4. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of official duty.

Stage 3 - Forest Closure

During Stage 3, or "Forest Closure," **public entry is prohibited** due to the extreme fire danger. At times, National Forests may close specific geographic areas, or the entire forest. Wherever a closure is implemented, the public cannot enter any National Forest lands, roads, or trails.