

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



News Release

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GEORGIA BURN NOTIFICATION LAW CHANGING

Changes are coming to laws affecting Georgians who burn outdoor yard debris. As of July 1, 2021, landowners will no longer be required to notify the Georgia Forestry Commission of their intention to burn hand-piled vegetative matter. However, the legal responsibilities of those burning outdoor yard debris will be strengthened.

Under Senate Bill 119, GA code section 12-6-90 was changed to eliminate the notification requirement to burn hand-piled natural debris. Agriculture, silviculture and land-clearing burns for residential or commercial development will continue to require notification to the county forest ranger and a permit IS still required for these activities.

“Escaped debris burning is the number one cause of wildfire in Georgia,” said Georgia Forestry Commission Director Tim Lowrimore. “The Georgia Forestry Commission responds to more than 3,500 wildfires a year. With a strong focus on individual burning safety as required with these new changes, we can bring that number down significantly, together.”

The Georgia Forestry Commission has launched a communication campaign emphasizing the new changes that must be taken before burning: adequate space between fire and woodlands/structures; sunrise to sunset time frame; person on site responsible until fire is extinguished; and reasonable precautions to prevent escaped fire. As always, household garbage and man-made waste products may not be burned and it is unlawful to move debris from one location to another for the purpose of burning.

Local burning ordinances supersede the code requirements. In addition, restrictions on burning in 54 northern Georgia counties under the Environmental Protection Division summer burn ban from May 1-September 30 continue to be in effect.

Burning of debris generated by machine clearing of an area for the purpose of establishing a small garden spot or land clearing is considered a land type change. These are subject to the EPD land clearing burning rules and may require the use of an Air Curtain Destructor (ACD), depending on the county in which you live. Click here for [GA EPD Open Burning Rules](#). To clear land with or without an ACD, or burn off acreage or understory, please click [here](#) to contact your local GFC county office.

For more information about these changes and services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, go to [GaTrees.org](#).

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Georgia Forestry Commission Director Tim Lowrimore will be available for virtual interviews on Monday, June 21, 2021 from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Contact Wendy Burnett to schedule.