



Commissioner Adam H. Putnam

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

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Florida Forest Service Chipola Forestry Center Releases Additional Information for Hurricane Michael Primary Burn Authorization Zone

Panama City, Fla. – The Florida Forest Service Chipola Forestry Center has released additional information for counties identified in the Primary Burn Authorization Zone, which includes Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Jackson and Washington.

The Primary Burn Authorization Zone was created to identify hurricane-impacted areas with specific open burning requirements as the Florida Forest Service continues recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael.

“We have thoroughly evaluated the wildfire risks in these areas hardest hit by the storm,” said Jim Karels, State Forester and Director of the Florida Forest Service. “Our plan will effectively reintroduce open burning into these areas with firefighter and public safety as the primary focus.”

While the Florida Forest Service assists in recovery efforts and establishes necessary burning parameters, local city or county ordinances maintain the authority to prohibit yard waste burning in their areas. Burn bans are currently in effect for Bay, Calhoun and Gulf counties. Jackson and Washington counties do not currently have burn bans.

If there is not a burn ban, residents can burn vegetative hurricane debris and yard waste without an authorization if they meet the following requirements:

- Burn piles must be less than 8 feet in diameter.
- Comply with [required setbacks](#) for outdoor burning and ensure there are no local city or county ordinances that prohibit burning.
- Ignite fires after 8 a.m. CST or 9 a.m. EST and extinguish fires one hour before sunset.

Setbacks for outdoor burning require vegetative hurricane debris and yard waste to be:

- 25 feet from your house;

- 25 feet from any wildlands, brush or combustible structure;
- 150 feet from other occupied buildings; and
- 50 feet from paved public roads.

Until January 7, 2019, burn piles greater than 8 feet in diameter and located in the Primary Zone require an authorization from the Florida Forest Service. They also require a certified pile burner, an on-site inspection, suppression equipment on-hand and additional setbacks. To obtain a burn authorization in Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Jackson or Washington counties, contact the Florida Forest Service Chipola Forestry Center at 850-373-1801.

For updates on city burn bans, contact your local city officials. To view current county burn bans, visit FloridaForestService.com. For additional information on outdoor burning requirements, visit [Know The Law Before Burning Outdoors in Florida](#).

The Florida Forest Service, a division of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, manages more than 1 million acres of state forests and provides forest management assistance on more than 17 million acres of private and community forests. The Florida Forest Service is also responsible for protecting homes, forestland and natural resources from the devastating effects of wildfire on more than 26 million acres. Learn more at FloridaForestService.com.

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