

Burn bans will start June 15 in Benton and Linn counties

SALEM, Ore. — A ban on all open and backyard burning will take effect on June 15 in Linn and Benton counties. The Oregon Department of Forestry and the fire defense boards of the two counties announced the ban, which aims to reduce the occurrence of open debris burns escaping control. The restrictions will extend through Oct. 15 or later, depending on fire danger.

The open burning restrictions overlap with the current air-quality rules set forth by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Those rules already forbid open burning within three miles of cities over 1,000 in population and six miles from cities over 50,000 in population after June 15. These burn restrictions expand the geographical area to include all of Linn and Benton counties.

“The weather is beginning to shift, most of the spring rain has passed and the days are getting hotter,” said Linn County Fire Defense Board Chief John Bradner. “The grasses are still green, but some of the larger fuels are drying out. In fact, there have already been several small fires around northwest Oregon this year.”

Benton County Fire Defense Board Chief Rick Smith said, “Along with this ban on residential burning we hope that the public has an increased awareness of wildfires. Now is the time for spring property maintenance. Create defensible space around your property by removing dead vegetation, keeping grass and brush mowed short, and landscape plants green and well-watered. It can make the difference between losing and saving a structure in the event of a wildfire.”

Rural fire agencies and the Oregon Department of Forestry have the authority to enforce and regulate the burn ban. Under Oregon Revised Statute Chapter 477, the department may issue citations for violation of restrictions on burning.

For more information on the open burning restrictions as well as advice on safe debris disposal, contact the nearest Department of Forestry office or the local fire department.

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