



## NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **DRY CONDITIONS PERSIST; BURN BAN CONTINUES IN VOLUSIA COUNTY**

Dry conditions remain in Volusia County, even with a prediction of rain for the weekend of Feb. 28 - March 1. According to local fire officials, a significant amount of rain is needed over an extended period of time to truly alleviate the dry conditions.

A burn ban remains in place in unincorporated areas of Volusia County. The burn ban was enacted Jan. 21 and also applies to the cities of DeBary, Oak Hill and Lake Helen, and the Town of Pierson. Citizens in other areas of Volusia County should check with their local municipality for any restrictions.

"We have had some really cold snaps that have only created additional dry fuel for wildfires," said James Tauber, Volusia County Fire Services director. "We need citizens and visitors to do their part in preventing fires."

Carelessness and arson cause two out of every three wildfires in Florida, according to Timber Weller, Public Information Officer with the Florida Division of Forestry.

"Anyone who causes a wildfire, whether intentionally or through carelessness may be held responsible for the costs of extinguishing it and for whatever damages the fire may cause," said Weller.

**Under the burn ban, all outdoor burning, unless authorized by the Florida Division of Forestry, is prohibited. This includes the burning of yard trash, household paper products, bonfires, campfires, warming fires and cooking fires. Outdoor cooking done with a contained gas or charcoal grill (excluding a fire pit) is the only exception.**

Violations of the ban are punishable by a fine up to \$500 and/or imprisonment in county jail for up to 60 days. Personnel from Volusia County Fire Services will issue violation notices to any person violating the burn ban and also will extinguish any fire not authorized by the Florida Division of Forestry.

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[www.volusia.org](http://www.volusia.org)

#### V O L U S I A C O U N T Y C O U N C I L

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Volusia County's Keech-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is 575. However, in some areas of the county, particularly the northwest, the index is above 750. The KBDI is on a scale of 1 to 800 (saturation to desert dry).

**Safety tips include:**

- Do not discard cigarettes from moving vehicles; use ashtrays.
- When pulling off the side of the road, stay off dry grass areas.
- Do not operate all-terrain vehicles on dry vegetation areas.
- Check lawnmowers and farm equipment for properly working spark arresters.
- Properly extinguish fires when cooking outdoors and never leave fires unattended.
- People start most wildfires. Promote and practice fire safety with all members of your family. If you see a suspicious fire or smoke, call 911.
- Clearly mark all driveway entrances with name and address.
- Plan several escape routes away from your home by car and on foot.

**Protect your home**

- Design and landscape your home with wildfire safety in mind. Allow a 30-foot buffer of non-combustible material around your home.
- Use non-combustible materials on the roof and regularly clean the roof and gutters.
- Teach family members how to use a fire extinguisher. Install and regularly test smoke detectors.
- Inspect chimneys twice a year and clean them once a year.
- Rake leaves and dead limbs and twigs. Clear all flammable vegetation.
- Have a garden hose long enough to reach any area of your home and property.

**When brush fire threatens**

- Listen to the news media or your NOAA Weather Alert radio for Civil Emergency Messages about where the danger is.
- Prepare your family, pets, and supplies in case you have to evacuate.
- If told to evacuate, DO SO IMMEDIATELY.
- Tell someone you are leaving and where you are going.
- If evacuating, drive a route away from fire hazards and listen to public safety officials.